



# 6<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO SEMINAR

Moscow State Linguistic University – 29 September – 1 October 2005

Report by David Little, Seminar Co-ordinator



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**Sixth European Seminar on the  
European Language Portfolio  
Moscow State Linguistic University  
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## Thursday 29 September

### Official opening

**Irina Khaleeva, Rector of Moscow State Linguistic University**, welcomed participants to the sixth European seminar on the European Language Portfolio. She was happy that the seminar was being held in Moscow, and aware of the honour and responsibility thus conferred on Moscow State Linguistic University, which because of its experience and expertise in the study of language and related areas of research, plays a central role in the development of language education policy in the Russian Federation.

Policy and decision makers, teachers and researchers from forty-five countries were taking part in the seminar. Between them they provided a good overview of our multicultural world. The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attached great importance to the seminar: they were both committed to promoting mutual understanding among peoples, and they saw the ELP as a tool for doing this.

On behalf of the ministry, the academic staff of Moscow State Linguistic University, and herself Irina Khaleeva thanked the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe for bringing the seminar to Moscow and for supporting the ELP as a pan-European project. We have reached a new stage in European cooperation, and each one of us needs to participate by attending workshops like this one. To adopt an English expression, the future burns bright for Europe. Professor Khaleeva concluded by wishing all the participants a successful seminar.

Professor Khaleeva then read a message of greetings from Andrey Fursenko, Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. He welcomed the participants from Council of Europe member states and many regions of Russia. Underlining the importance of the role played by Moscow State Linguistic University in linguistics and language policy, he noted that the Russian Federation attaches great importance to the implementation of the ELP, which addresses issues central to the concerns of the Council of Europe: respect for linguistic and cultural diversity, the promotion of cultural and linguistic tolerance, plurilingual competence, and education for democratic citizenship. From 2006 to 2010 the Ministry of Education and Science will have a project aimed at creating the conditions that will allow Russian to become the key language of the Russian Federation. The project will contribute to the integration of the member states and the development of Russian political, educational and cultural space. The minister concluded his message by wishing the participants a successful seminar, much fruitful debate and new friendships.

**Alexander Gruschko, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, brought greetings from the Minister. He noted the importance of the seminar for all involved. It is the mission of linguists to bring nations together: their work is the main tool for achieving the international goals set by politicians. The choice of Moscow as the venue for the 2005 European seminar on the ELP was recognition of the contribution that Russian linguists – including Irina Khaleeva and her colleagues at Moscow State Linguistic University and associated institutions in other states of the Russian Federation – have made at European level. Committed to the promotion of mutual understanding, the Russian Federation attaches great importance to foreign language teaching in schools at all levels: without a command of foreign languages Russia will not be able to address the important issue of globalization. The Vice Minister appreciated that the seminar would bring an international sharing of knowledge and expertise that would help to further Russia's integration in the European and global communities. He concluded by congratulating all concerned on the start of the seminar, wishing the participants success in their work over the next three days and a continuation of fruitful contact in the future.

**Eleonora Mitrofanova, Head of the Centre for International Scientific and Cultural Cooperation**, under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the seminar to Moscow. The development of a pluralist democratic society in Europe depends on young people, and it is important that they are aware of their cultural heritage. The European Language Portfolio can help them to develop the knowledge and skills they need for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and thus can contribute to the building

of a European humanitarian space. The Centre for International Scientific and Cultural Cooperation sees the promotion of the Russian language in the world as one of its main areas of activity. Currently it is helping 10,000 people to learn Russian in 15 countries, and the work of the ELP is very relevant to this effort in a rapidly changing world. Eleonora Mitrofanova concluded by wishing the seminar every success in achieving its goals and expressing the hope that it would generate more recommendations to politicians, managers, and administrators.

**Joseph Sheils, Head of the Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg**, said that the Council of Europe was very happy that the Russian Federation was hosting the sixth European seminar on the European Language Portfolio. On behalf of the Council of Europe he welcomed delegates from many regions of the Russian Federation and from other Council of Europe member states. He thanked the authorities of the Russian Federation, especially the Ministry of Education and Science, for their help in organizing the seminar, and colleagues at Moscow State Linguistic University for all their preparatory work. The ELP has found fertile soil in the Russian Federation, where it is used in more than 50 regions. The Russian translation of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* was one of the first, which made the CEFR available also in other countries where the Russian language is known. In addition the Russian Federation had been very active in the project relating assessment to the common levels of the CEFR, and the next Council of Europe programme would include work on the Russian language. The Council of Europe also had joint programmes with the European Union in various Russian regions; for example, a seminar had been held in Vladivostok in September 2005, a second was to be held in another region in October, and a third in Moscow also in October (this would be on the CEF, and colleagues from Chechnya had been invited).

We could afford to congratulate ourselves on the progress that had been made since the end of the ELP's pilot phase (1998–2000) and its launch at the beginning of the European Year of Languages (2001) seventy-four models had been validated in four and a half years. Joseph Sheils acknowledged the Council of Europe's debt to the Validation Committee for all the work it has done, both in validating ELPs and in developing policy and helping to generate, for example, the documents for this seminar. This year the first electronic ELP had been validated. This was an important development, as was the launch of Europass, with its link to the ELP. Joseph Sheils also stressed the importance of the ECML's ELP-related projects, which are designed to support ELP implementation.

Participants in the seminar, whether ELP contact persons, experts or advisers, needed to develop a co-ordinated approach. There were important texts to understand, and gaps in the work that needed to be identified so that they can be filled. The seminar was also giving particular attention to the intercultural dimension. Since the Council of Europe was founded in 1949 there have been only three meetings of heads of state. At the third, held in Warsaw earlier this year, the heads of state requested that the Council of Europe continue to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. They also invited the Council of Europe to refocus its activities around the core issues of human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law. 2005 is the European Year of Democratic Citizenship, and this seminar should be seen as a contribution to that campaign. In 2006 there will be a youth campaign against racism and intolerance, and in that too the intercultural dimension of the ELP can play a role.

Joseph Sheils concluded by saying that the annual European seminar on the ELP is one of the most important events in the Language Policy Division's calendar. He wished the participants a successful and enjoyable seminar and renewed his thanks to the Russian colleagues for all they had done to prepare the ground.

## **Introduction to the seminar: report on progress since Madrid; overview of programme content and working methods – David Little**

The Madrid seminar in 2004 had three main concerns: (i) strategies for further dissemination and implementation of the ELP and for validating what has been achieved; (ii) plurilingualism; and (iii) self-assessment based on the ELP and teacher assessment based on the CEFR. In addition we were given an overview of the ELP in Spain, and show-and-tell sessions focussed on electronic ELPs (The Neth-

erlands, ALTE/ EAQUALS) and the development of an ELP-compatible assessment framework (Ireland). There was also an exhibition of ELPs and ELP projects. The Madrid seminar concluded (i) that further work was needed on self-assessment grids/descriptors and language passports for primary and lower secondary learners and (ii) that further development was needed in relation to reporting intercultural experience, learning how to learn, plurilingualism, the descriptor bank, guides for teachers and developers, studies of the ELP in use, and other support materials.

Early in 2005 a new Validation Committee was established, with the following members: France (Francis Goullier, chair), Hungary (Gabor Boldiszar), Ireland (David Little, vice chair), Italy (Gisela Langé), The Netherlands (Dick Meijer), Poland (Barbara Głowacka), Russian Federation (Irina Khaleeva), Spain (José-Joaquín Moreno), Switzerland (Peter Lenz). Gareth Hughes, Wolfgang Mackiewicz and Rolf Schärer are consultants to the committee.

In November 2004 the outgoing Validation Committee considered 3 new ELPs and registered new linguistic versions of 2 previously validated models, while in May 2005 the incoming Validation Committee considered 11 new ELPs and revised versions of 2 previously validated ELPs. Altogether 2 ELPs were validated unconditionally, 9 were validated with conditions, and 5 were returned to their developers for further work.

Since the Madrid seminar no further work has been done on learning how to learn, plurilingualism, the descriptor bank, guides for teachers and developers, studies of the ELP in use, and other support materials. However, a discussion paper has been prepared on age-appropriate self-assessment grids and descriptors/checklists (David Little) and a proposal for an intercultural autobiography has been developed (Michael Byram).

The main issues to be presented and discussed at the Moscow seminar are:

- ELP development, with a particular focus on (i) the annotated *Principles and Guidelines* and other key documents, and (ii) the discussion paper on age-appropriate self-assessment grids and descriptors/checklists.
- The intercultural dimension: (i) a case study (Russian Federation) and (ii) the proposed intercultural autobiography.
- Varieties of ELP experience: show and tell.
- The ELP in the Russian Federation.

The seminar also gives us an opportunity to bring ourselves up to date. The exhibition shows the progress of ELP projects in many different countries and educational contexts, and the show-and-tell “carousel” and the presentations by Russian colleagues on Saturday morning provide an opportunity to learn more about a wide variety of ELP-related projects

## **The ELP 2005–09: issues of policy and strategy – Joseph Sheils**

The Language Policy Division’s medium-term programme 2006–09 comprises three projects:

1. *A new project on policies and standards in language(s) of education.* A survey has already been carried out in a number of member states to identify the language(s) of education, the main elements of the curriculum, and the competences and standards that are required for learning across the curriculum. In due course this project may develop a new kind of CEFR. It will pay particular attention to the importance of social cohesion and the needs of disadvantaged groups in societies, including migrant populations. A small seminar will be held in November 2005, to which representatives will be invited from the countries for which the Council of Europe has developed language education policy profiles. An open conference will then be held in Cracow in April 2006, followed by a forum in Strasbourg.
2. *Language education policy profiles.* To date profiles have been developed for ten countries, two further applications will be considered by the Steering Committee for Education in the near future, and at least one more application is on the way. Each profile offers a holistic study of language education in the country in question, focussing on local concerns as elaborated in the country report. A team of experts nominated by the Council of Europe visits the country for one week and compiles a report intended to assist reflection and self-evaluation by the country in respect of lan-

guage education policy development. This leads to the production of a final report (the “country profile”) prepared by the Council of Europe and the local team.

