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Language requirements for adult migrants in Council of Europe member states: Report on a survey

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Foreword

The Council of Europe has been addressing the issue of migration – and in particular migrant workers - since 1968¹. It is worth noting that the first Resolution on this issue by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to its member states considers “that the home countries, immigration countries and public authorities and private bodies employing migrant workers should do their utmost to assist migrants wishing to learn the language of the reception country, and to facilitate the provision of the most effective types of language course”².

Political contexts and globalisation have had a great influence on the way approaches have developed since then, but the importance of migrants’ education has been reasserted in numerous texts: two conventions, sixteen resolutions or recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to the Committee of Ministers, as well as nine resolutions or recommendations by the Committee of Ministers to member states.

The cornerstone of the Council of Europe’s initiatives and projects

Migration has contributed to the history of peoples and the enrichment and development of civilisations throughout history. But it is also a human and economic reality that has to be managed by governments in keeping with the values shared by the Council of Europe’s member states, among which human rights and democratic citizenship hold pride of place.

Language is central to many of the challenges posed by migration, especially integration and the maintenance of social cohesion. Migrants’ access to education and training in the host country is particularly important, as is recognized by Article 14.2 of the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (1977)³:

To promote access to general and vocational schools and to vocational training centres, the receiving State shall facilitate the teaching of its language or, if there are several, one of its languages to migrant workers and members of their families.

This important dimension of integration was subsequently included in the revised European Social Charter⁴ (1996) where Article 19 refers to the signatories’ undertaking

To promote and facilitate the teaching of the national language of the receiving state or, if there are several, one of these languages, to migrant workers and members of their families.

In a similar vein, a Report⁵ of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly noted in February 2005 that “mastery of the host

¹ A compilation of extracts from Council of Europe texts relating to the linguistic integration of adult migrants. The full document is downloadable from the website of the Language Policy Division (www.coe.int/lang)

² Resolution (68)18 on the teaching of languages to migrant workers, Council of Europe, [<http://www.coe.int/t/cm>]

³ Council of Europe: <http://conventions.coe.int>

⁴ Council of Europe - STE no. 163 – *European Social Charter*. (Revised 1996) Article 19 par. 11

⁵ *Migration and integration: a challenge and an opportunity for Europe* (Document 10453), 2005, p.10. [<http://assembly.coe.int>]

country's language and obtaining training, if possible in keeping with labour market demand, are prerequisites if the problems posed by an under-qualified labour force are to be avoided". The report also detailed the growing tendency of member states to make the granting of citizenship conditional on the achievement of a stated level of proficiency in their national or official language. Clearly, language teaching and language testing have a central role to play in any adequate response to the challenges of migration and the integration of migrants into the host society⁶.

Change in integration policies since the end of the last century

Since 1991, migration in Europe has changed enormously. While the three migration waves (in most western European countries) between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the 1990s are characterised by a certain homogeneity – country of origin, socio-economic and socio-cultural background – and permanency (from initially temporary it quickly became permanent) of the migrant groups involved, migration post 1991 is much more diverse and more 'fluid'. Socio-economic and socio-political developments, such as the fall of the 'Iron Curtain', the expansion of the European Union (EU), globalisation processes and the sustained poverty in mainly African countries have increased migration into western European countries. At the same time, Europe is going through a process of economic and political unification. Exchange students, refugees, well and poorly educated labour forces are entering western European countries. In addition family reunification among 'older' migrant families and marriages of third and second generation migrants with somebody from the home country can also still be observed.

Post 1991 migration has become not only extremely diverse, but also more transitory in nature. Exchange students stay on a temporary basis. Large numbers of migrants are in transit. Many political refugees or asylum seekers who enter the European Union in one of the member states may stay there for some time before moving on to another country. At the same time, cheaper travel facilitates economic migration or mobility in a globalised society. In this context, diversity is becoming not only more and more the norm but also more complex. Traditional processes of acculturation no longer occur. Major cities are multicultural and multilingual by definition. An immigrant is no longer an "immigrant", he or she is member of a complex metropolis, where negotiation over differences in norms and values are self evident and hold in one context but not necessarily in another. These new 'types' of migration, along with the 'previous' migration from the fifties to the seventies, have put a considerable pressure on many European nation states with regard to concepts such as social cohesion, integration, citizenship, identity, culture and language. This interacts with a change in perception regarding immigration and integration. A feeling of insecurity stimulates negative attitudes towards immigrant groups. Some refer to the 'multicultural drama' or 'the multicultural experiment' of the seventies and eighties in terms of complete failure. Rapid changes in society mean that many people feel that 'their' 'safe' and familiar surroundings are disappearing. This can generate hostile attitudes towards the 'other' (the 'dangerous stranger') and resentment of everything that is unknown and unfamiliar.

⁶ Little D., *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the development of policies for the integration of adult migrants*, 2008, Council of Europe

This can result in extreme ideas of assimilation to ensure and safeguard ‘cultural homogeneity’ and revive attitudes of ‘them against us’. Consequently, ideas such as ‘they’ have to ‘integrate our society’, ‘adapt to our culture’ or ‘learn our language’ have become more prominent.

The political discourse on integration (and citizenship) has changed. An analysis of integration policies, however, reveals that, over a period of ten years, there has been a shift from policies that acknowledge cultural pluralism to policies that emphasise actual assimilation into the ‘host country’. The multicultural reality in the larger cities in all European countries may not be negated.

However, integration is a two way process⁷, and must be targeted at both majority and minority segments of the population. The Council of Europe promotes a human-right based approach and the question has been raised, notably by ECRI as to whether there is a tendency in some contexts to shift from a ‘right to integration’ approach to an ‘obligation to integrate’ for individual members of minority groups, with the consequent danger of focusing on the integration of a group into society rather than furthering the concept of an integrated society where the well being of everyone is sought.

The changes observed in climate and discourse over the last two decades strongly impacted on the integration policies in most European countries. Different surveys conducted over a period of time show that a proliferation of integration tests and courses is spreading across Europe through policy emulation⁸. This motivated the Council of Europe (Language Policy Division) to set up a project to providing support for member states with their initiatives related to the linguistic integration of adult migrants, taking into account shared fundamental values and principles.

