

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MODERN LANGUAGES, GRAZ

1st meeting of the Professional Network Forum on Language Education
Graz, 7 January 2010

DGIV/EDU/GRAZ(2010)9 – 14 January 2010

Meeting minutes

I. Opening of the meeting

<Appendix I: Agenda>

The meeting was opened at 09.00 on Thursday, 7 January 2010, by Waldemar MARTYNIUK as Executive Director of the ECML.

Mr MARTYNIUK welcomed the participants (Appendix II: list of participants).

- AILA – Bernd Rüschoff
- ALTE – Berit Halvorsen
- CercleS – Johann Fischer
- EALTA – Sauli Takala
- EAQUALS – Peter Brown
- CEL/ELC – Wolfgang Mackiewicz
- FIPLV – Terry Lamb
- ICC – Rolf Schärer
- OLBI - University of Ottawa – Aline Germain-Rutherford
- European Commission, Multilingualism Policy Unit – Harald Hartung
- Council of Europe
 - Language Policy Division – Joanna Panthier
 - ECML – Susanna Slivensky, Michael Armstrong, Catherine Seewald, Anna Kehl

He also welcomed Mr Henry Widdowson, University of Vienna, who was invited as a special guest to provide views from an independent expert perspective on the potential and added value of the network.

He expressed the best wishes from Ms Ólöf Ólafsdóttir, Deputy Director of Education and Languages, and from:

- Mr Joseph Sheils, Head of the Council of Europe Language Policy Division;
- Mr Alexey Kozhemyakov, Head of the Council of Europe Secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,
- Mr Alan Dobson, Chair of the ECML Governing Board, nominated initially to chair this meeting; who apologised for being prevented from attending the event by exceptional circumstances.

II. Background

1. Bilateral cooperation agreements

Encouraged by its Governing Board, the ECML is seeking to intensify its relationships with institutions and associations with similar aims working in the field of language education and assessment.

Following on from the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in 2008 by the ECML and the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute (OLBI) of the University of Ottawa, the Centre has developed a generic bilateral cooperation agreement which outlines the modalities of the desired cooperation and formalises the commitment to work together. The objective of the agreement is to ensure creative synergies at institutional level in the pursuit of common goals through the exchange of expertise, information and documentation, the attendance at partner events and the cooperation in joint activities. The impact of the cooperation will be evaluated by each partner at yearly intervals and reported jointly or separately to the ECML's Governing Board and the Governing Body of the partner organisations. The Governing Board of the ECML may choose to include this data in its Annual Report to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The term of the Memoranda corresponds to the duration of the ECML's 3rd medium-term programme "*Empowering Language Professionals*" (2008-2011) and should be subject to revision by agreement between the Parties.

The agreement was signed so far by 7 INGOs having participatory status with the Council of Europe: the European Association for Quality Language Services (EAQUALS), the International Federation of Modern Language Associations (FIPLV), the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA), the International Certificate Conference (ICC), the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education (CercleS), the European Association for Language Testing in Europe (EALTA). It is also envisaged to sign the agreement with the Conseil européen pour les langues / European Language Council (CEL/ELC) in the near future¹.

The initiative to set up a Professional Network Forum on Language Education allowing leaders of INGOs to meet once a year or once every two years under the auspices of the Council of Europe at the ECML in Graz emerged from this context.

2. Visibility of the Professional Network Forum: ECML promotional tools

a. Promotion of the network in the ECML flyer

Michael Armstrong presented a draft flyer designed to present and promote the partner associations and institutions and their involvement with the ECML. It briefly presents the role of the network and the individual partners, including their website address and logo.

The partners are invited to give their feedback on the content which will be updated accordingly, printed and uploaded to the ECML's website.

b. ECML databases

The partners may use

- the experts database (<http://www.ecml.at/interactive/experts.asp>) on the ECML website to advertise the expertise and services of their members or to identify experts in specific fields
- and the international events calendar (<http://www.ecml.at/interactive/calendar.asp>) to promote their events.

¹ The agreement with CEL/ELC was signed on 22 January 2010

3. ECML link persons

a. Assignment personal

ECML staff members have been nominated as contact persons for the Centre's partner organisations as follows:

Partners		Contact person at the ECML
Organisation	Contact	
AILA	Bernd Rüschoff	Anna Kehl
ALTE	Mike Milanovic	Waldemar Martyniuk
CercleS	Johann Fischer	Catherine Seewald
EALTA	Sauli Takala	Waldemar Martyniuk
EAQUALS	Brian North (Peter Brown)	Anna Kehl
CEL/ELC	Wolfgang Mackiewicz	Catherine Seewald
FIPLV	Terry Lamb	Anna Kehl
ICC	Rolf Schärer	Michael Armstrong
OLBI	Hilaire Lemoine / Richard Clement	Susanna Slivensky

b. Specific role of the ECML 'link persons'

The link persons who are intended to 'develop a culture of communication' are assigned the following tasks:

1. Information exchange

- Become familiarised and stay updated on the Partner's activities
 - Via website
 - Directly, by contacting the link person on Partner's side
- Inform Partner on relevant developments on own side
- Negotiate exchange and publication of news items and other information relevant to both sides
- Draw attention internally to the relevant developments on the Partner's side