3. *European proficiency standards for transparency and quality*. This project has three sub-components:
  - a. *Relating language examinations to the CEFR and related projects (“How does my B1 relate to your B1?”)*. CD ROMs and videos/DVDs are now available with calibrated examples in English and French; similar materials are in preparation for German, Spanish and Italian, and other languages will be added in due course.
  - b. *Language requirements, based on the CEFR, for adult migrants seeking residence or citizenship (new)*. Pioneer work has been undertaken by German, Swiss and Austrian experts, and work is in progress in other languages. Although language courses and language tests are increasingly a requirement for citizenship, there is great variation in the levels aimed at. The use of ELPs for migrants is very important here.

*A common curriculum framework for Romani (new)*.

As far as the ELP is concerned, the Language Policy division has the following objectives:

- To support the development of material to fill “gaps”, including age-appropriate descriptors (primary and secondary education) and tools for describing and reflecting on intercultural competence.
- To elaborate assessment guidelines based on the CEFR and the ELP, for ministries, examination bodies and teachers.
- To encourage the development of electronic ELPs and to promote the ELP via Europass. This may have implications for ELP documentation. There are 25 Europass agencies, and ELP contact persons should get in touch with them, make them aware of their ELPs, give them copies, and ask them to make users of Europass aware of the existence of their ELPs. Informal contacts with the EU commission suggest that Europass may in due course be made available in Russian.
- To reinforce teacher education via the ECML. Note that the EU’s European Profile for Language Teacher Education refers to the CEFR; also that ECML has recently launched a related project.
- To explore convergences with language(s) of education/mother tongue(s).

Other ELP-related objectives include:

- To develop illustrative reference material calibrated to the CEFR levels and reference level descriptions.
- To ensure synergy and complementarity with EC projects (an item bank for receptive skills; language proficiency indicator).

The expected results of this work are:

- An increase in the number of countries implementing validated ELP models in all sectors.
- An enriched descriptor bank.
- Templates for recording and reflecting on intercultural competence.
- Guidelines for linking self-assessment and formal assessment by others (internal and external).
- DVD + CD ROM + Manual for 6 levels of CEFR and Reference Level descriptions, for a range of languages.
- A compendium of good practice.
- Teacher training and implementation developed with ECML.
- Proposals for mother tongue/language of education competences.
- Recommendation to the Committee of Ministers on plurilingual education, including the ELP.

The Council of Europe hopes that by 2009 the basic work will have been done. It then becomes a matter of sustaining the dynamic and supporting high-quality implementation backed up by appropriate research.

## **The ELP reference documents (Francis Goullier)**

Francis Goullier began by greeting all members of the Validation Committee, past and present, who were attending the seminar, and paid tribute to Pavel Cink, chair of the EVC from 2000–2004.

The ELP is a process supported by a certain number of texts that have three main functions: (i) to define the formal criteria governing the ELP; (ii) to help developers to create the best documents possible; and (iii) to make explicit the procedures of the Validation Committee. Different documents address different moments in the development of ELPs. Two texts are concerned with the development of ELPs (the *Guide for ELP Developers* by Günther Schneider and Peter Lenz and the *Principles and Guidelines*), while three are concerned with ELP validation (the *Rules for Accreditation*, which define how the Validation Committee does its work; the *Guidelines for the submission of ELPs for validation*; and the application form for validation).

Inevitably there is a tension between the ELP as a developing dynamic and the attempt to regulate. This problem confronted the Validation Committee from the beginning. On the one hand it was impossible to have a single ELP for all countries, which explains the rich variety of ELPs that now exists; on the other hand, it is necessary to maintain a common core that guarantees the ELP's European character. When the EVC evaluates an ELP it must try to understand the context in and for which it has been developed; this coincides with the Council of Europe's principle of respect for diversity. At the same time, however, each ELP must be anchored in the CEFR's principles, levels and scales. For example, the EVC insists on the principle of plurilingualism, declining to validate ELPs that focus on the teaching/learning of just one language; it also insists on the centrality of the intercultural dimension. Each ELP is thus an attempt to achieve a balance between local needs and traditions and the European character of the ELP.

It is also the Validation Committee's function to facilitate further evolution of the ELP. For example, as more electronic ELPs are developed it will probably be necessary to adapt and/or expand the key texts. Already the committee has overseen the development of a number of tools designed to support the development and implementation of ELPs: the ELP web site, the bank of descriptors, the learning-to-learn and intercultural templates (which all developers should be familiar with), and the annual European seminars.

In all this, one document is particularly important: the annotated version of the *Principles and Guidelines*, which reflects four preoccupations of the EVC: (i) to warn developers against common problems, e.g. lack of internal coherence, or the need to use official translations (available on the ELP web site); (ii) some developers' evident ignorance of key principles, e.g. the need to make room for all languages that the ELP owner knows and uses, the languages to be used in the rubrics, and the individual owner's responsibility for his/her ELP (among other things this means that the teacher should not correct the learner's self-assessment); (iii) descriptors – the Validation Committee needs to know (and the ELP user has the right to know) how the descriptors were elaborated; (iv) ELPs developed in 2005 should not look like ELPs developed in the very early days – we have made progress since then.

In conclusion, it is worth drawing attention to the role of national authorities/contact persons as regards the validation of ELPs designed for use within compulsory education and emphasizing the importance of being fully explicit when completing the application form for validation. It is also important to note that the whole of any ELP submitted for validation must be translated into English or French to ensure that the Validation Committee has full access to it.

## **ELPs for younger learners: age-appropriate self-assessment grids and descriptors/checklists (David Little)**

A key function of the Self-Assessment Grid is to make explicit the link between the ELP and the CEFR (see *Principles and Guidelines*, paragraphs 2.6 and 3.2). Self-assessment cannot be undertaken on the basis of the SAG alone, however: learners also need checklists (see CEFR, p.25). Two reasons have been given for developing age-appropriate versions of the self-assessment grid: (i) accessibility (younger learners find it difficult to understand the Self-Assessment Grid) and (ii) behavioural appropriateness (the descriptors in the Self-Assessment Grid do not adequately reflect the behavioural options available to younger learners). Given that self-assessment depends on checklists, it may be that younger learners do not need to use the Self-Assessment Grid at all: its presence serves rather to inform others of the relation between the ELP and the common reference levels of the CEFR. The issue

of behavioural appropriateness on the other hand requires a response.

The discussion paper describes two projects to develop Self-Assessment Grids and descriptors/checklists for younger learners, the Swiss IEF project and the Irish project for non-English-speaking pupils/students (English Language Proficiency Benchmarks). The Swiss project began by collecting descriptors from ELPs, textbooks and tests. It then validated the descriptors qualitatively in teacher workshops and made a selection to cover six CEFR sub-levels: A1.1, A1.2; A2.1, A2.2; B1.1, B1.2. After that the scaling of descriptors was validated empirically and selected descriptors were reworded as “I can” statements for use in the Swiss lower secondary ELP. Finally a new (age-appropriate) Self-Assessment Grid was developed on the basis of the checklists. The Irish project began by bringing the Self-Assessment Grid and illustrative scales from the CEFR into interaction with (i) the official curriculum and (ii) the results of classroom observation. Scales were then developed as follows: global benchmarks of English Language Proficiency (effectively an age-appropriate and domain-specific version of the Self-Assessment Grid); scales of language quality (derived from CEFR); scales related to recurrent themes in the primary curriculum/main subject areas of the post-primary curriculum. These latter scales were used to generate checklists for the ELPs developed for primary and post-primary learners of English as a second language. Whereas the IEF project developed its SAG and descriptors using the same empirical techniques as were used to develop the common reference levels in the CEFR, the Irish project did not validate its scales/descriptors empirically, which means that the relation between the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and the CEFR remains a matter of faith. It would, however, be possible to add descriptors from sources like the Irish project to empirically validated descriptors like those developed by the IEF Project.

Another important question is: In terms of the common reference levels of the CEFR, how far can younger learners be expected to progress? Some ELPs designed for younger learners (primary as well as lower secondary) include the Self-Assessment Grid in the language passport and a table that allows learners to rate themselves from A1 to C2. This is defended on the ground that in most school systems there are learners whose language proficiency is unusually well developed for reasons that have nothing to do with language learning at school. But this is to overlook the fact that the CEFR’s action-oriented approach rests on a distinction between communicative proficiency (using language to perform tasks) and linguistic competence (the internalized knowledge on which language use depends). In order to perform the tasks specified for B2, C1 and C2 one needs not only a high level of linguistic competence but a level of educational achievement and/or professional experience that has no equivalent in the lives of children and adolescents. On the other hand, it is possible to perform the more limited tasks specified for A1, A2 and B1, which do fall within the behavioural range of younger learners, with native or near-native linguistic competence. These considerations suggest that age-appropriate adaptation of the common reference levels should be confined to A1, A2 and B1. After all, the common reference levels were conceived as a “universal” scale of L2 proficiency, and if we adapt the upper scales for younger learners they will inevitably diverge from the CEFR.

Finally, how can we help younger learners to recognize and show that they are making progress when they may take years rather than months to achieve a CEFR level? Essentially there are two answers to this question: either sub-divide the levels (as in the Swiss IEF project) or develop (part of) a curriculum within one level (as in the Irish project, which provides more than 60 descriptors for each of the three levels it is concerned with).

## **Group work to prepare posters, comments and questions for plenary feedback**

The participants worked in four groups as follows:

English-speaking Group 1 (chair: Mike Makosch; rapporteur: Maria Stoicheva)

English-speaking Group 2 (chair: Viljo Kohonen; rapporteur: Gisela Langé)

French-speaking Group (chair: Gaby Kunsch; rapporteur: Gilbert de Samblanc)

German-speaking Group (chair: Gunther Abuja; rapporteur: Heike Speitz)



Discussion was guided by questions attached to the presentations by Francis Goullier and David Little.