In the wider context of the Council of Europe’s mission, the project aims to contribute in a practical manner to the implementation of the 2008 White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, and to offer support for specific recommendations in the recent Report of the Group of Eminent Persons⁹ of the Council of Europe, in particular its proposals for the development of better indicators for measuring the success of member states’ integration policies, and a comparative study of the effects of different citizenship laws on the integration of immigrants, people of recent immigrant origin and minorities.

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⁷ “As ECRI has repeatedly stated, integration is a two-way process, based on mutual recognition, which bears no relation to assimilation”. Par. 15, [Annual Report 2010](#). European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (Council of Europe) www.coe.int/ECRI.

⁸ ECRI recognises that speaking the host country’s language is essential for a successful integration process. However, procedures such as using linguistic tests prior to immigration, especially for family reunification, as an indirect tool of restricting immigration are, in ECRI’s view, counterproductive. Par. 14, [ECRI’s Annual Report 2010](#).

⁹ *Living Together. Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe*. [Report](#) of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe. www.coe.int

1. A Council of Europe survey on the linguistic integration of adult migrants

1.1 Background to the survey

Many European countries have made knowledge of their national language a requirement for adult migrants to be allowed to enter the country or to be granted permanent residence status or access to nationality. In accordance with the legal rules governing knowledge of the host country's language, language classes and, sometimes, courses designed to inculcate knowledge of the host society are arranged for these people. Language learning is often combined with language testing, which is compulsory under the law in some cases. This is a phenomenon which has arisen since the year 2000. As a requirement for integration, language has become a key component of immigration and integration policies. The notion of *linguistic integration* deriving from this is linked to the person's command of the language of the host country, which is transformed from a foreign language into a second language. The Council of Europe wished to gauge the extent of the phenomenon by organising its own discussion process in order to bring the issue into political focus and provide practical support for the member states.

The linguistic integration of adult migrants has therefore been the subject of two conferences at the Council of Europe, one on 26 and 27 June 2008 and the other on 24 and 25 June 2010. A presentation of these events, a description of their aims and the reports prepared for them can be consulted on the Language Policy Division's website (www.coe.int/lang). Under the auspices of the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) and the European Committee on Migration (CDMG), these conferences were held jointly by the Language Policy Division of the Directorate of Education and Languages (DG IV) and the Migration Division of the Directorate General of Social Cohesion (DG III). The Conference of June 2008 focused on Council of Europe principles and the specific instruments devised to help member states to frame and implement policy in this sphere. The purpose of the June 2010 conference was to provide a forum for discussion on the language requirements linked to residence and citizenship, the quality of language classes, testing and alternative approaches to this widely used form of assessment.

A survey on policies linked to the linguistic integration of adult migrants was conducted in the Council of Europe member states before the two conferences in 2008 and 2010 to assess the situation, based on the principle that it is important to know what one is talking about so as to talk about it properly. It was indeed important to pinpoint the principles and practices determining the way the matter is dealt with in public policy. The two rounds of the survey, carried out two years apart at the end of 2007 and 2009, highlighted the changing nature of national policies.

Earlier on, at the beginning of 2007, a small-scale study was conducted in co-operation with the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE, www.alte.org) to compare integration and citizenship policies across Europe. Data were collected by ALTE members in 18 countries. While a previous ALTE survey in 2002 had shown that 4 out of 14 countries (29%) had language conditions for citizenship, the 2007 survey showed that five years later this number had grown to 11 out of 18 countries (61%). The results of the surveys conducted in Council of Europe member states in 2008 and 2010, helped to fine-tune this assessment.

1.2 The organisation of the survey

Save for a few minor details, there was no difference between the two rounds of the survey in terms of the objectives and the methodology used to process the results. The objective was clear: It was to learn about the policies implemented by observing their characteristics and their effects. The approach adopted unquestionably led to comparisons between states, but deliberately ruled out any value judgment liable to give rise to an international classification. We have purposefully refrained from drawing up an international classification, preferring instead to identify the major trends at work. The second round of the survey in late 2009 had the added bonus of highlighting the changes that had occurred since the first phase in late 2007.

The survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire appended hereto, which was sent in the autumn of 2007 and 2009 to the delegates of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG),¹⁰ representing 44 of the member states (the other three – Andorra, Malta and Monaco – are not officially represented). The returned questionnaires were studied in detail¹¹ and the data deriving from them were analysed by the authors of this report in preparation for the conferences at which they were presented.

The questionnaire focused on knowledge of the host country's language in three distinct administrative situations, namely:

- admission to the country (A);
- permanent residence (B) and
- acquisition of citizenship (C).

It covered the legal and regulatory framework, the integration programme, language classes, courses on the host society, tests, levels required, course content, costs to be covered by migrants and sanctions. In 2007, but only then, family reunion and access to the labour market were also part of the administrative situations which were investigated in detail. This is because, when it is compulsory, knowledge of the language is a requirement for persons applying for family reunion before they are admitted to the host country. With regard to access to the labour market, only Italy stated, in 2007, that it had taken measures to facilitate the learning of Italian by foreigners wishing to immigrate to Italy for employment purposes. Among the new features of the 2009 survey were questions on quality assurance regarding the courses offered and on the evaluation of the training and programmes set up. There was also a question about the use of information and communication technologies in language classes. For details, the reader should refer to the copy of the questionnaire appended hereto. The main indicators adopted were as follows:

Total population and percentage of foreigners
Language test before entering host country
Optional/compulsory integration programme
Optional/compulsory official language classes
CEFR language levels

¹⁰. Which will not be meeting in 2011, as the Council of Europe's activities in the field of migration are currently being restructured.

¹¹. See the 2008 and 2010 conference reports for further details.

Special provision for non-readers and non-writers
Cost for migrants
Sanctions for non-attendance or low attendance
Quality of courses
Optional/compulsory tuition on the host society
Optional/compulsory testing of language proficiency + knowledge of host society
Cost for candidates
Sanctions if test not taken or failed
Course curriculum
Is the effectiveness of programmes measured?
Are information and communication technologies used?