2. Exchange of expertise

- Forward Partner's requests for expertise accordingly

3. Attendance at events / Professional development

- Coordinate mutual attendance at events

4. Joint activities

- Forward ideas for joint activities accordingly
- Negotiate modalities and draft plans for joint actions – for approval by relevant bodies

5. Follow-up (monitoring/evaluation)

- Collect documentation and data for evaluation and reporting purposes
- Draft annual evaluation reports

III. Aims of the meeting

<Appendix I: Agenda>

The three aims of the meeting were:

1. to launch the Professional Network Forum through:
 - network presentation,
 - taking stock of current language education issues and challenges as viewed from the perspective of each organisation ("what keeps every partner busy?")
 - reflection on how the platform could enhance cooperation and coordination of efforts ("how can we enhance synergies in cooperation?")
 - mission statement
 - action plan
 (based on information provided under "Partner profile", "Partner highlights", "Action points", and during discussions);
2. to reflect on a common statement to the wider public addressing the most urgent matters in European language education in preparation for drafting a 'Graz Declaration on Language Education 2010' to be adopted by the network (based on information provided under "Burning issues" and during discussions) - this exercise could be repeated each year;
3. to collect input for the ECML's next medium-term programme 2012-2015 (based on information provided under "ECML projects" and during discussions).

IV. Content and organisation

The event was organised around four main sessions and one concluding one. The main sessions were based on brief presentations (max. 15 minutes) given by each partner organisation, followed by extensive discussions:

- Session 1a: "Council of Europe and Languages": Language Policy Division, Strasbourg, Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and European Centre for Modern Languages
- Session 1b: "European Union and Languages": Unit C5, Multilingualism Policy, Directorate General for Education and Culture, European Commission
- Session 2: "Reaching out": OLBI, AILA, FIPLV
- Session 3: "Language teaching": EAQUALS, ICC, CercleS, CEL/ELC
- Session 4: "Testing and Assessment": ALTE, EALTA

The partner presentations focused on five key points:

1. "Partner profile"
2. "Partner highlights"
3. "Burning issues"
4. "Action points"
5. "ECML projects".

1. Partner profile and highlights

Participants were invited to briefly present:

- their respective organisation/institution including the mission, membership and basic data;
- activities/initiatives/projects/products/publications/events that could be highlighted and promoted/disseminated through the Network - completed, on-going, or planned

This information can be found in the individual powerpoint presentations and handouts provided by the participants.²

2. "Burning issues"

² See the special file to be established soon on the ECML website

The participants were invited to reflect on issues/needs/challenges related to language education that - from the perspective of each organisation/institution - require coordinated action on the international level within the next few years (2010-2015).

Language Policy Division

- Integrated approach to the learning/teaching/assessment of all languages in/for education
- Languages of schooling: development of standards for language(s) used as a medium of instruction (language as subject and language(s) in other subjects)
- Equal opportunities for all learners. Special attention to 'vulnerable' learners: often learners from a migrant background and/or low social education status
 - Building on their plurilingual repertoires and pluricultural experiences

In preparation:

- Guide for the development of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education (+ modules)
- Policy paper for the linguistic and educational integration of migrant children (+ toolkit)
- Principles and guidelines for the integration of adult migrants

Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Education should be organised in a way which ensures the successful transmission of a regional or minority language.

Burning issues

- setting up independent supervisory bodies to monitor and report on the measures taken and progress achieved in the provision of regional or minority language education. This should empower the states themselves to take stock of the existing situation regarding regional or minority language education and provide them with the tools to devise strategies to improve it;
- basic and further training of teachers;
- encouraging the continuity of regional or minority language education at all stages, and notably at the secondary level to combat the challenge of **teacher shortage** in regional or minority language education in many countries;
- combining facilities for teacher training with incentives for young persons to become teachers in cases where the regional or minority languages are particularly threatened.

European Centre for Modern Languages

- Challenge of linguistic (and cultural) diversity: not just 'a problem to be solved' but more 'a resource to benefit from'
- Appropriate access to education as a human right
- Awareness-raising of the core value of language skills
- Plurilingual and intercultural education: curriculum development, textbook design, teacher training, teaching, assessment
- Integration of migrants (children and adults): support for lifelong learning

Multilingualism Policy, Directorate General for Education and Culture, European Commission

Context

- Basic knowledge of the host society's language and culture is indispensable for the integration of third-country nationals.
- Concrete measures are necessary to reach a large part of the European society still missing the advantages of multilingualism (those who are monolingual, who still struggle with their first foreign language, school drop-outs, seniors and other adults no longer in education).
- Lack of language skills is one of the most significant obstacles to intra-EU mobility of workers (in international companies and in small companies and public administrations). Companies are estimated to lose 11% of turnover through lack of language skills.

Two main problems to be tackled:

- Knowledge of foreign languages remains insufficient among European citizens,
- Companies and service providers are not fully aware of the benefits as well as of challenges of linguistic diversity in Europe.

Actions needed:

- To empower individuals and businesses to take advantage of the opportunities in the global and multilingual society.
- To show that languages can be an asset, for the benefit of the European society as a whole.