## **Plenary feedback (round table: Francis Goullier, David Little, Rolf Schärer) – Chair: Joseph Sheils**

### ***Question 1***

a) *The explanatory notes in the right hand column summarize the Validation Committee's interpretation of the **Principles and Guidelines** as it has evolved since the first ELPs were validated; they constitute the Validation Committee's case law. Are these notes explicit enough to provide effective help for ELP developers?*

b) *Do you think there is a sufficiently clear and effective complementarity between the ELP reference documents?*

### **English-speaking Group 1**

a) The annotations are useful but would benefit from concrete examples. Use of a case law approach based on precedent is not common across all member states. It is important to clarify the difference between what is an absolute requirement and what is a good idea or suggestion.

b) There is too much similarity between the documents, and some rationalization would be helpful. Frequently these documents are only accessed after the event so that they become clearer after the process but do not lead the way. It would be helpful to have a more accessible document to consult during the development process.

### **English-speaking Group 2**

a) Not many members of the group were really familiar with the annotated *Principles and Guidelines*.

b) The ELP reference documents are clear and complement one another. However, visits of experts would be very helpful for new ELP developers. A better information flow from Strasbourg to ELP contact persons is needed. Perhaps contact persons should have their own network for the dissemination of important information. They might also establish networks in their own countries. Not many members of the group knew about the ELP-related ECML projects. The *Principles and Guidelines* should be translated into national languages. Many developers do not understand exactly what happens in the validation process. Mid-April and mid-October would be better deadlines for submitting ELPs for validation. It is important to put more pressure on authorities to make them support the ELP.

### **German-speaking Group**

a) There were not many ELP developers in the group. Electronic portfolios are under consideration in several countries; these are likely to call for an adaptation of the *Principles and Guidelines*. The application form for validation was not particularly problematic for group members, but the difficulties came after validation: the implementation process, teacher education, etc. proved more difficult.

b) The ELP reference documents complement one another appropriately. But in the application form for validation there is always room for interpretation of the questions. One example is the question relating to implementation: it is difficult to look so far ahead and predict problems. The role of the Council of Europe was discussed. On one hand there are recommendations but on the other, countries are free and it's not clear how far countries need to follow the recommendations.

### **French-speaking Group**

a) The group agreed that case law is very useful.

b) The application form should be kept separate but the other documents could be grouped together. It is important to produce documents for teachers for each ELP model. The production of a guide for teachers might be a condition for the validation of any ELP.

### **Round table**

David Little wondered whether the concrete examples recommended by English-speaking Group 1 should take the form of further text or illustrations drawn from ELP models. Maria Stoicheva replied that the group had both things in mind; suggestions and recommendations without examples are too abstract for developers, especially if they are new to the ELP. David Little thought that a set of guidelines for developers might usefully accompany the existing documents; e.g., a list of absolute requirements and a separate list of good ideas.

Rolf Schärer noted that the guidance provided by the documents needed to be supported by personal expertise and networking. It would be useful to look at the possibility of developing a website to make that more dynamic.

Francis Goullier argued that it is not the task of the reference documents to say precisely how ELPs should be developed down to the last detail. The whole ELP project is a dynamic process, and the goal is to have specific developers take this into account and work on it. In some respects the documents are not absolute, and there is a difference between demands and recommendations. There are mandatory elements – the “common core” of the ELP – but developers should also seek to benefit from good practice in validated ELPs. The problem with providing concrete examples is that they may be interpreted as absolute demands. As for the matter of case law, the Validation Committee is not engaged in jurisprudence, but it is concerned to explain what is required and to take well-founded decisions. Note that the committee distinguishes between conditions (which must be fulfilled) and recommendations (which need not be followed).

Joseph Sheils suggested that there may be a need to update the *Principles and Guidelines*, though any changes would have to be approved by the Steering Committee for Education; there might be a discussion paper on electronic ELPs in the coming year. He reminded participants that the Language Policy Division asks for 60 copies of each validated ELP for distribution to ELP contact persons and to the ECML in Graz. He said that he had taken note of the need for a newsletter.

David Little asked why mid-April and mid-October were thought to be more appropriate submission deadlines. Yvonne Vrhovac replied that these dates fit better with the demands of the school year; in particular, it is not easy to finish piloting before June, and it takes time to process and absorb the results. Rolf Schärer recalled that this issue had been discussed many times in the past, and every discussion concluded that there are conflicting interests.

Referring to the suggestion that the development of a guide for teachers should be a condition for validation, David Little argued that the best kind of teachers’ guide comes as a result of experience over several years. Viljo Kohonen added that guidelines for piloting might later become guides for teachers.

## **Question 2**

a) *In the past ELP contact persons have expressed a need for language passport templates for (i) primary and (ii) lower secondary learners. Does this need still exist?*

b) *Within compulsory education the term “younger learners” can apply to (i) primary and (ii) lower secondary. Is it possible to establish a bank of descriptors that can be drawn on for both these groups, or do we need two separate descriptor banks? Please give reasons for your answer*

c) *The discussion paper identifies two ways of making it easier for younger learners to recognize and report their progress: (i) subdivide levels A1, A2 and B1, and (ii) provide a large number of descriptors for each level and encourage learners to gradually shade in the cells on their self-assessment profile in the language passport. Is either of these approaches preferable to the other? Please give reasons for your answer*

d) *The common reference levels of the Common European Framework were designed to describe proficiency in second and foreign languages. To what extent can the descriptors that define the common reference levels be used to capture the ELP owner’s capacities in his/her first language?*

### **French-speaking Group**

a) A language passport template for primary learners is a good idea but it should not be imposed on everyone. The Self-Assessment Grid should be adapted for young learners, but teachers should also have the self-assessment grid from the CEFR.

b) The group thought that there were two possible approaches: to develop either two separate banks of descriptors or one bank with so many descriptors that ELP developers could make an appropriate choice.

### **German-speaking Group**

a) The group supported the idea of a passport template for young learners but suggested that the obligatory elements should be as few as possible and the detail of design and content should be left to developers. The group noted that the language passport boosts the self-confidence of young learners and is very important for pupils from migrant families. The language passport needs to provide a profile of second/foreign language skills.

The group found questions 2b) and 2c) very difficult to answer. It wondered how important these issues are, given that the ELP is not intended for testing. The group suggested that the validity of new descriptors is not as important as how learners get to a new level of proficiency working with them.

### **English-speaking Group 2**

a) The group wondered what is meant by the term “young learners”. The distinction between primary and lower secondary does not apply in all countries. The group opted for 11- and 11+ and agreed that there is no need for a “strong” language passport for learners in the former group.

b) The group saw a risk in sub-dividing the levels if teachers saw them as a scale. Perhaps it was better to develop a large number of descriptors. In any case younger learners would have difficulty understanding the scales – maybe A1 should be represented by icons or pictures.

c) The group believed that there should be two descriptor banks because children change so much in their developmental years. The age group below 11 is not in urgent need of attention; priority should be given to the age group above 11. The group was in favour of developing large numbers of descriptors rather than sub-dividing levels, which might make things too difficult for learners. The question had been raised: How can we combine CEFR levels with national assessment systems? This topic needs further work.

d) The group did not discuss this question in detail, but there were strong feelings against the idea of using the CEFR for mother tongue. A document should be prepared describing first language skills.

### **English-speaking Group 1**

a) This group felt that there is no need for a language passport template for primary learners, first be-

cause a passport is needed for mobility and children are less mobile than other age groups and secondly because the philosophy behind the language passport is objective-setting. At this age we are dealing with short-term objectives and this creates a contradiction. The group thought there was probably room for a language passport template at lower secondary level provided it is age-appropriate. At local level, having a common template can stimulate learner motivation and enhance the ELP's reporting function. It can be problematic when several ELPs exist in one country or area.

b) A single descriptor bank would be unrealistic as this is an age of great cognitive development. The group suggested that age-appropriate descriptors may be valid for a maximum of two years. The idea that some dramatic change takes place between primary and secondary is artificial. There may be pedagogical differences between the two levels but they may not require different instruments. The group recommended the development of two or more flexible descriptor banks with different content for different age groups. Alternatively, it would be possible for descriptors to have the same content but to be formulated in different ways according to the age of the learners.

c) Sub-dividing levels makes it easier to show parents that their child is making progress. However, sub-dividing levels and developing large numbers of descriptors are not mutually exclusive options. Progression is not linear, and more descriptors would reflect this situation and help with motivation

d) The group found this question too complex to address in 10 minutes: it includes dialects, mother tongues, "father" tongues, etc. Because of this complexity no consensus was possible. The majority view was that the descriptors are not appropriate for the definition of first-language skills, though they could be used in various contexts to encourage language awareness and reflection.

### **Round table discussion**

Francis Goullier noted that whereas several years ago there was a strong feeling that we need an age-appropriate Self-Assessment Grid, that issue has not been raised in this discussion. Can we now conclude that the Self-Assessment Grid is compulsory in every language passport except those designed for the very youngest of learners? That certainly enhances the reporting function of the ELP.

David Little was struck by the variety of feedback, which included a number of interesting ideas that the Validation Committee would need to take into account when deciding how to support the development of descriptors for younger learners.

Gisela Langé thought that levels need to be sub-divided for teachers but wondered whether this is necessary for learners as well. In some cases it would be more positive to enhance the bank of descriptors so that it can be used in whatever way is appropriate for those working with the ELP. Templates should not be an imposition but should be used flexibly.

Rolf Schärer thought there was a consensus that the language passport is often very important for young learners, who find it motivating to compile their own language profile. It has also been suggested that the language passport can make young learners feel like "citizens of Europe". At the same time, language passport templates for younger learners should be neither too complex nor prescriptive, and they should be adaptable to local contexts. Given that a lot of cognitive development takes place between the ages of 7 and 12, Rolf Schärer agreed that we should attempt to have at least two sets of descriptors.