Document 1: Indicators adopted for the survey questionnaire

1.3 Respondent states

31 states out of 44 replied in early 2010, eight of which had not replied in early 2008. 27 out of 44 replied at the beginning of 2008. In total, as shown in the table below, 35 states out of 44 replied at least once to the questionnaire. 23 replied both in 2008 and in 2010. In comparison with other studies or surveys comparing linguistic integration policies over the same period, this survey is the most comprehensive as it is not confined to western Europe in its global definition, covering some states of the European Union, the states of the European Economic Area (Norway and Liechtenstein) and Switzerland and San Marino. It is also a source of information on some states in central and eastern Europe and even beyond, covering the Caucasian states of Armenia and Georgia and, lastly, Turkey. Of the central and east European states formerly part of the Communist Bloc at the time of the Iron Curtain, some are now members of the European Union. To simplify, we refer to this second category of states as “east European” although the title only partly matches the countries concerned.

Germany	2008 and 2010
Armenia	2008 and 2010
Austria	2008 and 2010
Belgium/Wallonia*	2008 and 2010
Belgium/Flanders	2008
Cyprus	2010
Croatia	2008
Denmark	2008 and 2010
Spain	2008 and 2010
Estonia	2008 and 2010
Finland	2010

France	2008 and 2010
Georgia	2008
Greece	2008 and 2010
Hungary	2010
Ireland	2008 and 2010
Italy	2008 and 2010
Latvia	2008
Liechtenstein	2008 and 2010
Lithuania	2010
Luxembourg	2008 and 2010
Malta	2010
Norway	2008 and 2010
Netherlands	2008 and 2010
Poland	2008 and 2010
Czech Republic	2008 and 2010
Slovak Republic	2008 and 2010
United Kingdom	2008 and 2010
San Marino	2008 and 2010
Serbia	2010
Slovenia	2010
Sweden	2008 and 2010
Switzerland	2008 and 2010
Turkey	2008 and 2010
Ukraine	2010

Document 2: Countries which sent replies in 2008/2010 (French alphabetical order)

2. Data analysis

2.1 Major trends

In 2008, 27 member states out of 45 replied. Of these, 21 states made language knowledge a requirement for admission to the country, permanent residence or acquisition of citizenship. In 2010, 31 member states out of 47 replied and 23 announced measures linked to language learning; this was true of five of the eight new states. Over half of the states concerned (17 countries) are members of the European Union; the others are Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Armenia, Turkey and Ukraine. Of the 31 states which replied in 2010, 23 were concerned by at least one of the three administrative situations identified, namely **admission to the country (A), permanent residence (B) or acquisition of citizenship (C)**. The following table distinguishes between states which make language knowledge a requirement and those that do not, even if they propose optional language classes.

Language knowledge compulsory in 23 states	Language knowledge not compulsory in 8 states (** = optional language classes)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Germany A, B, C 2. Armenia C 3. Austria B, C 4. Denmark A, B, C 5. Estonia B, C 6. Finland A (Russian Ingrians), B 7. France A, B, C 8. Greece B, C 9. Italy B, C?? 10. Lithuania B, C 11. Liechtenstein A, B, C 12. Luxembourg A, B, C 13. Norway B, C 14. Netherlands A, B, C 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Belgium/Wallonia** 2. Cyprus 3. Spain 4. Hungary** 5. Ireland** 6. Malta 7. Serbia** 8. Sweden**
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Poland C (repatriation) 16. Czech Republic B, C 17. Slovak Republic C 18. United Kingdom A, B, C 19. San Marino 20. Slovenia B, C 21. Switzerland (cantons) C 22. Turkey C 23. Ukraine C 	

Document 3: Language knowledge compulsory or not compulsory in 2010

Two trends clearly emerge. The first relates to the administrative situations to which measures are applied, and the second to whether the language learning and evaluation arrangements are compulsory or optional. With regard to administrative situations, two different patterns can be discerned depending on whether the countries are in western or eastern Europe (in the broadest sense). In western Europe, measures linked to proficiency in the host country's language are targeted at foreigners who have come to settle for a long time in the country whereas in the East it is acquisition of citizenship for which language knowledge is a requirement. If we look at whether language learning and assessment arrangements are compulsory or optional, the first thing we note is that language classes are offered by most countries which have made language a condition of integration. Language classes are combined with knowledge-of-the-host-society courses and are compulsory for permanent residence in half of the cases.

Another fundamental trend is the widespread adoption of language-related requirements in the context of immigration and integration.

Almost half of the countries made changes in their integration policy between 2008 and 2010. The increase in the number of countries introducing language proficiency and knowledge of society (KOS) requirements prior to entry into the host country is salient (from 4 in 2008 to 6 in 2010, +2 in the near future, and others that are seriously considering it and are in the process of doing a feasibility study). In a few cases, the required level of language proficiency (expressed in terms of the CEFR¹²) levels) has been upgraded. Another salient finding from the 2010 survey data is that there are still some countries that set language requirements but do not offer language courses, so that candidates have to turn to the private market. The 2010 data also revealed that, as in 2008, although specific language needs of migrants are acknowledged, many countries do not offer courses that are tailored to the functional language needs of the migrants. As in 2008, the western European countries, in 2010, focus strongly on language requirements for permanent residency and citizenship, although conditions prior to entry have gained in significance. In the eastern European countries the focus in 2010 was mainly on citizenship. All the countries that have language requirements prior to entry can be geographically situated in western Europe. This is almost 50% (6/13) of the western European countries that have language proficiency requirements for integration. None of the eastern European countries have language proficiency conditions prior to entry. The number of western European countries (84%) that have language proficiency requirements in order to obtain permanent residency is more than double that of eastern European countries (30%). The picture for linguistic requirements for citizenship is different. The number of eastern European countries is slightly higher than that of western European countries. All eastern European countries (100%) have language conditions for citizenship, compared to 84% of the western European countries.