OLBI

- Individual Plurilingualism and Multilingual Communities within the context of official bilingualism: a social reality vs. a political & historical will
- Curriculum development: a growing focus on plurilingual and intercultural education
- L2 teacher education: taking into account the multilingual and multicultural reality of the Canadian classroom
- Testing and assessment
 - Development of new testing tools
 - Equivalency issues between existing tools (CEFR / Canadian Language Benchmark / ACTFL); harmonisation of language testing
- Globalisation of processes / Internationalisation in higher education and of programmes and online education: compatibility of technologies, accreditation and equivalency issues
 - international classes, interculturality, compatibility of educational systems
 - mobility of students and professionals: expectations, audiences
 - mobile technologies
- Research dissemination: how results influence language policies or not?
- Do/should we play the role of lobbyist?

Also interest in

- Academic literacy into the other language (e.g. being able to write articles in the second language): deficiency in Canada
- Continuity in language learning
- Teaching of a discipline in second language

AILA

- Integrative and holistic approach (all contexts of human life; linguistic and communicative competence at individual level, within and between societies)
- Local impact of a language used in international communication; lingua franca issue
- Impact of demographical changes on languages and language education
- Need for examining the development of the CEFR within the global context; need for networking and coordinating CEFR initiative worldwide
- Personal language profiles: intergenerational issue (language biographies/portfolios of older learners to be used to encourage early language learning), personal development as a motivation factor
- Redefining literacy in multilingual communities in the light of new technologies that provide new reading and writing contexts
- Regionalisation strategy aims at establishing closer international cooperation among Applied Linguists from more or less neighbouring countries who are affiliated to AILA by fostering joint events, projects and publications in the respective region

FIPLV

- Retaining linguistic diversity in policy, society and education
- Redressing the disappearance of languages in the above contexts
- Promoting social inclusion and cohesion
- Increasing the range of languages learnt as foreign languages throughout life
- Increasing the motivation of native speakers of English to learn other languages
- The rejuvenation of the profession (of languages teachers) at all levels – attracting newcomers to the profession
- The development of appropriate pedagogies for the use of new technologies in language learning
- The unification of organisations committed to multilingualism
- Identifying stakeholders who will make policy in the future and establishing a successful dialogue with powerbrokers/stakeholders for the above
- Teacher voice in policy making and influencing change
- Bridging the gap between research and policy making

EAQUALS

For the meeting itself the burning issues were divided into:

- (S) Strategic & long-term / policy / broad vision
- (T) Tactical & medium-term / implementation / outcomes that help achieve the strategic objectives.

1) Teachers

Attracting newcomers to the profession

- **Emergent needs** – identifying & monitoring changes in requirements for language teaching professionals
- **Training** FL teachers in the future
- **Quality assurance** in/accreditation of FL teacher training
- Further **professionalisation** of FLT
- **FL teacher training** frameworks
- Development of **professional pathways** for FLT practitioners (both new and already in service) as well as pro-active support for CPD for serving language teaching professionals
- Issues of **teacher mobility**
- **Intellectual asset stripping**
- Exporting unemployment
- Brain drain

2) Diversity

Getting away from barriers – moving towards plurilingualism (presently under political attack in many countries)

- Getting away from “one size fits all” notions
- Support for “linguistic integration” of migrants [current Strasbourg project]
- Promoting the intercultural approach in language teaching / learning
- Making / transforming “*plurilingualism*” into more than just a political slogan

3) Accreditation

Need for qualitative labels other than simple, and often misleading, performance tables

4) CEFR/ELP

- Reporting and dissemination of CEFR implementation.
- Dangers of prescriptive / proscriptive use of the CEFR
- Addressing the needs of Young Learners (also in terms of cognitive development)
- CEFR scaling – inflated scaling of some major tests in the market may provide (i) unreliable results and (ii) unfair advantage
- Developing complementary descriptors (e.g. for intercultural competence, content learning, the world of work) and frameworks for putting them into practice

5) Innovation

Innovation not simply as educational applications of science & technology but also as innovative teaching approaches, methodologies, and materials.

Actions seen as (i) an investigation looking towards the future, (ii) monitoring & reporting on current and ongoing experimentation, (iii) implementation & dissemination.

- Implementation of technologies
- Application of new or emerging techniques (syllabus, methodologies, testing & assessment)
- (S) The need for scientific underpinning of FL teaching & training
- Coping with a decreasing willingness – especially among young people – to enter long-term learning processes such as language learning
- Relevant teacher training for innovation (not only ICT)
- Breaking down the barriers between mainstream and language education

6) Quality Assurance & Quality Control

- The perceived need from both state & private sectors for an over-arching organisation which lists the quality QA bodies and differentiates the others. This would help get rid of “the cowboy award bodies” which are beginning to proliferate in the FE and LT sectors. A key issue for consumers and governments alike.

7) International Minimum Standards

- Recognition of international minimum standards for FLT TT qualifications
- Guidelines and agreed practice re visa issuance and QA FLT sectors
- Standards for:
 - learning programmes
 - teaching methodologies
 - assessment – including country specific requirements

8) Networking

How do we, as a profession, actually network with each other?