David Little recalled that earlier discussion of ELP templates had raised fears that they would become obligatory. But this had never been the intention. The learning-how-to-learn and intercultural templates, for example, were available to be used as they are or adapted in any way that seems appropriate to a particular ELP model. The Validation Committee is always concerned to maintain a balance between the European dimension of the ELP and the requirements of the local educational culture.

Lid King felt that his group had not revisited previous discussions; David Little's discussion paper was very helpful in the matter of interpreting the CEFR descriptors.

On the issue of applying the CEFR descriptors to first-language skills, Viljo Kohonen thought that their linguistic dimension should be taken for granted, but that bridges could be built to other competences – sociolinguistic, intercultural, pragmatic, etc. This could create an important point of contact between mother tongue teaching and foreign language teaching.

**Friday 30 September**

**The intercultural dimension – Chair: Lid King**

**A case study: the Russian Federation (Irina Khaleeva)**

Russia is the homeland of 160 nationalities or ethnic groups – 80% of the inhabitants are Russian and 20% belong to other nationalities and ethnic groups. These latter include 60 numerically small peoples, e.g., the Nenets (more than 430,000), Evenks (30,000), Akhvakhtsi (about 5,000) in the North Caucasus. The state language is Russian. Russia's main linguistic groups are Slav (Russians), Turkic (Tartars, Chouvashes, Yakuts, Balkars, Khakassians), Finno-Ugric (Mari, Mordvinans, Udmurts, Komi, Karelians), Caucasian (Chechens, Ingushes, Ossetians, Kabardinians, Avars), Mongolian (Buryats, Kalmyks), and Paleo-Asian (people of Siberia and the Far North). In addition there has been an increase in immigration by Armenians (from 0.53 million to 1.13 million people), Azerbaijanis (from 0.34 million to 0.62 million people), and Tajiks (from 0.04 million to 0.12 million people). There are 14 federal ethno-cultural autonomies, over 100 regional and about 300 local ethno-cultural autonomies, and more than 1,000 different public organizations (figures from early 2003). There are 30 state languages and 5 official languages (Dolgan, Chukchi, Evenk, Even, Yukagir)

Russian has a long history of contact with Turkic languages (over 1500 years), Komi-Permyak languages (7–8 centuries), and the Evenk language (since the early 16th century). Its lexicon shows the influence of the genetically related Ukrainian and Byelorussian languages (*varenik*/curd of fruit dumpling, *doyarka*/milkmaid, *pobratim* /twin city, *malevat*/to daub), and of Turkic, Finno-Ugric and Romanian (*kovsh*/bucket, *bakhcha*/melon plantation, *degot*/tar, *yantar*/amber, *dengi*/money, *bazar*/market place, *shashlik*/pieces of mutton roasted on a spit, *pelmeni*/dumplings)

The Russian mentality to a great extent lacks a prevalent ethnic colouring; it has developed as a result of interaction of various ethnic mentalities. In 1927 the Russian philologist N. Trubetzkoy developed an approach to the study of mentalities that takes account of the opposition (or compatibility) of the collective (“symphonic”) ethno-linguistic identity and the individual ethnophone. In this model the basic concept is “personality”, which is applied both to single persons and to groups of people (the so-called “symphonic personality”). In Trubetzkoy's terms every nation is a “symphonic personality” made up of “single-person personalities”, “many-person personalities”, a “single-nation symphonic personality” and “many-nations symphonic personalities”. When applied to the Russian Federation this theory helps us both to understand and to shape an approach to maintaining and building a national self-consciousness while at the same time encouraging the different peoples in the country to be proud of their heritage, culture and language.

According to official data, in 2003–04 the Russian Federation had 6,260 schools (9.9% of the total) that used a language other than Russian as the medium of instruction, and in 10,404 schools the native (non-Russian) languages were taught as school subjects (16.4%). After Russian the most widely used languages are Tatar, Bashkir, and Chouvash. The least used languages are Latvian, Modern Greek, Georgian, Estonian, Kazakh, and Polish, as well as the languages of some numerically small indigenous peoples. Today, about 20% of Russian schools teach mono-ethnic students through a language other than Russian.

Russia has five different kinds of schools: “national schools” where instruction is provided in the native tongue from 1st to 11th grades, and the Russian language is offered as a separate subject (Tatarstan, Bashkiria, Sakha (Yakutia)); “national schools” where instruction is done in the native tongue and Russian is a separate subject up to the 7th or 9th grades, with senior classes being taught through the Russian language (rural schools in Touva, Buryatia, Chouvashia, Kalmykia, schools in the North Caucasus, and the urban schools of Tataria and Bashkortostan); “national schools” where the native tongue is the medium of instruction and Russian is a subject up to 4th grade, after which Russian becomes the language of instruction (the urban schools of Touva, Kalmykia, Adygeia, North Ossetia-Alania, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Mariy-El, Mordovia and others); “national schools” where Russian is the language of instruction from the 1st to the 11th grade and there is a more profound study of the native tongue and culture (Karelia, Mordovia, Mariy-El, Udmurtia, Komi,

Komi-Permyak Administrative District, schools where children of numerically small indigenous peoples of the Far North, Siberia and the Far East study); and “national schools” where the native tongue is the medium of instruction from the 1st to the 11th grade, after which Russian is the language of instruction (traveling schools beyond the Polar Circle, traveling family schools of Yamalo-Nenetski Administrative District and other territories). Currently 31 written languages are used in Russian schools, 13 at primary level, 6 in the compulsory stage of 9-year school, and 12 at secondary level.

ELPs developed in other countries adopt different strategies for developing intercultural competence: encouraging the acquisition of a certain amount of linguistic and cultural knowledge, observing cultural differences, and describing linguistic and intercultural experiences with native speakers. The Russian ELP models proceed from a broader definition of culture, viewing language not only as one of the means of transmitting culture but also as a major independent component, reflecting a certain way of perceiving and understanding the world and a key to understanding culture seen as the interaction of different mentalities. Russian ways of coping with cultural diversity may differ in many respects from Western Europe, and that is why a dialogue in the context of the Council of Europe is so important.

### **General introduction to intercultural competence and its relation to communicative competence; specific introduction to the issues involved in assessing intercultural competence – Michael Byram**

Communicative competence is made up of linguistic/grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and other elements that differ from theory to theory. It continues the tradition of deferring to the native speaker, e.g. van Ek (1986): “If a learner is unaware of the associations that certain manners of expression may carry for a speaker of the target language this may lead to disturbance or even breakdown of communication.” This implies that the native speaker has some kind of special authority.

Intercultural competence is made up of a number of different dimensions: knowledge of “otherness” (*savoirs*), attitudes of curiosity/openness (*savoir être*), skills of interpreting/relating (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery/interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), and critical cultural awareness/critical activity, which is part of citizenship education. Intercultural competence is modelled not on the native speaker but on the “intercultural speaker” whose role is that of interpreter and mediator and who occupies a decentred perspective.

Communicative competence aims at integration into the target language community. Consider, for example, the descriptor for C2 interaction: *Can interact with ease and skill [...]. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turntaking, referencing, allusion making, etc.* What exactly is the meaning of “natural” here?

Intercultural competence aims at being a “mediator”, decentring from one’s own community without integration into the target community and without imitating or deferring to the native speaker. Success in developing intercultural competence is measured in terms of the interpretation of one culture to another, the explanation of contrasting interpretations of reality, and the resolution of conflicting opinions: all things that have to do with how difference is dealt with.

If we define assessment as allocating something to a point on objective scale and evaluation as judgement against subjective criteria (including values), then success in assessment depends on the competence of the assessee as measured on a scale, whereas success in evaluation is a matter of engagement with “the other”, which depends on the assessee and the other, and judgement depends on moral and ethical views? The question immediately arises, Whose moral and ethical views?

The distinction between assessment and evaluation can be illustrated by reference to an English examination at a German university about the situation in Northern Ireland. The professor described the situation as colonialism, while the student expressed racist views against Catholics at C2 level. What grade should the student be given? From the perspective of communicative competence he merits C2, but from the perspective of intercultural competence (e.g. attitudes of curiosity and openness) he may deserve to fail. Or one might ask: Who fails? The student or the professor?

The proposed autobiography of key intercultural experiences seeks to operationalize key theoretical concepts via critical questions in the autobiography itself. These focus on the learner's

- *attitudes and affective capacities*: acknowledging the identities of others (“Who else was involved?”), respecting otherness (“The other people ... way of seeing it ...”), tolerance for ambiguity (“I can see similarities and differences ...”), and empathy (“The other people ... “);
- *behaviour*: flexibility (“How do you see your responses now?”) and communicative awareness (“I needed to talk/write ... differently...”)
- *cognitive capacities*: knowledge (“I already knew things about ...”), knowledge discovery (“I tried to find out by asking questions ...”), interpreting and relating (“the experience involved something ... similar ...”), and critical cultural awareness (“There were aspects ... I approve/disapprove...”).

The autobiography is intended for adolescents and adults, because it presupposes (i) a certain level of reflection and self-analysis and (ii) the language level required by the questions.

The workshop has two purposes: (i) to enable participants to become more familiar with the proposal; and (ii) to discuss if and how the autobiography can be integrated into the ELP. For the first 45 minutes participants should work in pairs to complete the autobiography, asking themselves the question, Is a mentor necessary/appropriate? Then, for an hour, participants should form groups to discuss

- Moral/ethical issues, e.g.: Problems of encouraging judgements? Focus on difference/negative experience? How to choose the experience?
- Pedagogical issues, e.g.: Reporting versus pedagogical function? Which language – one's own, the target language, or a mixture of the two? Again, is a mentor necessary?
- Technical issues, e.g.: Usefulness of suggested points/questions? Ambiguity of questions? Length and time for completion?
- General response?

The workshop groups were the same as on Thursday.