2.2 Changes between 2008 and 2010

Half of the states said that changes had been made or were planned (12 member states out of 23). The breakdown, in terms of A – admission to the country, B – permanent residence and C – acquisition of citizenship, is as follows:

- For the six member states that already had a host-country language proficiency programme in 2008:
 - Denmark and the United Kingdom were planning to extend the arrangements for permanent residence and citizenship applications to persons applying for admission to the country under the family reunion process; this is now the case for Denmark (A1- + knowledge of society, with a test, planned for 2010); in the United Kingdom introduction of the new measure had to be postponed until 2011;
 - Estonia has introduced the CEFR – the level required was B1 instead of A1-A2 (considered to be an elementary level) in 2007;
 - Austria was planning to raise the required level (formerly A2) to B1 for permanent residence and citizenship in 2011;

¹² The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages...* (CEFR) defines levels of language proficiency that allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis (the CEFR exists in 38 language versions). The CEFR is available online on the Language Policy Divisions's website: www.coe.int/lang

- the United Kingdom was planning to introduce new measures in 2011 for people applying for citizenship;
- Norway and Finland were considering new measures for permanent residence and citizenship.
- Among those states which did not have a compulsory programme related to language proficiency in 2008:
 - the Czech Republic had, as planned, opted for level A1 for permanent residence with a language test; for citizenship there is no longer a set level, although in 2008 there were plans to introduce level A2;
 - Luxembourg had made preparations for the introduction of a programme for A, B, C: level A1.1 Letzeburgesch, German and French for A and B and Letzeburgesch for C;
 - in Liechtenstein, A = A1, B = A2, C = B1, though a review was planned for 2010.
 - in 2009 Italy promulgated a law on a language and knowledge-of-society test for levels A1 to B1, to be implemented from 2011.
 - Slovenia had introduced a B1 language test for C;
 - and lastly, Poland had promulgated a law introducing levels B1, B2 and C1 for C.

Legal and regulatory framework – changes between the end of 2007 and the end of 2009

	For admission to the country		For people seeking permanent residence		For the acquisition of citizenship	
	End 2007	End 2009	End 2007	End 2009	End 2007	End 2009
Denmark	Planned	A1 - + KOS 2010 test		Vocational language courses		Reform bill before parliament
United Kingdom	Planned A1 February 2008	2011 A1 family reunion				Change planned in 2011
Austria			A2, optional test	A2 test compulsory 2011 before permanent residence A1; after permanent residence B1 planned	A2	A2 language + KOS test B1 planned for 2011
Norway				Amendments being discussed		Amendments being discussed
Finland				New provisions being discussed		New provisions being discussed
Estonia			A1-A2	B1 test, CEFR used since 2008	Elementary level test	B1 test, CEFR used since 2008
Poland						Act on proficiency in Polish for the acquisition of citizenship, levels B1/B2/C1
Czech Republic			A1 planned for 2010	A1 test	A2 interview planned for 2009	Interview at non-specified level, KOS test
Luxembourg		A1.1 planned	A1.1 planned	A1.1 Lux. Ger. Fr. planned	Under consideration	Language test Letzeburgesch EO A2, CO B1
Liechtenstein		A1		A2 language + KOS test		B1 + KOS test Changes in 2010
Italy				2009 Act implemented in 2010 : A1-B1 language + KOS test	B2 planned	?
Slovenia						B1 language test, optional KOS test

2.3 Required language levels

2.3.1 Western Europe

For the 13 western European countries listed in the following table, permanent residence (B) is the main focus of the legislation and sets the level of language proficiency required. And it is for permanent residence applicants that the courses offered by the public authorities – central, regional or local government or the cantons in the case of Switzerland – are most frequently compulsory. The legislation on permanent residence pre-dates that on the acquisition of citizenship (C), with the conditions related to admission to the country (A), which is itself related to permanent residence, coming after or before permanent residence (B) as the case may be. In Denmark, for instance, the measures relating to permanent residence were adopted in 2003, those concerning citizenship were adopted in 2006 and those on admission to the country in 2010. In Germany, measures linked to admission to the country were taken in 2007, two years after those relating to permanent residence while legislation relating to the acquisition of citizenship was introduced in 2008.

The level required is higher in northern European countries than in southern ones, a reflection of the fact that there is more government intervention in the North than in the South. The average level required for permanent residence is around A2/B1 on the CEFR scale (6 replies for A2, 3 replies for B1); the level required for admission to the country is lower, however: A1 minus (Netherlands and Denmark) or A1.1 (France, Luxembourg) and A1 (Germany, United Kingdom, Liechtenstein).

The measures concerning admission, which were introduced after those on permanent residence, call for, in addition to language proficiency, a course and/or test on knowledge of the host country (known as “KOS” for short or “values of the Republic” in France), as for people seeking permanent residence.

When it is set with reference to the CEFR, the level required for acquisition of citizenship (C) is either the same as that required for permanent residence (B) or higher. For example, in Finland and Austria, level B1 is required for B and level A2 (B1 in 2011) is required for C, while in Liechtenstein A1 is required for A, A2 for B and B1 for C.

Like France, Luxembourg requires a minimum level of A1.1 for A and B, in its three languages, namely French, German and Letzeburgesch; for persons seeking citizenship, however, a higher level of proficiency is required in the language of identity, Letzeburgesch, (oral expression A2, oral comprehension B1).

Rather than requiring a single level of proficiency, some countries have taken a different approach. In Denmark, for example, there are three recognised learning profiles (learners with little education, some education and full education), for whom levels A2, B1 and B2 are required respectively. Germany offers B1 and A2-level courses depending on the students, while in the Netherlands a distinction is made between new arrivals (level A1/A2) and more established migrants (A2). The United Kingdom assesses the desire to integrate by looking at the progress made by foreigners who have not reached B1 (progression from one level to the next, e.g. from A2 to B1). Norway, meanwhile, does not reason in terms of level but rather in terms of tuition hours, with one course representing between 300 and 3,000 hours and the minimum attendance requirement being 300 hours.