- Moving towards pro-active management of the Network by ECML
- Optimising project management
- A forum for discussion of/clarification of policies relating to language teaching/learning/testing
- Separate from - but linked to - a clear overview of relevant CoE/ECML (and if possible EU) projects, completed, in progress, and planned
- ECML partial agreement: concerns about access to ECML, and medium-term programmes in particular, by citizens resident in non-signatory states

ICC

Challenge A

Responding to fast changing environments

- Technical development
- New forms of delivery
- Changing expectations

Challenge B

Life-long professional development

- Common development frameworks
- Flexible, relevant development offers (e.g. how to use Twitter in educational contexts)
- Self-assessment and certification where needed

Challenge C

Promoting diversity (what do members have in common and how do they differ from one another)

- Quality, services, products appraised on their own terms of merit
- Common international frameworks and guidelines – adaptable to local contexts
- Mutual professional respect (conditions created to ensure mutual respect for diversity)

CercleS

- Language Policy
- Management of University Language Centres
- Teacher Training, Teacher Education, Staff Exchange;
 - Need for modules specifically designed for university language teachers (not for language teachers in general) Innovation
 - Need to set up portals for teachers: Research and development in language teaching
 - Metastructure of the various associations needed Testing and Assessment, certification, evaluation
 - Efforts focus on mutual recognition and harmonisation of the certificates issued by languages centres to facilitate mobility (creation of a network, harmonisation of exams)
- ELP / CEFR
- Less widely spoken and less widely taught languages
- Languages for specific purposes
- Enhancing motivation for multilingualism and diversity
- Continuity in language learning provision

CEL/ELC

Concrete burning issues

- **Development and implementation of institutional language policies, strategies and practices** (all sectors of education)

- Definition of reference points that will allow institutions to develop their own specific policies / strategies / practices
- **The role of languages in the internationalisation of higher education (HE) in Europe**
 - Internationalisation vs. the regional / national / European dimensions of HE
 - Definition of reference points
- **Core qualifications to be acquired by future language teachers / to be expected of practising teachers** (all sectors of education)
 - Special needs: early language learning; higher education; management of linguistic and cultural diversity
- **Language learning and multilingual and multicultural competence for economic performance and sustainable employability** (all sectors of education)
 - Development of sets of descriptors anchored in CEFR
 - Languages to be included in career tracking
 - Exploitation of linguistic potential of migrants
- **Qualitative aspects of multilingualism, including the aspect of multiliteracy**
 - A new understanding of multilingual competence / plurilingual profile
 - Importance of competence in 1st language(s)
 - Importance of language education as a prerequisite of meeting translation and interpreting needs
- **Accelerated language learning**
 - Inter-comprehension
 - "Difficult languages"
 - How to reach B1 reasonably quickly
 - The role of ICT
- **What future for modern languages degree programmes?**
 - Definition of learning outcomes for applied language components of ML programmes
 - Towards multilingual communication
- **Overview of cases of successful and innovative use and implementation, and of the development of the scope of the CEFR and the ELP** (all sectors of education)
 - By way of monitoring
- **Languages for social inclusion**
 - What role for the different sectors of education?
 - What works and what does not?
 - Instruments designed to facilitate social inclusion
- **Identification and description of learner qualifications facilitating lifelong language learning** (all sectors of education)
- **CLIL revisited**
 - CLIL at different levels of competence and in different sectors of education
- **Tools and instruments – and their applications - designed to facilitate smooth transitions from one sector to the next**
- **Development of European reference level descriptors for major non-European languages**
- **Complementing the Council of Europe's Country Profiles – the impact of national / regional policies on attitudes towards languages and language learning, and on national / regional language capacity**

- **Find ways of bringing the host of relevant and useful policy documents and project reports available to the attention of**
 1. Policy-makers and decision-makers
 2. Educational institutions
 3. Practitioners
 4. Experts engaged in projects in the fields of language learning and language teaching
- **Encourage the launch of research projects designed to address new challenges in the field of language learning and teaching**

ALTE

- **Access to citizenship and knowledge of the national language – role of language testing and assessment in decisions made by governments**
- **Supporting multi-lingualism**
 - raise awareness of the value and opportunities of Europe's linguistic diversity;
 - encourage the removal of barriers to intercultural dialogue and social inclusion;
 - achieve the strategic objective for every European to communicate in two foreign languages in addition to one's own
- **Promotion of assessment literacy among language education professionals**
 - Bi-annual ALTE meetings
 - International conferences
 - Specialises training – professional development programme

EALTA

- to promote assessment literacy in language education at all levels and for all assessment purposes
--> need for continued general competence building
- to promote professionalism in assessment and testing on a continuous basis, i.e. to promote good practices in all testing and assessment activities
--> need for a systematic approach to doing research and development work on language testing and assessment, in order to strengthen the knowledge base for dealing with perennial and emerging challenges related to testing/assessment of/in/for all language education. EALTA's annual conferences and presentations on the website are intended as a forum for sharing new knowledge.
- training/information in/about language testing/assessment provided for all stakeholders: pupils/students, teachers, parents, administrators, policy makers, general public and for professional language testers/examination bodies.
- key challenge in the next years: to promote EALTA's Guidelines for Good Practice as a tool for enhancing overall assessment literacy.

Ways in which EALTA is seeking to promote competence building on a continuous basis:

- several concrete projects can be initiated by its members on their own and co-operatively
- pre-conference workshops
- colloquia
- EALTA's new summer school activity

3. "Action points"

Possible/desirable joint actions/initiatives/events that each partner would like to suggest for the Network to undertake in the near future are presented below.

Language Policy Division

- An online platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/langeduc/le_platformintro_EN.asp) has been launched at the "Languages of schooling" conference in June 2009. The platform should ultimately become a dynamic evolving resource built up by a community of practice within the member states. The Forum partners are invited to consult it and provide feedback, where appropriate;
- the First Policy Forum on all languages in education, languages for education in a plurilingual and intercultural perspective (Geneva, 2-4 November 2010) will bring together all the different strands of the Language Policy Division's work. The ECML's work should also feed into this event in a visible way;
- a project (February 2010) will look into how the European Language Portfolio could include all languages of schooling and mother tongues.