## **Plenary feedback (round table: Irina Khaleeva and Michael Byram) – Chair: Lid King**

### **French-speaking Group (Gilbert de Samblanc)**

- The autobiography is rich and interesting, but it focuses on personal and potentially delicate issues. The group wondered whether all this reflection is appropriate to a language portfolio; there is after all non-linguistic as well as linguistic culture.
- There is a need for great tact in formulating the questions. One word shocked the French group: “judgement”, though this probably arises from a problem of translatability.
- The group could not decide whether a mentor is necessary, but thought such a procedure would be appropriate for adolescents if they wanted it.
- The learner should decide on the language of the autobiography, but L1 may be most appropriate.
- Where would this autobiography fit in the ELP?

### **English group 2 (Viljo Kohonen)**

- How can we take reflection beyond personal experience? This is a pedagogical issue.
- The ELP is the property of the learner. This raises the problem of what to write in the ELP, what to share and what not to share. How should the teacher mediate such personal issues?
- How are we to reconcile personal development with the development of linguistic proficiency? The group expressed some concern about using up precious lesson time, unless stories can be shared in the target language. What is the role of personal growth in becoming an intercultural person? Clearly the teacher plays an essential role in stimulating intercultural awareness, which is an issue for teacher training.

### **German-speaking group (Heike Speitz)**

- Negative experiences are the ones that we remember; hence the tendency to emphasize difference.
- The discussion paper lacks an introduction; it also needs a follow-up.
- Teachers need training if they are to promote the development of intercultural competence.

- The proposed autobiography has pedagogical functions of awareness raising and reflection, but what comes next? What do we do with experiences that touch us as individuals.
- The choice of language should be left to the users, because there are different learning situations.
- The group reacted quite critically to the way the questions were formulated (they are quite complex and metalinguistic). Some of them are very dependent on an intercultural partner. The group wondered what the reference points were for describing the reactions of oneself and others

### **English-speaking group 1 (Maria Stoicheva)**

- Moral and ethical issues: “judgemental” is not the most appropriate word in this situation; “reflection” would be better. How deep should analysis go? The group found the questions to be neutral.
- “Mentor” is not the right word; “listener” might be better. The “listener” should be chosen by the “subject”.
- Technical issues: there is some repetition/redundancy; the group was not happy with closed questions; the explanatory notes are sometimes too constraining; the request to write could be a hindrance to the activity, making it more complex.
- Crucial issues: age-dependency; the place of interculturalism in the curriculum. The autobiography is useful, but it should not become a formal part of the ELP. Perhaps it could be included as a supplement. It is linked to language learning only if the learner can complete it in the target language. Intercultural competence should be a thread running through language education, not an “add-on”.

In the limited time available for discussion Lid King decided to concentrate on two issues:

(i) *Moral*. Michael Byram argued that how one deals with the moral implications of the intercultural autobiography depends on one’s view of language teaching: interculturalism is important if teaching addresses the whole person. Irina Khaleeva thought that the ELP itself might help to solve the problem for teacher training, though we may need a special bank of descriptors. Joseph Sheils noted that the Council of Europe is developing a bank of descriptors for democratic citizenship; also that intercultural awareness runs across the whole curriculum.

(ii) *Why should the intercultural autobiography be included in the ELP?* Michael Byram thought that the answer to this question depends on how one sees oneself as a language teacher. If language teaching is concerned only with skills, we are not “doing” education. Rolf Schärer wondered whether the autobiography could be used to develop a link between the individual orientation of the ELP and the “symphonic” personality of groups. Viljo Kohonen supported Michael Byram in distinguishing between communicative competence and intercultural communicative competence, which in his view marks a paradigm shift in language education.

## **Show-and-tell**

### **Using the ELP to develop a language learning environment**

Edward Kurlyand

This report described the process of introducing the ELP in the Altai region in the south-western part of Siberia, with a population of 2.7 million, a multicultural community of 110 ethnic groups (90% Russian, 3.9% German, 2.9% Ukrainian). All universities, colleges and schools in the Altai region offer foreign language studies as part of the core curriculum of the Russian Federation, with centrally established standards. In addition, many schools use a special regional component to extend their language programmes. The Regional Education Committee in cooperation with the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Barnaul State Pedagogical University decided to pilot and evaluate the Russian versions of the ELP in the Altai region.

This ELP project was launched in 1998 and involved 180 pupils in five secondary schools and 85 students at three universities. After studying the experience gained during this pilot process, the project team concluded (i) that the ELP is better suited to schools that begin intensive foreign language programmes from primary level, and (ii) that it took longer than they had expected for learners to recognize how they could use the ELP to plan their learning and assess their progress.



State secondary school 69 in Barnaul, which had been very active in the pilot project, was chosen for an experiment that placed particular emphasis on cultural diversity programmes and the exploration of family roots in order to promote respect, tolerance and understanding between different ethnic groups in the Altai region. This initiative proved effective and aroused the interest of teachers of other subjects. It also opened up for the students new prospects of language use and motivated them to apply the principles underlying the ELP to their work in other subjects.

### **The ELP and whole-school language policy**

E. Kuritsina

The ELP project in Vladimir started in 1997 and gave rise to profound changes. Linguistic Gymnasium 23 strives to equip its pupils with a broad education that enables them to understand and take part in today's complex political, socio-economic and socio-cultural world in the Vladimir region, Russia and the world. In order to achieve this goal it is necessary to stimulate the formation of a linguistic personality based on the development of a linguistic mentality. In this process external evaluation and internal self-assessment need to be carefully balanced. The ELP has become a necessary and useful instrument in this endeavour, significantly changing the role of the teachers in the whole educational process and allowing a partnership to develop with the learners. It also became a stimulus for cross-curricular work and relations. One of the most positive effects of the ELP is that it helps develop co-operation in communication, and tolerance and respect towards native and foreign languages and cultures. Another positive effect is that pupils learn how to assess themselves.

Following E. Kuritsina's presentation, pupils from the school gave a performance that illustrated the role played by the ELP both in their classroom learning and in their contact with other languages and cultures outside the classroom. Those seminar participants who saw this performance were so impressed by it that it was repeated in the presence of the Minister of Education and Science at the end of the show-and-tell session.

### **The Russian ELP for philologists**

Kira Iriskhanova

The ELP for philologists was designed to support the linguistic and professional development of language teachers, interpreters and translators. Professionally oriented descriptors are a distinctive feature of the model, which is based on the CEFR and the Swiss ELP model for learners aged 15+. Since its validation in 2002, it has been used by some 150 Russian universities and linguistics departments: 2,841 learners in pre- and in-service training and 159 trainers have been involved. The feedback from trainees and trainers has been generally positive. The following modifications have been suggested for the next edition:

- use classroom teaching activities (e.g. explaining, correcting, commenting, etc.) as headings under which to group the required language competence and scale descriptors;
- revise and rearrange the profession-related language skill descriptors for translators and interpreters in a more logical and user-friendly way;
- provide more space and translate descriptors as far as possible into the languages of the larger ethnic groups of the Russian Federation.

Alexandra, a student of Moscow State Linguistic University, gave an eloquent account of her use of the ELP for philologists and what it had come to mean to her.

## **Soutien à la mise en oeuvre du PEL (impel)**

### **Programme d'activités du CELV 2004 – 2007: Echange d'expériences, d'exemples de bonnes pratiques et d'outils de soutien**

Coordinateur : Hans Ulrich Bosshard (Suisse)

Equipe de projet : Gisella Langé (Italie), Dick Meijer (Pays-Bas), Gabriele Tänzer (Allemagne), John Thorogood (Royaume-Uni), Rolf Schärer (Suisse)

#### **Etat d'avancement Septembre 2005**

**Le point de départ** – 69 modèles de PEL étaient validés en septembre 2005 et d'autres sont en cours de pilotage ou de planification. Le nombre d'apprenants équipés d'un PEL est estimé à plus d'un million. Il existe cependant une variété considérable concernant la structure et l'organisation de la mise en oeuvre du PEL. C'est pourquoi un soutien et une plate-forme pour les responsables de projets de mise en oeuvre sont nécessaires.

**L'objectif du projet** – Collecter et échanger des informations sur les expériences de mise en oeuvre du PEL ; collecter des exemples de bonnes pratiques ; élaborer des outils de planification, de pilotage et de retour d'information afin de fournir un soutien à la gestion de projets de mise en oeuvre du PEL. Ce projet est mené en collaboration avec la Division des politiques linguistiques du Conseil de l'Europe.

**La procédure** – Réunion de l'équipe de projet et de 4 experts supplémentaires (responsables de grands projets de mise en oeuvre du PEL) deux fois par an ; utilisation d'un espace de travail coopératif ; atelier du CELV pour les responsables d'autres projets de mise en oeuvre en Mars 2007 ; rapports réguliers sur l'avancement des travaux dans le cadre des séminaires annuels sur le PEL de la Division des politiques linguistiques (DPL) du Conseil de l'Europe

**Les résultats attendus** – Des instruments de planification, de supervision et de retour d'information sur le site web du PEL du CELV et sur CD-Rom ; un groupe clé d'experts expérimentés capables de conseiller les responsables d'autres projets de mise en oeuvre du PEL ; un nombre considérable de responsables de projets de mise en oeuvre du PEL formés.

**Résultats intermédiaires** – 12 projets de mise en oeuvre PEL ont été étudiés lors de 4 réunions dès le début du projet:

- Les projets des membres du groupe de projet: Lombardie / Italie; Pays Bas; Royaume Uni; Suisse; Thuringe / Allemagne.
- Les projets des expert(e)s invité(e)s: Autriche; Bulgarie; Espagne; Fédération de Russie; Grèce; Pologne, Suède.

Depuis septembre 2004, le groupe de projet est renforcé par Mme Sally Rehorick, Université du Nouveau Brunswick, en mission permanente d'observation au nom du gouvernement Canadien.

Les 12 projets présentés lors des réunions sont d'une variété considérable quant à la structure et à l'organisation de la mise en oeuvre. Une grille a été développée pour structurer les informations et pour comparer les projets de mise en oeuvre. Ainsi, les caractéristiques et les paramètres définis peuvent être démontrés.