For people who have received little education in their countries of origin, developing writing skills can be a challenge, and that is recognised by a number of countries. France and Luxembourg have accordingly opted for level A1.1, and a literacy module has been introduced in Luxembourg, Austria, Sweden and Liechtenstein. Similarly, courses may last longer for less educated students: 300 hours in addition to the standard 900 hours in Germany, 40 weeks in addition to the standard 20 to 30 weeks in Finland, and up to 3,000 hours of tuition in Norway.

2008 survey: Levels of language required and courses – Western Europe (EU and EFTA)

The 13 states concerned	Admission to the country (A)	Permanent residence (B)	Citizenship (C)	Official courses
Germany	A1 (2007)	B1 (2005)	B1 (2008)	Compulsory for B, optional for EU
Austria		A2 (2006) / 2011 A1 and B1	A2 (2006) / 2011 B1	Compulsory for B
Denmark	A1 - + KOS (2010)	A2/ B1/B2 (2003)	B2 + KOS test (2006)	Compulsory for B
France	A1.1 + KOS (2008)	A1.1 (2007)	Interview (1993)	Compulsory for A and B
Finland	Russian Ingrians	B1 (1999)	B1 (1999)	Compulsory for A (Russian Ingrians) B
Greece		A1-A2 (2005)	Interview (2004)	Optional for B
Italy		From A1 to B1, 2009 Act introduced in 2010	?	Optional for B and in the country of origin
Luxembourg	Planned A1.1, optional Lux. Ger., Fr.	Planned A1.1, optional Lux., Ger., Fr.	EO A2/CO B1 Letzeburgesch	Optional for A, B and C
Netherlands	A1- + KOS (2006)	Old migrants A1/A2 New migrants A2 (2007)	A2 (2007)	
United Kingdom	A1 planned for spouses by 2011	Progress by one level up to B1 (1971)	Progress by one level up to B1 (2001)	Optional for B and C
Liechtenstein	A1 (2009)	A2 (2009)	B1 (2008)	Optional for C
Switzerland			Cantons/communes	Optional for B and C
Norway		300h of tuition (2005)	300h of tuition (2005)	Compulsory for B and C, minimum of 300h
Total	6 + 2 planned	11 + 2 planned	11	6/12 compulsory for B

[KOS stands for “knowledge of society”]

2.3.2 Eastern Europe

In eastern Europe, language proficiency tends to be required for acquisition of citizenship rather than for permanent residence, as was already the case in 2008, and ten states have adopted measures relating to the acquisition of citizenship. Of the ten states listed in table 4, only three make permanent residence conditional upon language proficiency. These are Estonia, which has required level B1 from its Russian minority since 1995, Lithuania (2003) and the Czech Republic (2009).

Language proficiency is usually assessed in an administrative interview or by means of a test on the Constitution (Hungary, Armenia) although Turkey requires a language certificate. Three of the ten countries check whether applicants have reached the level required to acquire citizenship by means of a test, namely Estonia (B1), Poland (B1/B2/C1) and Slovenia (B1). Slovenia also holds tests on the values of Slovenian society.

Levels of language required and courses – Eastern Europe

The 10 countries concerned	Admission to the country (A)	Permanent residence (B)	Citizenship (C)	Official courses
Estonia		B1 (1993)	B1 (1995)	
Lithuania		A2/B1 to work (2003)	A2/B1/B2 (2003)	Compulsory for B and C
Poland			B1/B2/C1 (2009)	Optional for repatriation/ compulsory for refugees
Hungary			Basic knowledge of Constitution B1/B2 (1993)	Optional for C
Slovak Republic			Interview (2007)	Compulsory for C
Czech Republic		A1 (2009)	Interview (1993)	Optional for B and C
Slovenia			B1 (2008)	Optional for B and C
Ukraine			Interview (2001)	Optional EU programme since 2009
Armenia			Test on the Constitution (2007)	
Turkey			Language certificate (1964/2009)	
Total		3	10	5 optional courses

2.4 Are courses and tests compulsory or optional?

On this specific point, readers should refer to the appended table entitled “Language courses and tests in western Europe – compulsory and/or fee-paying?”.

In western Europe language courses are compulsory in 8 cases out of 12. A language test proving that the applicant has reached the level required by law is compulsory in nine countries: in Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Finland, it is compulsory for permanent residence, and in some cases also for admission and citizenship, while in France and Greece, it is compulsory only for people seeking permanent residence. In Luxembourg a test in Letzeburgesch is required for citizenship but not for permanent residence and admission to the country, although courses are compulsory. Lastly, Italy is planning to introduce a compulsory language test for permanent residence.

In most cases in western Europe (France, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, Greece), courses and/or language testing are free of charge if they are compulsory (8 cases out of 11). Costs are borne partly by the migrant in Austria (course fees partly reimbursed) and in Finland (free compulsory courses, fee-based test). They are borne by the migrant in the Netherlands and Liechtenstein (there are no government-funded courses and the test is fee-based), as they are in the United Kingdom (optional courses and compulsory testing, both fee-based).

In eastern Europe, three countries out of ten have compulsory courses: Lithuania (for permanent residence and citizenship), Poland (for refugees) and the Slovak Republic (for citizenship). Optional courses are provided in five states, namely Hungary (for citizenship), Poland (for repatriated persons), the Czech Republic and Slovenia (for permanent residence and citizenship) and Ukraine, where there has been an EU-financed programme since 2009. Four out of ten states have a language test for permanent residence and/or citizenship, namely Lithuania (compulsory course), Estonia (no course), the Czech Republic (optional course) and Slovenia (for citizenship only – optional course). Both courses and tests may have to be paid for by the migrant.

Sanctions and incentives are based on students’ class attendance and their success in tests and are mainly a feature in western European countries. Sanctions may be of a financial nature, taking the form of reductions in benefits or 100% liability for course fees. Incentives include the partial reimbursement of course or test fees.

