



Language Policy Division

**CONFERENCE ON**  
**LANGUAGES OF SCHOOLING AND THE RIGHT TO PLURILINGUAL AND**  
**INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION**

**Council of Europe, Strasbourg, Agora Building, Room G01**

**From 8 June 2009 at 2.00 p.m.**  
**Until 10 June 2009 at 1.00 p.m.**

***Introduction to the Conference***

**Conference aims**

This event follows two conferences held in 2006 (Strasbourg) and 2007 (Prague) which launched the project on 'languages in education – languages for education' and reported on its progress, including the intention to develop a web-based 'platform' of resources and references. This 2009 conference presents the culmination of the first phase of the project and addresses key issues related to the language(s) of schooling. It has four key aims:

- i) to develop further understanding of plurilingual and intercultural education as a right, particularly in relation to the use of descriptors in the context of the languages of schooling and the needs of disadvantaged learners
- ii) to launch the platform in its first phase to support the development of plurilingual and intercultural education
- iii) to determine how participants will be able to contribute to the development of the project after the conference
- iv) to formulate concrete resolutions related to the realisation and future development of the project.

**Background**

Language plays a crucial role in ensuring cultural diversity, democratic citizenship and social inclusion. The right to quality education depends on the acquisition of adequate proficiency in the language of schooling in order to ensure access to the school curriculum. At the Strasbourg conference which launched the project the complexity of language as subject was considered and the importance of language in other subjects (referred to there as 'language across the curriculum') was addressed. That conference also examined ways in which countries might be supported in their work on these dimension of language learning. The Prague conference developed the languages of education perspective further (particularly in relation to intercultural and plurilingual education) and looked in more detail at some of the elements that a reference instrument might contain by examining concrete examples. It also addressed the needs of socially disadvantaged learners. Since the Prague conference, the working group has been developing a web-based set of reference documents and resources that represents the culmination of the first phase of the project.

## **Conference structure**

### Day One

**Introduction.** After the official opening, the presentations will summarise developments since the last conference in relation to the Council of Europe's policies and priorities, and provide an overview of the conference.

**Presentation of the philosophy and purpose of the platform.** Three brief presentations will describe (i) the plurilingual and intercultural perspective underlying the project, (ii) the approach that has been adopted to present and structure the content of the web platform, and (iii) the significance of the project in relation to the needs of disadvantaged learners.

**Case studies.** Case studies drawn from three different countries will be used to provide concrete examples of how the platform relates to specific contexts. The starting point for the case studies will be recently completed Language Education Policy Profiles which will then be related to the different dimensions of the current work.

**Report on the questionnaire and country examples.** A report will be provided on the results of a questionnaire (focused mainly on descriptors) distributed to a small number of countries before the conference. Representatives from two of the countries who responded to the questionnaire will present examples of specific descriptors from their different contexts. This will lead to a plenary discussion on the links between language as subject and language(s) in other subjects.

### Day Two

**The use of descriptors.** After opening presentations on languages of schooling and intercultural education, and on the relationship between descriptors in curricula for language as subject and for language(s) in other subjects, the **group work** will focus on concrete examples of descriptors in order to further discussion of their use, formulation, and inter-relationship.

After reports on the group work, a presentation will provide an overview of a range of conceptual and practical issues related to the use of descriptors. This will be followed by concrete examples of how different approaches to producing descriptors have operated in different countries, including in relation to early second language learning.

The second day will conclude with presentations which will provide examples of specific approaches to producing descriptors for use in a range of varied contexts.

### Day Three

#### **Disadvantaged learners**

Representatives from other European Organisations have been invited to present current work on the integration of migrants' children. This will be followed by examples of how the school curriculum has been developed to support disadvantaged learners in specific contexts.

#### **Future developments**

A presentation on the role of standards in curriculum development, teaching, learning and assessment will be followed by final presentations which will provide an overview of the conference, a re-assertion of key Council of Europe values underpinning the project, and a

discussion on the future direction of the project and ways in which the platform might be developed.

**Further information**

Delegates are advised to book a hotel room as early as possible due to a large number of events taking place in Strasbourg at in June. Practical information and an indicative list of hotels are offered on the [website](#) (see section Events / Practical Information)

Further details, including the programme and seminar documents will be made available in due course on the Language Policy Division website: [www.coe.int/lang](http://www.coe.int/lang)

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