Une plateforme d'information interactive sur le site web du projet sera mis en phase d'essai vers la fin 2005.

#### **Adresses utiles**

- Site web du CELV: [www.ecml.at](http://www.ecml.at)
- Site web de projet: [www.ecml.at/mtp2/impel](http://www.ecml.at/mtp2/impel)
- [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)
- Adresse électronique du coordinateur: [h.bosshard@sg.ch](mailto:h.bosshard@sg.ch)

## **Piloter les Portfolios en Croatie – quelques leçons à apprendre**

Yvonne Vrhovac

Après avoir piloté les portfolios dans les écoles de différentes régions de Croatie, nous avons rencontré certaines difficultés surtout avec le PEL pour les jeunes apprenants (notre PEL se rapporte à des enfants âgés de 8 à 10 ans). Les difficultés portaient sur la compréhension des descripteurs et une sorte d'incapacité de comprendre et puis de répondre à des questions se rapportant à la partie interculturelle de la biographie langagière. Après avoir recueilli ces expériences le comité national pour l'élaboration des portfolios a travaillé d'abord sur l'adaptation de certains descripteurs.

1. Nous nous sommes rendus compte que certains descripteurs étaient trop longs et qu'ils posaient des problèmes aux jeunes apprenants de les lire (même en langue maternelle), de comprendre ce qu'ils voulaient dire et puis d'y répondre. Nous avons donc décidé de simplifier langagièrement certains descripteurs (par ex. *I can say thank you, or I can say please*), de les couper en deux (par ex. *je peux nommer trois animaux domestiques; je peux nommer trois animaux sauvages*) ou en plusieurs parties, de les rapprocher du curriculum – c'est-à-dire du contenu du travail effectué en classe auquel les enfants étaient habitués. A certains descripteurs nous avons également ajouté la situation contextuelle dans laquelle les enfants pouvaient utiliser ces descripteurs ou la situation simulée que les enfants ont vécue en classe.

Nous avons remarqué que les enfants étaient très motivés à remplir la partie avec des questions qui portaient sur les éléments interculturels mais en même temps ils étaient incapables de juger ce qui est autochtone et ce qui est « étranger » – ce qui appartient à la culture dans laquelle ils se développent et ce qui appartient à l'Autre. Très désireux de remplir aussi cette partie de la biographie langagière, ils ont été tout à fait déprimés ne sachant pas ce qu'on voulait d'eux. On s'est donc rendu compte qu'il fallait aider les apprenants en leur indiquant certaines catégories où ils pouvaient venir en contact avec ce qui appartient à l'autre comme par ex. les voyages (avec les parents, la famille), la rencontre des touristes (puisque la Croatie est un pays touristique), en suivant les programmes de la télé, en regardant attentivement les éléments dans leur entourage (par ex. la pub, les marques des produits alimentaires, les marques de l'équipement sportif, les magazines et les BDs étrangères, etc.). On s'est rendu compte que les apprenants de cet âge avaient absolument besoin d'être guidés dans la compréhension de ces questions.

2. Les collègues qui enseignent les langues anciennes, le grec et le latin, dans certaines filières se sont sentis un peu vexés car leurs apprenants ne pouvaient pas faire preuve de leurs compétences langagières dans le domaine de ces langues. Après de longues discussions et après avoir consulté les collègues du Conseil de l'Europe impliqués dans la problématique du PEL, nous nous sommes décidés d'inclure dans les portfolios pour les jeunes adolescents (11 à 14/15 ans) et les adolescents (15 à 18 ans) les parties dans lesquelles les apprenants pouvaient faire preuve de leurs compétences en latin et grec – dans les parties qui se rapportent à la compréhension et à la production écrites.

Une fois nos portfolios validés, nous avons encore beaucoup d'efforts à faire en préparant les enseignants au travail avec cet outil pédagogique.

## **Piloting a European Language Portfolio in Denmark: *Min første Sprogportfolio***

Eva Kambskard

In the Danish educational system compulsory schooling (Folkeskolen), from grade 0 to grade 10, is the responsibility of the municipalities, of which there are 275. At the next level of administration are the counties, which deal with upper secondary and adult education, whereas universities and other third-level institutions are taken care of at state level. Until around the year 2000 the national curriculum set up by the Ministry of Education was only advisory for the municipality schools, but today key competences are defined for the different stages in each subject and embodied in the aims and objectives that students and teachers have to work towards. However, teachers are still free in their choice of methodology.

In Denmark there is a strong bottom-up tradition when it comes to experimenting with and implementing new ideas in education at Folkeskole level. Teachers with new ideas are always welcome to describe an innovative project and then perhaps get support from the local authority to try it out, provided they are prepared to share their new experience with colleagues. If their project is successful it may result in an official change of practice. New initiatives often arise in connexion with or as a result of in-service teacher training.

Denmark has 14 counties and in every county there is an Education Centre where teachers can review all the teaching materials on the Danish market, take in-service courses, or get into a dialogue with a subject-specific pedagogical consultant.

Having translated the CEFR and the self-assessment grid into Danish and having written numerous articles about the ELP without receiving any significant feedback or reaction, I felt – as the national coordinator for the ELP in Denmark – that something had to be done. So I called upon the help of a colleague who like myself is a pedagogical consultant for foreign languages, Hanne Thomsen. We are both experienced developers of methods for the teaching of foreign languages, and we felt inspired by the idea of working together with the other language consultants all over the country in a national pilot project. We proposed the idea at the annual meeting of the consultants, our colleagues were enthusiastic, and that encouraged the two of us to sit down in our spare time and develop *Min første Sprogportfolio* for young learners aged 9+, together with a teacher's guide, consulting the Guide for Developers.

We had support from the Education Centres and the Ministry of Education gave a sum of money that almost paid for the lay-out and printing of the pilot edition of 15,000 copies. We introduced *Min første Sprogportfolio* at the annual meeting of pedagogical consultants for foreign languages in April 2004 in Roskilde, where David Little was our keynote speaker. We proposed a programme to introduce the ELP to teachers, a three-lesson course to explain and discuss the background to and use of the portfolio, which the consultants could offer to their teachers locally at their respective county centres. Each colleague received 1,000 copies of *Min første Sprogportfolio*. Letters of introduction and invitations to the teachers together with the teacher's guide were placed in the consultants' common electronic platform for networking. Only teachers who had attended a course could get a free set of portfolios for their classes. Before getting the portfolios the teachers filled in a form giving their name, school and e-mail address, so that we could set up an electronic network. In addition they had to agree to answer an evaluation questionnaire electronically three times during the pilot period of three years. We put the evaluation form on the website of the pilot project [www.ackbh.dk/portfolio](http://www.ackbh.dk/portfolio) and the teachers answered over the summer period. So far the response rate is almost 80 %.

We have not yet had the time to analyse the answers properly, but as a starting point we are very pleased by the high response rate. Every day we have teachers wanting to get the portfolio for their classes. After minor alterations prompted by teacher feedback and our own reflection we will try to get *Min første Sprogportfolio* ready to send in for validation in spring 2006. We do not yet know whether in future the Education Centres will pay the cost of giving the portfolios free to schools or whether the schools will have to pay about one euro per portfolio. But validation will decide whether a new edition will be printed; until then the pilot period continues according to plan.

### **What do teachers want to know about using the ELP?**

Barbara Lazenby Simpson

This presentation was based on information gathered from teachers in Irish primary and secondary schools who are providing language support to pupils whose mother tongue is not English.

Since 2001 language support teachers have been using validated versions of the European Language Portfolio, developed by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT), to help their pupils learn the language of the host community. During a series of in-service seminars delivered by IILT in spring 2005, 427 teachers participated in workshops to identify the type of information that would help them use the ELP with their learners. The teachers had varying degrees of experience in using the ELP, so their feedback was representative of teachers generally.

As a result of the workshop series, it became clear that teachers required information and support of two different types. First, a number of basic questions were raised about ELP implementation, for example, how frequently it should be used, at what point in a teaching cycle, how long it should take to complete, and so on. The second category of information requested was related to specific pages in the ELP and their use. On the basis of this feedback IILT produced a guide to the ELP for primary schools which (i) answers the general questions raised by teachers and (ii) provides concrete examples of classroom tasks and activities designed to engage learners with different pages in the ELP. This guide may be downloaded from the IILT website ([www.iilt.ie](http://www.iilt.ie)).

Participants in the Moscow workshop expressed considerable interest in the process of gathering information from teachers and responding to their needs through the production of an ELP guide. Many of them had not yet reached a stage in ELP implementation in their own countries where it was possible to elicit the sort of feedback described. In effect, the process presented in the Moscow seminar workshop represented a relatively advanced stage of ELP implementation and one which may need to be addressed more generally in the future.

### **The Dutch electronic ELP**

Dick Meijer

The electronic website has been online since 1 September 2004. The show-and-tell session described the development of the website since then and provided information about the implementation projects. In September 2005 there were 7,200 accounts, about 500 of them held by teachers, who have their own teacher's language portfolio. It is expected that by summer 2006 approximately 12,000 pupils and students will have an account.

The ELP website presents the three sections of the ELP (language passport, language biography and dossier) and also describes learning activities which might help account holders to plan their own learning.

The user statistics yield interesting information. For example, although the website explains that it is not necessary to work on the portfolio during the time the learner is at school, it is clear that working on the ELP is a school-based activity. Some statistics were shown in the show-and-tell session, the greater part of which was devoted to a demonstration of the website.

The teachers and learners who participated in pilot projects gave a lot of feedback. The main topics were user-friendliness and ways of monitoring learners' activities. Feedback leads almost automatically to changes, and some future modifications were described in the session. The teacher's portfolio was also demonstrated.

