Language Policy Division

Summary Progress Report 2005

Plurilingualism, Diversity, Citizenship

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www.coe.int/lang
www.coe.int/portfolio
1. Language Education Policy Profiles

The process for Cyprus and Slovenia has been completed and their respective ‘Profiles’ will be published in October. The "Profile" for Lithuania is in the final stages of elaboration. Visits of expert groups took place as follows i) Slovak Republic in March, ii) Lombardy in April and iii) Luxembourg in June; further meetings for each of these countries/region are taking place in autumn to discuss the draft expert reports and the preparation of the final Round Tables, which are planned for Luxembourg on 1-2 December, Slovak Republic and Lombardy in early 2006.

The experts visit to Ireland is scheduled in October and to Poland in December.

Authorities of Armenia and of Val d’Aoste have submitted their formal application to undertake the “Profile” activity. A letter supporting the application by Val d’Aoste Region has been received by the Secretariat from the Italian authorities. The regional authorities indicate that the activity could begin either in 2006 or in 2007.

Country Reports and Profiles, as and when they are published, are available on the website.

2. Quality and standards - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

These standards of language proficiency are a significant Council of Europe contribution to the European Council’s Lisbon strategy; they form the basis of the Barcelona Indicator, the purpose of which is to measure foreign language competences in each EU member state with a high level of accuracy and reliability.

2.1 Manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR

38 institutions from 20 countries are now piloting the draft of the Manual. A meeting to evaluate the progress in piloting was held on 9-10 June in Strasbourg.

A meeting of experts coordinating the production of DVDs and CD-ROMs containing samples illustrating the six reference levels to accompany the Manual took place in Strasbourg at the beginning of March.

Grids for analysing samples of performances have been produced, as well as a DVD with samples of calibrated spoken performances in French and a CD-ROM with calibrated items for testing comprehension skills (reading and listening) in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. A second CD-ROM with samples of written performances in the same five languages is in preparation. Rating conferences with a view to producing DVDs with samples of oral performances in German, Italian and Spanish are scheduled in autumn. Two videos showing calibrated oral performances in English are available since early 2004.

A new e-mail account (relating.exams@coe.int) has been established for discussion and feedback on the pilot scheme.

2.2 A survey on the use of the CEFR

This survey was announced on the website of the Language Policy Division and widely distributed to the key partners in the field. The preliminary results have been incorporated in the Discussion Paper on “Linking language examinations to the Common Reference Levels” also submitted as a working document (see 2.3 below).

2.3 Discussion Paper on Linking language examinations to the Common Reference Levels

The accreditation of claims according to which examinations have been calibrated against the Common Reference Levels is a major issue frequently raised with the Language Policy Division. Some possible options for a Council of Europe response are presented in the Discussion Paper on Linking language examinations to the Common Reference Levels.
2.4 Reference Level Descriptions (RLD) for national and regional languages

Draft Guidelines, aimed at assisting teams in elaborating RLDS based on CEFR levels, have been
developed to ensure better coherence between the levels and transparency at an international level.
The reference levels have already been described in linguistic and cultural detail for the following
languages: Czech (A1, A2 and B2); French (A1 and B2), German (all six levels) and Greek (A1) and
work is underway for Italian (A1 and B2) and Portuguese (B1 and B2). A consortium has recently
been set up in the United Kingdom to develop the Reference levels for English.

A seminar, aimed at teams/states interested in the development of Reference Level Descriptions is
scheduled on 5-6 December to help in developing or planning a RLD. Interested teams in relevant
countries/regions are invited to contact the Secretariat with a view to participating in the meeting.

3. European Language Portfolio (ELP) www.coe.int/portfolio

The first meeting of the new European Validation Committee took place on 25-27 May. Nine portfolios
were granted accreditation, bringing the total to seventy four. The first electronic portfolio has now
been validated (developed for adult learners by ALTE/EAQUALS) and others are under development.
The next meeting will take place on 3-5 November 2005.

The standardised Language Passport for adults has been included in electronic form in Europass
(launched by the EU in January).

The generous support of the Russian Federation, which is hosting the annual European seminar for
ELP contact persons in 2005, is gratefully acknowledged.

Lithuania has announced that it will host the annual seminar in 2006.

Within the framework of its second medium term programme the ECML is coordinating two projects on
ELP implementation, the results of which are being communicated to the European Validation
Committee and the annual European seminar for ELP contact persons.