The Council of Europe's draft education programme 2010-2014 "Education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic culture"

- will look at how the right to education could be further protected and promoted, giving all children access to quality education;
- project 1B within the programme: *Language policies and the right to education for social inclusion* draws its philosophy from the fact that access to education represents a fundamental human right and good quality education represents a prerequisite for social cohesion, social inclusion, democratic citizenship and intercultural dialogue. Language education is at the very basis of this right, as developing adequate linguistic abilities enables citizens to have unrestricted access to good quality education;
- the project coordinated by the Language Policy Division will look at the language competences a learner brings into the language education system and the support needed to develop these further in order to benefit fully from his or her education.

European Centre for Modern Languages

- Awareness-raising: value of language skills, benefits of linguistic diversity and individual plurilingualism
- Linking research findings to educational practice
- Promotion of the concept of plurilingual and intercultural education
- Approaching assessment of plurilingual competences

Multilingualism Policy, Directorate General for Education and Culture, European Commission

Areas to be followed up:

Early Language Learning (ELL)

- OMC (Open Method of Coordination) group on ELL
- Piccolingo information campaign on ELL

Employability and Competitiveness

- The "business platform"
- OMC group on business and employability
- Information campaign for small and medium sized enterprises

Social inclusion and integration

- Civil society platform
- Learning of the language of the host country
- Support for the language of origin of immigrants

Language teaching

- Improving initial and in-service language teacher training
- Removing obstacles to teacher's mobility
- Developing models for teaching classes of multiple linguistic backgrounds

Remarks concerning the idea of a web portal:

- the updating of a multilingual portal is a major challenge
- attractive features such as a forum require supervision
- work on meta-level (keywords etc.) should be done to attract also non-initiated people
- Based on the experience of the European Commission, the feasibility of such an initiative should be checked in terms of resources and knowledge

OLBI

- Creation of CCERBAL (Canadian Centre for Study of Bilingualism and Language Policy) focusing on three principal fields of research interest
 - 1) language learning, teaching and testing;
 - 2) individual and societal bilingualism; and,
 - 3) language policy and planning.
- Annual OLBI / CCERBAL Conferences
 - Research dissemination
 - Fostering national and international partnership and collaboration
- OLBI Papers / Les Cahiers de l'ILOB: the OLBI publication to disseminate research
- OLBI Promotion and Development Office

AILA

- See "burning issues"
- Involve non-experts – the business sector and policy makers
- Conference where national teams are invited – how do we interpret policy in different contexts
- Providing support for teachers rather than overwhelming them with new things – resources are limited so focus is required

FIPLV

- The ECML could be the vehicle through which to unite the stakeholders to have more successful impact on the (political and financial) powerbrokers?
- Increasing collaboration in projects
- Joint events on policy issues
- Mutual promotion of activities

EAQUALS

- The establishment of a policy forum to clarify Council of Europe/ECML policies, compare with EU policies, and identify issues relevant to the Network
- Overview of projects (especially current and future) in the light of policies and priorities (a way of organising the 'observatory' function referred to below and in the previous section).

The **encouragement / fostering of implementation of ongoing projects**

- Descriptors for YL (possibly differing cognitive capacities / age bands) urgently needed
 - possibly by non-native speakers
- CEFR – vertical applications
- ELP vertical applications
 - Redesigning the ELP
 - Europass is not enough

The ECML as an **observatory / point of reference** and as a potential **laboratory** for testing applications of policy

- For all European projects concerning CEFR, ELP etc
- ELP sector-specific applications / implementations

- Observatory / initiator of longitudinal studies e.g. CLIL impact studies urgently required
- Disseminator for informing / updating all stakeholders:
- Idea of developing a knowledge portal; the ECML should
 - take a proactive role
 - understand what the needs of the stakeholders are (e.g. subject teachers)
 - play a mediator role
 - lead people to interesting sites
 - reference made to the work of the Max Planck Institute relating to scientific journals

Ongoing:

As part of the preparation for this meeting EAQUALS carried out a consultation process with its wider membership involving different questionnaires to all members, associates and inspectors. One interesting result is that there are emerging specific, yet different, concerns depending on whether the respondents are

- (i) accredited members – i.e. schools or institutions that voluntarily undergo quality control inspections,
- (ii) associate members (Associations of Schools, Examination Boards, National Cultural Agencies, and University or Research Institutes), or
- (iii) individual members who are part of our professional network, such as inspectors. The collation of this information is underway at present and any relevant outcomes will be made available to the Professional Network Forum.

ICC

see "Burning issues"

- Idea of developing a platform for the different stakeholders;
 - Purpose: the platform should help interested parties to find and connect relevant information about practice in the individual contexts

CercleS

see "Burning issues"

- Interest in issues related to motivation
 - for teachers: how can they create motivation at all levels
 - for students of languages for special purposes
 - to identify needs and 'pay-offs' related to learning a language for special purposes
 - explore ways to communicate them appropriately to the different stakeholders

CEL/ELC

Identification of broad issues of common interest and concern (on the basis of the burning issues presented)

- Creation of working groups devoted to the exploration of the broad issues identified (involving experts from various Network members)
- Separate meetings of working groups to identify concrete topics and themes that might be included in future ECML projects

Broad issues to be taken up by Network working groups

- Institutional, and regional / national policies on the learning and teaching of languages.
- The linguistic and intercultural implications of the internationalisation of public and private organisations.
- Towards a comprehensive and inclusive concept of individual multilingualism and multilingual education.
- New policies, strategies, methods and practices for acquiring multi-lingual competence in a lifelong learning perspective. Preparation of future and practicing language teachers for new challenges in language education – in a lifelong learning perspective.