### **CROMO (Crossborder Module): Trilateral cross-border supplement (Austria, Italy, Slovenia)**

Gunther Abuja, Gisella Langé, Janez Skela

This project was launched as an initiative of the Italian authorities, who approached the Austrian Ministry of Education with the wish to cooperate on an educational trilateral project including Italy (the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia supported by the Ministry of Education), Austria and Slovenia. From the very beginning the objective was the common construction of a trilateral ELP to be validated by the Council of Europe. In a first meeting in Udine, Italy, in May 2005, representatives from all three countries discussed possible topics for work and feasible ways of realizing it. After thoroughly discussing the different viewpoints of the three partners and exchanging ideas on possible ELP projects, the group decided to develop a trilateral intercultural "module" that could serve as an additional element to each of the existing ELPs of the participating countries. The "module" was to be developed in close cooperation between national working parties, its members usually coming from schools in the border regions. These schools (with students aged 15+) usually have already had contacts with schools abroad. The concrete work plan and time schedule has not been fixed yet, but the next envisaged meeting in mid-October 2005 will move the project a step further in this respect.

**The general aim of this intercultural module/supplement would be:**

- a) To use trilateral contacts in the border regions for fruitful intercultural contacts.
- b) To enhance school partnerships and mutual exchange (visits, common projects).

**Outcomes**

- A teacher training module, possibly a teacher training pack.
- A guide for teachers.

**Crucial issues discussed during the first meeting in May 2005:**

- Preventing ELP proliferation: the new tool should not be in conflict with existing national ELP development and implementation policies and approaches.
- Preventing competition with existing national/regional ELPs: the new tool should not be perceived as something taking the place of ELPs but as something to enhance their value and link ELP-using cross-border communities.
- Teacher training: teachers should be properly prepared for this new perspective, in that it is not another ELP, but an instrument to raise awareness and foster intercultural activities in schools in border communities.
- Links to national curricula.
- Based on the authentic needs of principal stakeholders, to involve: pupils, teachers and teacher trainers.
- Target languages: English and in particular German, Italian, Slovene – to promote the learning of the three languages spoken in these bordering areas by creating “authentic needs”.
- Raising motivation through activation for students.
- Involving parents.
- Use of ICT also to simulate cooperation between schools: work together using the three languages (look at e-twinning opportunities).
- Cost: a downloadable version of the supplement or online version would increase access and cut costs.
- Take into consideration the needs of the different partners and existing materials in order to come to an agreement on what to put in the supplement.
- Added value: complementing citizenship education
- Look for support from the outside:
  - a) policy level – Council of Europe . It is not common for the Language Policy Division to endorse any specific language-learning tool or approach, but it should be informed about the added value of the project idea to the ELP so that it can look favourably on it. In particular, this idea may open new doors within the consolidation phase of the ELP (cf. Rolf Schärer’s time line).
  - b) technical level: ECML (Graz), others?
  - c) resources level: EC – ESF, COMENIUS 1.3 (foster trilateral school development projects) and 2.1 (teacher-training courses), Accompanying Measures (trilateral international seminars), Interreg (Spring call); e-twinning programme (unfunded collaboration opportunities).

**Reference documents**

- D. Little and B. Simpson, *The Intercultural Component and Learning How to Learn*, Council of Europe, August 2003.
- M. Byram, *Theoretical model and proposed template for an Autobiography of “Key intercultural experiences”*. Draft, August 2005.

**ECML reference projects**

- IMPEL (ELP implementation through exchange of experiences, best practice examples and support tools)
- ELP\_TT (ELP teacher training material)

**EU-funded reference projects**

- CEFTrain (interactive introduction to CEFR descriptors, scales, levels)
- PLEASE (self-assessment tools for teachers)

## **Results of research into the Czech ELP project**

Radka Perclová

The research focused on the beliefs and attitudes of primary and lower-secondary teachers and learners who piloted the ELP (53 teachers of English, German and French, their 902 learners, and a group of 53 potential ELP teacher trainers). The learners considered language learning both useful and interesting and, correspondingly, a high percentage of them evaluated the work with the ELP very positively (the response “useful and interesting” was given by 72% of the learners). While there was not a statistically significant difference between boys’ and girls’ attitudes towards language learning and between attitudes of learners of a different age, chi-square analysis indicated that girls and younger learners adopted a positive attitude towards the use of the ELP more frequently than boys and older learners, who tended to be more critical. As expected, there was a reciprocal relationship between the learners’ attitudes towards language learning and their school report grades (the better the grades, the more positive the learners’ attitudes towards language learning were). However, a statistically significant relation between the learners’ attitudes towards the ELP and their school report grades was not established, i.e., the observed frequencies did not differentiate significantly between high achievers and lower and low achievers.

ELP implementation undoubtedly encouraged teacher reflection and turned teachers’ attention to the development of new techniques. Teachers’ beliefs and attitudes tended to be favourable to an ELP-related pedagogy. The majority of the teachers considered the project intuitively plausible and they understood the aims of the ELP in theory, but they appeared to lag behind in practice – either in amending the content of language learning or in accommodating new approaches. The ELP concept appeared to be too complex for them and they often concentrated on certain chosen aspects. They expressed different interests, highlighted different ELP features and developed, tried and preferred different ways of implementing the ELP. The ELP allowed methodological flexibility and its use incorporated a variety of options. However, several basic patterns form a continuum. The categories of the continuum can be classified as teacher-directed and learner-directed and as assessment-oriented and goal-oriented. Teacher-directed and assessment-oriented categories were very popular in the Czech project. One conclusion that could be drawn is that a wide variety of approaches to ELP implementation should be expected, and that this diversity should be recognized as a natural response to a challenging innovation.

## **The Finnish national ELP implementation project**

Viljo Kohonen

The Finnish national implementation project (ELP Mentor Project, 2001–04, funded by the National Board of Education and coordinated by Viljo Kohonen) had the goal of delegating ELP mentoring to the universities in charge of pre-service language teacher education (Tampere, Helsinki, Turku, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Oulu). Each of the participating universities had an independent sub-project involving a group of teachers and their students (total of some 65 teachers and 1,500 students). The site-based projects were coordinated by a collegial work pair consisting of researchers and teachers at the department of teacher education and/or the university practice school. The university coordinators (and several practising teachers) attended 3–4 intensive workshop days each year at the University of Tampere, discussing the theoretical backgrounds of the CEFR and the ELP, current European developments in the pan-European implementation project, the use of the self-assessment grid, and the issues arising from ongoing project work. The project coordinators also submitted annual reports on the progress of their projects, based on the individual experimenting teachers’ reports.

At the end of the project (spring 2004), qualitative data was collected to investigate the experiences gained in the ELP implementation work carried out at the six universities. In addition to the annual reports, which included samples of teacher-designed teaching materials, teacher reflections and students’ portfolio work, recorded thematic interviews (each lasting 20–30 minutes) were obtained from 9 participating teachers and 38 students, from primary to upper secondary levels.

In an analysis of the students’ experiences, the following content categories emerged from the data:

1. Experiences related to the learning/study processes (ownership of the ELP; problems of the amount of work to be done, especially in the upper secondary school; the role of peer cooperation/peer assessment).
2. Change processes (possibility of authentic communication in connection with the portfolio assignments; acceptance of responsibility for the work; a new learning culture of cooperative learning)
3. Assessment culture (ethos of assessment done by the teacher; ethos of working alone; significance of teacher guidance)
4. A broad variety of learning outcomes (strategies of language learning; organizing one's work, thus making student learning more visible to the participants).

The presentation was illustrated by student quotations taken from each of the content categories. While the ELP was clearly seen as having significant potential for promoting student learning, the quality of student experiences was also related to the kind of support, feedback and guidance that the teacher was able to give to individual students, and to the learning culture established by the teacher in the group. Teacher support was crucial for positive experiences to develop. The findings thus showed that the participants were in the middle of a major educational change.

## **Europass**

Christopher Reynolds

Following a decision by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in December 2004, the European Language Passport, a constituent part of the Council of Europe's European Language Portfolio, was made one of the five documents comprising Europass, a framework designed to increase the transparency of qualifications and competences. The electronic version developed as a result of this decision is called the Europass Language Passport. Europass was officially launched in Luxembourg in January 2005.

The aim of the show-and-tell presentation was to outline the background to and development of the Europass Language Passport and to give a demonstration of how to fill it in on line. A direct link between the European Language Portfolio and Europass websites was now operational. In particular, it was pointed out that the Europass Language Passport was available to users anywhere, whether or not they lived within the EU, and that following an agreement between the Council of Europe and Cedefop, the agency which has overall responsibility for Europass, it would gradually be translated into the languages of all the Council of Europe member states. Attention was also drawn to the links on the Europass website to the National Europass Centres (NEC), thirteen of which are already active. The ELP Contact Persons were encouraged to get in touch with the NECs to see how they might best help promote the Europass Language Passport and the European Language Portfolio as a whole.

Finally, it was pointed out that the Europass Language Passport had been designed to present a "snapshot" of an individual's skills and competences at any given moment, thereby facilitating mobility throughout Europe, particularly, but not exclusively, in the field of employment. It could not, nor was it intended to replace the European Language Portfolio, which had both pedagogical and reporting functions. It was recognized that ELP Contact Persons may have to explain this fundamental difference to any authorities that considered that the existence of Europass made support for a European Language Portfolio redundant. The Council of Europe's Language Policy Division would naturally be happy to assist any Contact Person who was encountering difficulties of this nature.



## **Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio: Project C6 of ECML's 2nd medium-term programme (ELP\_TT)**

David Little

The project team comprises David Little (Ireland, co-ordinator), Hans-Peter Hodel (Switzerland), Viljo Kohonen (Finland), Dick Meijer (The Netherlands), Radka Perclová (Czech Republic)

The aim of the project is to support the implementation of the ELP in Council of Europe member states by developing materials and activities in English and French for ELP-related teacher training, mediating the materials and activities in a central workshop (November 2004), supporting national follow-up events (2005–06), and making the kit of materials and activities generally available (2007).