Finally, in countries where language proficiency is not compulsory, specific government-funded courses are often available. This is the case in particular in the following countries:

- Belgium/Wallonia: So-called social advancement courses, to which the association “*Lire et Écrire*” makes a major contribution;
- Ireland: Courses for refugees – report currently being prepared with a view to devising a policy;
- Sweden: Municipalities and private schools provide courses;
- Hungary : The Budapest School of International Languages is cited; English is taught to immigrants who are permanent residents;
- San Marino: Courses held by the Ministry of Education and Culture;
- Serbia: Courses for asylum seekers and migrant workers.

Sometimes migrants have access to mainstream training provision, as in the United Kingdom and Spain.

2.5 Quality assurance and assessment of existing programmes

Quality assurance is a concern for those western European countries which have introduced a linguistic integration policy. Once language proficiency becomes a statutory requirement, courses are introduced by the public authorities (central, regional or local government) or funded by them if the training is delivered by the private sector or by associations. The key issues here are:

- course accreditation;
- oversight of training agencies;
- teaching qualifications.

Most of the western European countries answered these questions in the affirmative. The programme or course curriculum is prescribed in only a few instances (Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, etc.), even though the CEFR is widely used as a benchmark.

Evaluation of the training agency may be carried out by:

- an outside body, as is the case with the National Language Institute in Luxembourg, which conducted an external assessment following specifications approved by the minister (section 8 of the Act of 22 May 2009).
- an independent inspectorate, as in the United Kingdom;
- the public authorities: this is the case in France where inspections of training bodies may be organised by the minister responsible for integration and the Immigration and Integration Office.

As to the evaluation of programmes or curricula, in some replies there was clearly some confusion with course-specific evaluation, evaluation of the training agency or even evaluation of what students have learnt. In some countries, course-specific evaluation, where it exists, may be carried out on an occasional basis, meaning that it does not take place systematically.

As for evaluating the programme as a whole, external assessments have been set up in Germany, Denmark and Greece. Their aim is to gather statistics on the number of people sitting tests and the results and on satisfaction levels among students and employers. In Denmark the implementation of the Act of 2003 was evaluated in 2007. This showed that language courses had become more effective, partly as a result of the measures introduced by the 2003 Act. Annual statistics are also produced on the number of persons sitting each Danish language examination, rates of progress and satisfaction levels among students and among employers questioned about their employees' language skills. In Italy, the Ministry of Labour runs assessments.

2.6 Use of new technologies

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been introduced into the courses on offer in only five countries (Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) for people in the three administrative situations we have focused on. Among the other

countries, some are planning to make use of ICTs (Germany, France, Greece, Norway, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine). In Lithuania tests can be taken on line.

3. Challenges

From the data that have been collected from the different surveys over time, it is possible to identify a set of challenges to be met in order to enhance language integration policies.

In this report we briefly describe the main challenges that were presented at the second international conference on ‘The linguistic integration of adult migrants: ways of evaluating policy and practice’, held at the Council of Europe, Strasbourg from 24 to 25 June 2010.

Challenge 1

How can we take into account the diversity of educational and cultural backgrounds? How can we meet migrants’ and society’s specific and functional language needs?

From research we know that a learner is more engaged and motivated for learning a language in a formal context (e.g. a classroom), when what is offered meets his/her needs..

Documents written for the Council of Europe’s 2008 international conference on the linguistic integration of adult migrants (see www.coe.int/lang) stress the importance of providing as many language programmes that meet and take into account the language needs of the groups at stake (tailor-made courses) as possible. To achieve this, it is important that the needs of the target population are analysed in detail level. Why do adult migrants want to learn which repertoire of the target language? The content of the societal domains that can be distinguished can then be described in very concrete terms: what abilities do people need and what do they have to be able to do with language (performance) in contexts that are specific to a certain domain?

Taking into account the diversity of educational and socio-cultural backgrounds of adult migrants implies a critical reflection on the pedagogies used in language teaching. From research we know that more constructivist approaches (e.g. task-based teaching, co-operative learning, learner autonomy) in most cases produce very good results.

Challenge 2

How can we encourage adult migrants to stay in language courses?

Sometimes administrative or juridical sanctions are used to encourage adult migrants to stay in language courses. From a perspective of motivations and commitment, however, this practice is questionable.

Positive incentives might have a better impact. When people know that following a language course for integration directly or indirectly increases their chances of finding a job, this might reduce the dropout rate. Another possible positive effect might be found in formal recognition the form of a certificate obtained after successful participation in a language course and/or passing a language exam.

But a more flexible provision of language courses and assessment tools can also impact positively on course attendance. Flexibility can refer to tailor-made courses (see Challenge 1), to

variations in schedule (day, evening classes), variations in location (close to where migrants live), by providing baby-sitting facilities for migrants with young children, and so on.

Acknowledging and understanding the language and educational background of the target population also strongly reduces drop-out rates. When people are shown that their previously acquired knowledge and their plurilingual repertoires are seen as assets and are promoted and used in the learning process, this impacts positively on their involvement and their attendance of the courses.

Alternative assessments in the form of continuous and positive feedback (feed forward) increase migrants' motivation to stay on the courses. Drawing attention to their responsibilities and involving them as active actors in the learning process is also important.

When people know that the integration process does not stop at the end of a language course or with a language test, but that they will continue to be given guidance not only in the broader aspects of integration, but also in finding work or continuing their education (personal trajectories) this also motivates them to stay on a course.

And finally, the drop-out rate also falls when people begin to see that language courses provide real opportunities for building social networks.

Challenge 3

How can we educate teachers?

It goes without saying that qualified language teachers have the basic expertise needed to teach languages in formal settings. Given the specific L2 context, providing opportunities to educate language teachers to function in specific contexts of L2 teaching can only be strongly encouraged.

Among other things this might include knowledge about L2 teaching (new pedagogies); competencies for dealing with diversity (cultural, social, educational, learning styles, ...); coaching and training of teachers in the classroom; improving teachers' working conditions; providing examples of good practice (e.g. video samples); giving support to teachers on how to identify the needs of a group; coaching teachers on how to refer to frameworks (national or CEFR); showing teachers how to introduce more informal learning opportunities (social networks; contacts with children's schools; ...) in the classroom; providing structures for more flexible course delivery: needs, space/location, learner's context (social, family, job commitments).