ALTE

- Partners are welcome to attend ALTE events and become involved in the work of Special Interest Groups, such as Language and Migration (LAMI) and Young Learners
- Mutual attendance at events organised by partners can be expanded
- Exchange of information about activities and forthcoming events would be mutually beneficial
- Joint activities for the European Day of Languages

EALTA

- Exchange of information by setting up a suitable mode of communication.
- Joint production of publications/documents/reports on an ad hoc basis.
- Joint surveys of relevant topics by distributing/allocating responsibility for specific domains (use EALTA membership list).
- Ad hoc joint conferences on topics of shared interest.

4. "ECML projects"

4.1. ECML medium-term programme of activities (2012-2015): overview

Susanna Slivensky informed the partners that the ECML is in the process of preparing its next medium-term programme of activities (2012-2015).

The programme should address current key issues, be complementary to the work of the Council of Europe Language Policy Division and other related programmes at the Organisation, and avoid any kind of "competition" (e.g. between languages), and enhance further co-operation with the Centre's partners. Furthermore it should be based on a large-scale consultation process and, in particular, on the expertise of the Professional Network Forum.

The draft timetable proposed for the preparation and launch of the Centre's 2012-2015 programme was presented as below:

October 2009 - February 2010	On-going discussions with Bureau and Governing Board: principles and orientations for next programme; input as to key issues and priorities in member states; framework of ECML activities
November 2009	Initial input from the ECML project coordinators and programme consultants on the Call
January 2010	First meeting of the Professional network forum coordinated by the ECML which will discuss institutional cooperation and possible themes for the next programme
February - September 2010	Drafting of Call for proposals/tender
July 2010	Input from the National Nominating Authorities and Contact Points on the Call
October 2010	ECML Governing Board meeting to discuss and approve Call
November 2010	Publication of Call for proposals/tender
November 2010 - March 2011	National events to raise awareness of the Call
May 2011	Deadline for submissions
June - September 2011	Short-listing of proposals by Secretariat, selected experts and Bureau
September 2011	Governing Board meeting prior to <i>Empowering language professionals</i> conference to approve new programme
November 2011	Central event for coordinators of new projects
January 2012	Publication of new programme

4.2. Suggestion of issues to address

The participants were invited to suggest issues/topics/themes to be taken up by international project teams within the next ECML medium-term programme of activities (2012-2015) - specifically those with high potential for involvement/contribution from their organisation/institution.

They made the following suggestions:

- To look into the issue of **language education and social cohesion**
 - To take an **integrated, holistic, coherent (including intergenerational) approach** to language education encompassing all forms of teaching and learning, contexts at all levels
- To examine language education **needs emerging from increasing migration movements** in Europe:
 - the role of languages in mobility
 - how to relate these needs to the **notion of territorial principle**
 - To **avoid discrimination**: migrants and migrant children should not be singled out.
 - The issue is too complex to be reduced to such a label (e.g. 3rd, 4th generation immigrants who are not migrants but suffer discrimination and restricted access to education).
 - Social cohesion and inclusion is being built by the minority AND majority population. Consequently the needs of the majority should be taken into account.
- **English is posing a threat** to other languages/to the learning of other languages and it is inhibiting the language learning of native English speakers: are there means to counter this threat?
- Work towards **increasing the influence/impact** of the good work of the ECML by reaching out to groups not so far reached by the ECML, in particular to policy makers.
 - Examine **ways to promote it appropriately** among experts and the general public;
 - Attract newcomers, non-experts and people who are not convinced that reform in language education is necessary for all: parents, politicians and other groups of society. At least some of the results should be relevant and understandable for the non-expert audience.
 - Focus on broad issues of common interest
 - Focus on realistic aims. Avoid working for a specialist audience only.
 - Identify stakeholders and their needs more clearly and empower them by addressing issues relevant to them in an appropriate language – most ECML projects are not self-explanatory to non-experts (e.g. decision makers are often non-experts); provide meaning to non-experts (e.g. where were the ELP and the CEFR successful? What benefits? Where did they fail? Why? Who will implement them in practice? Conditions of success?)
 - Transfer information into knowledge
 - Work towards closing the gap between research, teaching and policy making
 - Involve non-experts directly in project work (envisage a team with mixed professional background representing several sectors of stakeholders)
 - Focus on mediation between experts and public, between research, policy and practice: introduce efficient and appropriate means of communication of relevant issues to stakeholders outside the expert community
 - Aim to change policies in institutions
 - Much of dissemination is related to awareness-raising
- Highlight the need for language teachers to take account of and benefit from research
- Place emphasis on **concrete tools** that are practical and easily understood by users and that incorporate elements of good practice that has proven feasible