The projects in Graz are followed by the General Rapporteur and some members of the Validation
Committee to ensure synergies, and the current Chair of the ECML Governing Board is also a
member of the Validation Committee. The ECML Head of Programmes will be invited to all Validation
Committee meetings and relevant seminars so as to further facilitate complementarity and synergy.

4. European Day of Languages www.coe.int/EDL

The European Day of Languages 2005, co-ordinated jointly by the Language Policy Division and the
ECML, is attracting increasing interest. Several hundreds events have been registered on the EDL
website. Up-to-date information and new sections as well as a new game launched on 26 September
are available on the website. Promotional material (posters, stickers) were supplied by Strasbourg
and Graz to all Relay Persons in the Member States who completed the request form, but also to a
significant number of associations and schools. Events are registered on the website, some of them
taking place beyond Europe.

Following the European Year of Languages 2001, the United States are organising a Year of
Languages in 2005 and Africa plans a Year of African Languages in 2006.

The European Commission is also active in the celebration of the EDL in 2005.


Member states discussed future priorities at the Policy Forum in Strasbourg in June 2004 which were
formulated in a document submitted to the Bureau in March for approval.

Subsequently the Bureau discussed the document “Language policies: Draft medium-term programme
2006 – 2009” (DGIV/EDU/LANG (2005-2) which outlined four main projects under the title: ‘Language
Policies for democratic citizenship and social inclusion’.

The document has been revised on the basis of discussions at the Bureau Meeting which approved
the broad lines of the draft programme. The main innovation concerns the new project on policies and
standards for languages of education. The Bureau gave the go-ahead for the preparatory stages of
this project (see part 6 below).
6. Languages of education

Subsequent to the approval by the Bureau of the broad lines of this new project proposal, two experts meetings have been held. A preliminary survey has been carried out among member States on curricula for teaching national/official/school languages in compulsory education. A seminar will be held in November 2005 with representatives from some member States (including those already involved in the Profile activity), an expert group and INGOs.

7. Education policy for minorities, newcomers and bilateral assistance activities

Bilateral activities: the Division contributes to intersectoral actions on language policy in general, and education policy in particular. A number of activities in the Russian Federation on language policies and in Bosnia-Herzegovina concerning the development of a Core Curriculum for Modern Languages are being carried out in 2005.

Languages and Citizenship: A seminar with representatives of a small number of countries (ministries of social affairs, justice etc.) as well as language experts is being held in Paris in September to examine and discuss language issues related to the acquisition of citizenship. It is being co-organised by the Division and the French authorities with a view to providing a platform for an in-depth analysis and discussion among the different kinds of instances directly concerned in those member states.

In May, a Forum on language and citizenship was held in Berlin as part of the wider programme of the Second International Conference of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) - an INGO that was recently granted participative status with the Council of Europe.

DECISIONS

The Committee

- took note of the progress concerning the Language Education Policy Profiles i) Cyprus, Slovenia, Lithuania (finalisation prior to publication) and ii) the Slovak Republic, Luxembourg, Lombardy, Ireland and Poland (underway);
- approved the applications for the Language Education Policy Profile activity submitted by Armenia and the Valle d’Aosta (11th and 12th applications)
- took note of developments concerning the Manual for Relating Examinations to the CEFR and the survey on the use of the Framework
- took note i) of the elaboration of Reference Level Descriptions (RLD) for a number of languages and different levels and ii) the seminar organised by the Division for new authoring teams on the 5th and 6th December
- took note of developments concerning the European Language Portfolio and the launch of Europass consolidating co-operation with the European Union
- recommended that Council of Europe Guidelines (option 5.2) and a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers (option 5.3) be prepared to assist with the question of validation of claims linking examinations to the CEFR
- took note of the preliminary work concerning languages of school education
APPENDIX 1: Europass Language Passport

Learners and workers | Employers | Education and training professionals | Higher Education

Create your / Europass Language Passport  E-mail a link to this page to a friend
The Europass Language Passport

What is it?
The Europass Language Passport allows you to describe your language skills, skills that are vital for learning and working in Europe.

The Europass Language Passport was developed by the Council of Europe as part of the European Language Portfolio which consists of three documents: the Language Passport, the Language Biography and the Dossier.

View examples of Europass Language Passports

Using the Europass Language Passport
You have three options:

Create your Europass Language Passport now
using online instructions and examples. You will then receive the completed Language Passport electronically (download or e-mail).

Download the Europass Language Passport documents
(blank template, instructions, examples and Europass cover page). You will then use these documents on your computer.

Update your Europass Language Passport (XML)
If you already have a Europass Language Passport in XML format, you can upload it and update your data. Your personal data will be automatically inserted in the system.