Challenge 4

How can we ensure quality of assessment?

It is evident that every language test that adult migrants take must meet the highest quality standards. The stakes are high. The consequences of failing a test can be tremendous. What quality in language assessment for integration implies has been described in a document written by ALTE¹³. It contains issues related to determining the purpose of testing and the real-world

¹³ *Language tests for social cohesion and citizenship – an outline for policy makers*: ALTE Authoring Group (Association of Language Testers in Europe) – Council of Europe.

demands of test takers; determining linguistic demands; determining the appropriate level or profile; producing test specifications; ensuring test specifications are met in practice (test criteria, pretesting, administration, reliability, validity, ...)

A standardised and course-independent language test is part of the integration policy of some countries, as can be derived from the surveys. In other countries, however, no standardised tests exist. There are many good reasons for having more informal, contextualised assessment tools. The learning context and content, the context of the group of learners can be better taken into account. However, assessment tools that are more integrated in language learning programmes also have to meet the highest standards.

One should think of portfolio-type tools¹⁴ (the Council of Europe is currently designing a template specifically aimed at adult migrants): self-assessment, peer and co-assessment and observations tools are examples of continuous-assessment tools as alternatives to language tests.

Challenge 5

To what extent can an integration policy be of a more facilitating rather than conditional nature?

A policy which first aims at integration in certain societal domains will lead to the use of the target language in those domains. That the use of the target language by immigrants can be achieved through an opposite policy, which sees the choice of the target language as a condition for integration and for that reason obliges the immigrant to learn the target language, is not supported by research. A facilitating policy that first aims at integrating immigrants in a societal domain (e.g. work) leads to the acquisition of the host country's language. People acquire the language when there is a need. In making language a condition for integration, one might refuse immigrants the opportunity to be active in domains where they can acquire the target language in a more informal way. In a conditional policy, one runs the risk that immigrants are not active in societal domains where language acquisition tends to be a natural process through contact. One might actually exclude people from domains that make the achievement of what one is aiming for possible. By maintaining a policy of making language proficiency a condition for social participation and obliging immigrants to take language courses, one runs the risk of actually reinforcing the structural discrimination of minority groups that one wants to counteract.

In a policy of a conditional nature courses and tests have to be more uniform. A universal and fixed level of language proficiency is required. This might lead to lower commitment and a more instrumental perspective: "do the course, pass the test and be done with it". And finally there a greater danger of gate-keeping and excluding people

In a policy of a facilitating nature there is more room for flexibility, for more needs-related and tailor-made courses and tests (format and content). The level of proficiency can vary according to

Another study also published by the Council of Europe (Language Policy Division - www.coe.int/lang) is of relevance here: *Quality assurance in the provision of language education and training for adult migrants – Guidelines and options*: Richard Rossner

¹⁴ European Language Portfolio (www.coe.int/portfolio)

an immigrant's needs and the linguistic requirements in the specific societal domains in which he or she wants to function. This is often more encouraging than discouraging.

Challenge 6

How can we help migrants to overcome the language barrier after completing official courses and tests?

In-depth research on the impact of integration policies, and more specifically language courses and tests, on social integration is lacking. A couple of small-scale impact studies reveal, however, that the impact is rather limited. What can be observed is that although language courses are seen as a lever for integration, this process stagnates after the course and/or the test. Therefore, it is recommended that migrants continue to receive support to help them overcome the language barrier after completing official courses and tests.

Instead of leaving someone to fend for him- or herself once the language course is finished or the language test has been taken, it is advisable to link L2 education achievements with further education and job requirements. This can have an even stronger effect when migrants are offered job orientation trajectories.

From research we know that social networks strongly contribute to processes of social participation and thus to language acquisition. It is therefore advisable to support migrants in building social networks. Often these inter-ethnic social networks do not appear automatically. Setting up support programmes is recommended.

Although formal recognition of L2 certificates or portfolios is not straightforward it is advisable to look at the options of attaching more social value to the L2 attestations or certificates of migrants.

To complement formal recognition it is advisable to invest in raising the awareness of all citizens so that they may contribute to the more informal processes of social cohesion.

Challenge 7

How can we increase migrants' multi literacy?

The socio-educational profiles of immigrants are very diverse. They range from highly skilled to poorly skilled people, but also from highly literate to illiterate people.

In today's societies literacy is very important. It is highly recommended to invest in the development of immigrant literacy skills. This implies more than just being able to read and write. Nowadays literacy is multiple and multimodal. It is therefore recommended that language integration policies take into account the acquisition of ICT skills (also as a source for teaching and learning).

It would be advisable to strengthen language education policies that use the immigrants' plurilingual repertoires as an asset for L2 learning and in L2 assessment.

Challenge 8

What kind of research should be given priority?

The importance of providing more tailor-made language courses has already been mentioned. To this end, research into needs and needs analyses is recommended.

In order to adjust integration policies it is important to conduct research on the reasons behind dropping out and the motivation of immigrants starting L2 courses.

If policies are to be adjusted successfully, it is important not only to carry out research on why immigrants drop out, but also to investigate the effectiveness and the social impact of integration policies.

Among others, the following topics can be singled out for research into their effectiveness: attendance; pass rates; programme types and open frameworks; contextualised learning; learner feedback; ICT and language learning; feedback from other stakeholders in society

As for impact studies, the following questions may be considered: To what extent do immigrants benefit in the long term? What is the effect on local policies? What is the impact on the perceptions of the majority group? Do these policies meet the policy goals set: improved social inclusion, more multicultural social networks, less discrimination, more chances of getting a job?

Concluding comments

This report helps us to understand more about the link now made between language proficiency and integration, except that the data available and the findings to which they give rise paint only a partial picture of the matter being investigated, which is the linguistic integration of adult migrants. This is because the data relate to national policies, as governed by statutory provisions, but nothing has yet been said about the work of the public authorities at local level or the activities of civil society, which we know to be abundant.