- Act as a point of reference, as a laboratory of applied policies
 - Provide support for CEFR and ELP implementation
 - Function as a mediator between different stakeholders
- Put flesh to the bones: Help putting plurilingual policies into practice
- Respect the existence and reality of diversity: quality, services and products are appraised in specific (not: objective) contexts
- Focus on two key areas: early learning + higher education
- Ensure continuity of ECML work and products
- Partner involvement: take into account the planning and budgeting schedule of the partner organisations
- Testing and assessment tools (equivalency issues between existing tools, i.e. (CEFR / Canadian Language Benchmark / ACTFL)
- Internationalization of programmes: accreditation and quality control issues
- Continuation of the LACS project, possibly expanded to disseminate the activity of Network members to a broader audience
- Holistic approaches to language development: drawing on children's linguistic repertoire as a resource for themselves and others
- Value of communications in various languages to support motivation to learn a wider range of languages and the development of supportive policy
- Development of lifelong language learners
- Plurilingual education and teacher training – practical ideas
- Increasing the role of parents in language education – role of parents and communities
- How can teachers have a voice in policy making? Role of the associations in national contexts
- Evolving technologies
 - (i.e mobile technology; social networks; virtual world and avatars such as second life, etc..) and teacher training programmes
 - Involving the learners with mobile technologies – all ages actively involved in learning
- Create a platform enabling exchange of good practice
- Projects should be based on an appropriate balance between research and practice
- Explore ways to bridge the gap between professionals, policy makers and the larger public

Possible candidates for "ECML projects":

Formative [possibly guided] self-assessment in FL teaching & learning

- Collecting & collating research
- Monitoring applications for impact & efficacy
- Moving beyond the measurement culture
- Dissemination of knowledge – regarding implementations, products, tools, services, and systems

The need for **scientific underpinning** of FL teaching & training

- Establishing a multi-disciplinary & inter-disciplinary forum as the interface between the scientific community (including neurosciences) and the practical world of FL teaching

Suggested themes

- Motivation
 - for plurilingualism
 - for learning languages for specific purposes
 - for lifelong learning
 - lifelong professional development
 - teaching / learning compulsory languages vs non compulsory languages
 - link between languages for specific purposes (with clear return on investment) and non purpose languages - relevance of languages as motivation factor (because it is relevant, it becomes motivating)
- Demographic factors and impact on language education (e.g. intergenerational communication gaps)
- Plurilingualism beyond bilingualism, continuity of learning more than one FL
- Teacher mobility
- Enhancing student-teacher communication
- CLIL impact study
- Literacy (media, assessment etc.)
- Focus on testing/assessment
- Provide an integrated and coherent framework for language education which encompasses all forms of language education at all levels; need to focus on shorter-term projects and to prioritize modern languages
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: the ECML could support projects which co-operatively develop tools that help to implement good practices in its use for a variety of purposes. Such co-operative projects can address:
 - innovative aspects of language teaching policies
 - curriculum/syllabus planning
 - teacher education
 - instructional materials
 - needs of special groups
 - teaching practices
 - testing/assessment
 - strong emphasis on concrete tools that incorporate elements of feasible good practices
 - more specific content focuses:
 - plurilingualism
 - intercultural communication
 - sociocultural pragmatics

5. "Individual expert perspective" on the potential and added value of the Professional Network Forum on Language Education: Comments by Henry Widdowson

Henry Widdowson highlighted the following aspects related to issues in language education:

1. Focus on burning issues

Considering the enormous range of interests and the number of projects conducted in the field of language education presented during the event, the Professional Network Forum should concentrate more on what burning issues might be for the future. This would avoid that diversity leads to dissipation.

2. Bridge the gap between theory and practice

Pronouncements of policy makers are ambitious and highly ideological (what should unity/diversity be, not what they are in reality). There have to be policies, but compromises always have to be made to make these policies a reality. But how can ideology be made a reality?

3. Grasp the concept of languages and foreign languages

The concept of language is difficult to grasp. Linguistic expressions relate to this question of the gap between rhetorics and reality, the ideal and the real. The notion of multilingual, plurilingual, intercultural competence refers to a collection of identities. For example "inter" relates to a relationship, but also to a difference. This raises the question of how far does it make sense to talk in terms of different languages (official languages, regional languages, modern languages etc.)?

The concept of foreign language is even more difficult to grasp. The term "foreign" implies that there is a mother tongue. The categorisation "foreign languages" includes different attitudes (deeply rooted in history and associations), different relationships towards the language which they refer to, language distance, former resemblance, value of learning the language...

Though foreign languages are equal ideologically, we have to be aware that they cover very different realities and have different power.

4. Identity

Considering that lesser used languages should be protected and promoted, the following questions may be raised: Why are these languages lesser used? What are they used for? What makes a language live? This leads to the issue of identity and community: you need a language for a larger community, which can be different from the one used by a small community. How far can the interests of smaller identities be simultaneously respected within larger communities? Do we seek to restrict identity to a smaller community and hinder their access to the larger community? This involves, among others, issues of the language of primary and secondary socialisation.

5. Measurement and assessment

This diversity issue raises the question: "what is a language"? Teaching and testing are always based on the norm of native speakers. For example, the success of a learner of French will be measured in terms of how effective the person can communicate compared with a French native speaker. The fact that the established norms always refer to the communicative effectiveness of a native speaker and that quantitative aspects are more weighed than qualitative aspects (e.g. how much can I learn vs. what can I do with French?) raises the question of how far these norms are effective, what is really needed to communicate, which aspects carry most communicative weight.

6. Strategy of 'linguaging'

In reality, a foreign language learner does not have to use the language s/he learns as a native speaker uses it. But the conditions should be set up to allow the learner to learn further for gradually approximating the level of native speakers. This needs a shift from the notion of competence in a language to the notion of strategic "linguaging" and the awareness of how a language works. Thus linguaging enables to exploit linguistic resources strategically and provides the basis for lifelong learning.

7. Assessment in the context of migration

There seems to be a general feeling of acceptance with regard to policies that just have to be implemented. However, policies may be questioned, in particular in terms of ethical issues: How far should we be concerned with ethical issues (that always exist)? Whose problems do we want to solve? Are these real problems?

III. Closing statements

The participants unanimously congratulated the ECML for the initiative to hold the meeting.

The meeting enabled better understanding of the working context and the respective competences of the European and international associations represented - which all deal with policy, research and practice to a different extent - and to become more aware of the common issues shared within the Professional Network Forum and to gain inspiration for further collaboration and actions.

Johanna Panthier appreciated the idea of extending the work of the Language Policy Division in the field of plurilingual competence assessment to associations of non-language professionals (e.g. teachers of geography, mathematics etc.).

Furthermore she reminded the partners that almost all international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) represented within the network forum have participatory status at the Council of Europe. They may therefore be involved in defining Council of Europe policies, programmes and actions in particular as observers to the Organisation's Liaison Committee and INGO thematic groupings.

Concretely INGOs can be invited to provide, through their specific activity or experience, expert advice on Council of Europe policies, programmes and actions. They are invited to public sittings of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, as well as to other activities organised specifically for them, seminars, conferences, colloquies of interest to their work according to the relevant Council of Europe rules.

Organisations with participatory status are encouraged in particular to keep themselves regularly informed of Council of Europe activities and developments in standards; provide information, documents or opinions relating to their own field(s) of competence on matters which are under consideration or which could be addressed by the Council of Europe; and disseminate information on Council of Europe standards, instruments and activities, as well as information from the INGO thematic groupings, to their members, on a regular basis.

(for further information see Council of Europe website:

http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/participatory_status/Summary.asp#TopOfPage

The partners agreed to disseminate the meeting results among their own networks where appropriate.

The next network meeting should be more focused, with the agenda based on a number of issues extracted from the presentations and discussions of this first meeting, and allocate more time for reflection.

Waldemar Martyniuk warmly thanked the partners for their active collaboration and highlighted the future steps

- a news article will be published after the network meeting (see <http://www.ecml.at/news/NewsDetails.asp?n=405>;
- the ECML's website will provide a new section dedicated to the ECML Professional Network on Language Education; this will provide the documents of the first Network Forum with the permission of all partners;
- the ECML will send the draft flyer presenting the network and distributed during the meeting to each partner for their feedback;
- the ECML will draft a 'Graz Declaration on Language Education 2010' (based on information provided under "Burning issues" and during discussions); the proposal will be sent to the partners who will be invited to give their feedback; the final declaration will be publicised on the ECML website;
- taking stock of the challenges presented during the meeting, the ECML will examine the feasibility of future actions and the best ways to handle these; an action plan will be drawn up on this basis.

APPENDIX I**ECML Professional Network Forum on Language Education**

1st meeting (Graz, 7 January 2010)

Agenda

09.00 – 09.15 Chair: Waldemar Martyniuk	Opening Welcome to ECML (Waldemar Martyniuk) Introduction of participants The purpose and the agenda of the meeting (Waldemar Martyniuk)
09.15 – 10.15	Session 1a: “Council of Europe and Languages” Presentation of the Department of Language Education and Policy, Directorate General for Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language Policy Division, Strasbourg (Johanna Panthier) 2. Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Strasbourg (Alexey Kozhemyakov excused, presentation by Waldemar Martyniuk) 3. European Centre for Modern Languages, Graz (Waldemar Martyniuk) Discussion
10.15 – 10.45	Session 1b: “European Union and Languages” Presentation of Unit C5, Multilingualism Policy, Directorate General for Education and Culture European Commission (Harald Hartung) Discussion
10.45 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 – 12.30 Chair: Susanna Slivensky	Session 2: “Reaching out” Presentations of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute – OLBI – University of Ottawa, Canada (Aline Germain-Rutherford) 2. AILA (Bernd Rüschoff) 3. FIPLV (Terry Lamb) Discussion
12.30 – 14.30	Lunch break
14.30 – 16.15 Chair: Michael Armstrong	Session 3: “Language teaching” Presentations of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EAQUALS (Peter Brown) 2. ICC (Rolf Schärer) 3. CercleS (Johann Fischer) 4. CEL/ELC (Wolfgang Mackiewicz) Discussion
16.15 – 16.30	Coffee break
16.30 – 17.30 Chair: Waldek Martyniuk	Session 4: “Testing and Assessment” Presentations of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ALTE (Berit Halvorsen) 2. EALTA (Sauli Takala) Discussion
17.30 – 18.00	“Individual expert perspective”: Comment by Henry Widdowson
18.00 – 18.45	Closing statements
19.15	Reception/Dinner

APPENDIX II

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MODERN LANGUAGES, GRAZ

ECML Professional Network Forum on Language Education

1st meeting (Graz, 7 January 2010)

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