If we look again at the statutory provisions, one of the striking features is the diversity of national situations, whether in terms of the level of proficiency required or of the methods of assessment and of teaching/learning of languages and the host society's values. Nonetheless, the implementation of national policies raises similar political and technical issues whatever the context. Summed up in the form of eight key questions, these issues present challenges to governments, the migrants themselves and the training sector (training bodies and teachers).

Lastly, in view of the changing nature of the issues highlighted by the results recorded in late 2007 and late 2009, the Council of Europe will organise another round of the survey, the findings of which will be presented in 2013.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Survey Questionnaire

Appendix 2 – Language courses and tests in western Europe – compulsory and/or fee-paying?

Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire sent to member states in November 2009

Council of Europe Survey: *Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants*

COUNTRY

Respondent :

Name

e-mail @

Function & Institution

General information on the country:

Number of migrants entering the country per year

Ratio (in %) of migrants in total population

General information on training and evaluation of migrants (Sept 2008 > June 2009)

Number of migrants taking courses

% of migrants completing a course

Number of migrants taking a test

% of migrants passing tests

NOTE:

This survey consists of 3 series of similar questions but addressing 3 different categories of migrants:

a) [Family reunion](#) (before entering host country)

b) [Permanent Residence Permit](#)

c) [Citizenship](#) (nationality).

You are invited to indicate on the top of each section (grey boxes) whether there are - or not - specific regulations for each category (if yes: please specify). A set of Guidelines accompanies this survey.*



NB: the questionnaire sent to member states contained 3 sets of 19 questions for each of the 3 categories

Category A (or B or C)

(*one table per category*)

Specific regulations?

No	Yes, specified below	Yes, same as for Category ...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Tuition / test before entering host country	Integration programme	Language tuition officially offered Duration / Type of institution	Specific provision for illiterate migrants?	Tuition up to which level(s)?	Tuition cost for migrant	Sanctions if no/ low attendance	Attendance: incentive	Tuition : quality assurance
	Tuition: YES / NO Test: YES / NO	NO or OPTIONAL or OBLIGATORY	NO or OPTIONAL or OBLIGATORY	YES / NO	A1 - C2	0,00 euros (approx.)	YES / NO	YES / NO	a) course accreditation: YES / NO b) inspection: yes/no c) teacher qualification: YES / NO
[Type of answer - indicate <i>one</i> of the options in this line]									
ALL >									
<i>EU Residents: only fill in if special arrangements applicable</i>									
COMMENTS	<i>Oral ? Written? Levels? urpose?</i> ...	<i>Areas covered?</i> ...	<i>Target groups?</i> ...	<i>Specify if provision for other groups with special needs</i>			<i>Please specify</i> ...	<i>Please specify</i> ...	
GENERAL COMMENTS									

(continued) **Category A (or B or C)**

	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Curriculum Framework / Guidelines for tuition	Is the effectiveness of programmes measured ?	Language test: level(s)?	Language test (+ cost for candidate)	Sanctions if test not taken or failed	Advantages of taking or passing a test	Knowledge of Society tuition (KoS)	KoS test & cost	Information technologies	Date of legislation
	YES / NO	YES / NO	A1 – C2	NO or OPTIONAL or OBLIGATORY approx. cost 0,00 euros	YES, inot taken YES, failed NO	YES / NO	YES, integrated YES, independent NO	NO or OPTIONAL or OBLIGATORY (in which language?) approx. cost 0,00 euros	Please refer to questions on page 7	DATE
[Type of answer:- indicate one of the options in this line]										
ALL >										
<i>EU Residents: only fill in if special arrangements applicable</i>										
COMMENTS	- If 'no': how are courses designed? ...	If yes, how? ...			Specify: ...	Specify: ...				
GENERAL COMMENTS										

Question 20

Are computer-based systems (connected to the Internet or not) or other digital devices used in the context of language and/or KOS education?

Please tick the appropriate box(es). Multiple YES answers are admitted

Please indicate relevant categories as appropriate:

- A (Family reunion – before entering the country)
- B (Permanent Residence)
- C (Citizenship (Nationality))

x	A or B or C?	
		1 NO and there is no official plan to use them in the near future
		2 NO but we have ideas/plans to use them in the near future
		3 YES for the language test before entering the country
		4 YES for language assessment before starting language tuition
		5 YES to provide language tuition (and/or KOS course) at a distance
		6 YES to provide language tuition (and/or KOS course) in the classroom
		7 YES to provide support to learners outside of classroom time
		8 YES for the language (and/or KOS) test at the end of the course
		9 YES to provide special training and/or support to teachers
		10 YES for other purposes. Specify: ..

Appendix 2 : Language courses and tests in western Europe – compulsory and/or fee-paying?

The 13 countries concerned	Official courses	Cost for migrants	Language test	Cost for migrants
Germany	Compulsory for B, optional for EU	For B, free of charge if compulsory, otherwise €1/hour	Compulsory for B and C	Free of charge if compulsory
Austria	Compulsory for B	50% if completed in 2 years	Compulsory for B and C	50% if student passes
Denmark	Compulsory for B	Free of charge for A, B and C	Compulsory for B and C	Free of charge up to € 133
France	Compulsory for A and B	Free of charge	Compulsory for A and B	Free of charge
Finland	Compulsory for A (Ingrians) and B	Free of charge for B	Compulsory for B	€95
Greece	Compulsory for B	Free of charge for B	Compulsory for B	?
Italy	Optional for B and in the country of origin	Free of charge	Optional for B, compulsory in 2010	Free of charge
Luxembourg	Optional for A, B and C	Free of charge	Compulsory for C	Free of charge
Netherlands		Cost borne by migrant	Compulsory for A, B and C	Cost borne by migrant
United Kingdom	Optional for B and C	B – € 250/1000; C – €0 to 250	Compulsory for B and C	B – € 50; C – €0 to 50
Liechtenstein	Optional for C	voucher	Compulsory for A, B and C	
Switzerland	Optional for B and C			
Norway	Compulsory for B and C	Free of charge	Optional for B and C	Free of charge
Total	7/13 compulsory for B	8/11 free of charge	9/12 compulsory for B	6/9 free of charge