The expected outcomes are (i) teacher training materials and activities, mediated at the central workshop, further developed through use at the follow-up events, and made available to potential users on CD-ROM and via the ECML website; up to 40 multipliers at international level (central workshop) and an indefinite number of multipliers at national level (via the follow-up events); dissemination of results via online reports on the central workshop, national training events and follow-up projects, and a final report on the project compiled by the project team (to be available both online and in hard copy).

The components of the training kit are:

1. The Common European Framework: activities, competences, levels (Hans-Peter Hodel)
2. Self-assessment in relation to the common reference levels: how do I know what level I am at, and how do I prove it? (Dick Meijer)
3. Learning to learn: a model of reflection for teacher trainers, teachers and learners (Viljo Kohonen)
4. Learner autonomy: drawing together the threads of self-assessment, goal-setting, reflection (David Little)
5. Language in the ELP: language(s) of presentation and process; plurilingualism (Radka Perclová)
6. The intercultural dimension: global simulation (Dick Meijer)
7. Integrating the ELP with language curricula and textbooks; using the ELP to go beyond the textbook (Viljo Kohonen, Radka Perclová, Hans-Peter Hodel)
8. Connecting assessment with the ELP and the common reference levels (Hans-Peter Hodel)

The central workshop was held in November 2004. There were 37 participants from 32 countries: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom. The working methods were: plenary input, group discussion, and individual reflection. As the workshop progressed handouts and notes gradually formed a portfolio of materials for ELP-related teacher training.

In 2005 and 2006 follow-up events are expected to take place in the following countries: Finland, Armenia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Croatia, Sweden, Germany, Lithuania, Estonia, France, Latvia, Romania, Czech Republic, Albania, Hungary, Ireland, Austria, Iceland, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

## **Plenary feedback on show and tell: round table (Rolf Schärer, Lid King, Gilbert de Samblanc, Gloria Fischer) – Chair: Michael Byram**

The members of the round table were asked to say what had most struck them about the show-and-tell presentations they had attended. Gilbert de Samblanc said he was shocked to learn that some children using the ELP do not know that they belong to a particular culture. Rolf Schärer was impressed by the impact of the ELP on Linguistic Gymnasium 23 in Vladimir. Gloria Fischer had been reminded that creating a good ELP is important, but you also need an implementation strategy. Lid King offered two subjective impressions: singing is a good thing, and the ELP approach is helping to create new inter-

cultural opportunities via drama and music. He also noted that he can understand Viljo Kohonen when he speaks German, whereas he cannot understand native speakers, and wondered what this means for language learning. Gloria Fischer was very impressed by the use of the ELP to develop a whole-school approach to language learning. Rolf Schärer thought we were at a turning point for the ELP, from development to implementation. He was struck by the effectiveness of the ECML ELP workshops, but noted that we must find a way of ensuring that we do not leave behind those Council of Europe member countries that do not belong to Graz. Gilbert de Samblanc found the tri-lateral project interesting both in itself and for its technique of devising a common supplement to ELPs that have already been validated.

From the floor, Irina Smoliannikova said she was very impressed by the possibilities opened up by electronic ELPs and by the impact of the ELP on philologists. She thought this approach could usefully be extended to other specialist areas. Kira Iriskhanova suggested that the Vladimir experience should be documented and published. She also suggested that in the future we need to go back to the intercultural component and further explore its complexity and the different approaches that have been developed in different countries. David Little thought that the philologists' ELP was an obvious way of preparing future teachers to use the ELP with their learners.

## **Visit of the Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation**

Irina Khaleeva introduced the Minister of Education and Science, Andrey Fursenko, and invited him to address the seminar in Russian, English or French.

The Minister explained that he could not say a word in French and was hesitant to speak English in such company; but he thought that perhaps his position gave him some excuse, so he would address the seminar in English. He said that it was an honour to visit the seminar and apologized for not being able to attend the official opening. In his view the seminar was a very important event. Language creates business for everyone, and every country is in the permanent process of changing its educational system. In the midst of all the discussion it is clear that there are not so many basic school subjects; maths is one, languages are another. The ELP is important because it supports language learning, and a new language brings new life – it is more than a new educational opportunity, it changes your mentality. The Minister thanked Irina Khaleeva for her effort on behalf of language learning and teaching in the Russian Federation. Russia today is a multilingual country, and the languages of Russia are learned as well as foreign languages. Russians are proud of the Russian language and hope that people from other countries will also learn the language. At the same time the Ministry is concerned to create a situation in which the languages of other countries can be learnt, not just English. It is important that young people can speak a few languages, and that they can choose the languages they learn. Language learning and teaching will become increasingly important in the future, and it will provide young people throughout Europe with an important opportunity. We must create the intellectual as well as the administrative opportunity to visit other languages.

On behalf of all present Irina Khaleeva thanked the Minister for visiting the seminar. On behalf of the Council of Europe Joseph Sheils thanked the Minister for attending and for almost fifteen years of excellent cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation in the area of languages, especially via Moscow State Linguistic University. He looked forward to Russia's presidency of the Council of Europe in 2006.

## **Saturday 1 October**

### **Presentation of Russian ELP experience – Chair: Kira Iriskhanova**

Kira Iriskhanova reported that at present 75,000 ELPs are in use in 52 regions of the Russian Federation. ELPs for economists and lawyers have been developed but not yet validated. An ELP for a national minority, Avarian (North Caucasus), has been piloted, with very encouraging results; it can be used to support the learning of Russian. The presentation by learners of various ages would show something of the Russian ELP experience.

The Vice Principal of Linguistic Gymnasium 1555, Tatiana Petrovna Udina, explained that nine languages are taught in her school: English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Japanese, Chinese. All pupils learn two foreign languages, and the ELP has been in use since 1998. The school has exchanges with France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Ms Udina explained how teachers, learners and parents are introduced to the idea of the ELP and what it represents. Among the positive results have been: a more transparent learning process, the introduction of goal-setting and reflection, more effective development of communication skills and learning strategies. Ms Udina showed a film of learners greeting seminar participants in various languages, after which pupils from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade (13 years old) and their teacher, Nina Koulidjanova, simulated a lesson working with the ELP.

Pupils from school 1353 (teacher: Yulia Fomina) and school 1528 (teacher: Olga Khadova) in Zelenograd then gave a presentation devised by Z. N. Nikitenko of Moscow State Linguistic University. The presentation opened with a Russian folk dance to show the children's national self-identification. The dance was performed by pupils of the ballet school named after the famous Russian ballerina Olga Lepeshinskaya. Then the pupils presented their ELP in the form of a role play in which they demonstrated their skills in understanding and speaking English: introducing themselves to the audience and telling about their families, their town and their favourite food, and asking various questions. After each activity a new leaf/descriptor was added to the Language Portfolio Tree that symbolized their

ELPs. In the second part of the presentation three students from school 1528 told the primary pupils and the audience about the linguistic and cultural experience they had gained working with the ELP. They also explained how the ELP helped them to get good results and to become good language learners. The whole performance was accompanied by songs sung by a music group from Moscow State Linguistic University. Their last song, “The European Language Portfolio”, written by Olga Khodakova, Alla Deryabina and Marina Kabanova of school 1353, was sung to the tune of “Yellow Submarine” and the audience joined in:

Come with us and we will show  
How many words we know.  
We can speak and we can read  
And explain to you what we need.

*Refrain:*

My portfolio helps me every day,  
Helps me every day, helps me every day.  
With the portfolio we can work and play,  
We can work and play, we can work and play.

We will travel everywhere,  
We will have friends here and there.  
Take my hand, let’s go and look,  
The world is open with this book.

*Refrain*

### **Coordinator’s summing up (David Little) – Chair: Francis Goullier**

Reviewing the content, process and outcomes of the seminar, David Little noted that the Validation Committee must now

- consider the suggestions concerning key ELP documents, submission dates, etc., and perhaps recommend a course of action to the Language Policy Division;
- consider the views expressed on age-appropriate SAGs and descriptors/checklists and recommend a possible course of action to the Language Policy Division;
- consider the feedback from the workshops on the intercultural autobiography;
- note the points made in the plenary discussion of the show-and-tell presentations.

Decisions must be taken immediately on at least the first two of these points if new work is to be presented at the 2006 seminar.

### **Open forum – Chair: Francis Goullier**

Lid King wondered about the implications of the discussion about intercultural attitudes: we can change behaviour, but can we change attitudes? Joe Sheils reminded participants that the Council of Europe is concerned to promote cultural diversity and the intercultural dimension; we need to make sure that the ELP can accommodate Council of Europe policy. Rolf Schärer reminded participants that reports from different countries state that ELPs in their present state of development contribute to the development of intercultural competence. Irina Khaleeva argued that it is necessary to develop descriptors for intercultural communication. Recalling the distinction that Michael Byram had drawn between linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence, Viljo Kohonen suggested that the Council of Europe might commission a collection of papers on the theoretical and practical challenge of educating intercultural speakers and assessing intercultural proficiency.

Gaby Kunsch confessed herself rather confused by the work on intercultural competence. During Luxembourg’s EU presidency there had been a declaration regarding the development of a portfolio for intercultural competence and education for democratic citizenship. Joseph Sheils said that there was a proposal to establish a centre of excellence focussed on intercultural competence and education for democratic citizenship, but that the work was only just beginning. Francis Goullier argued that we

need to find a way of focussing more intensively on intercultural competence in the ELP, while bearing in mind that it is not a matter exclusively for language teaching.

Noting that there are various portfolios in the Swiss educational system, Hans-Ulrich Bosshard suggested that the 2006 seminar might address the question: What is the position of the ELP in relation to other portfolios in the educational systems of the member states?

Rolf Schärer suggested that there are three main things we should look at: (i) in a number of places the implementation of ELPs has started to decline, for political or budgetary reasons, so we need a renewal of political support (the 2006 seminar could look at problems of implementation); (ii) other Council of Europe projects, e.g. on inter-faith dialogue, are concerned with issues that are also relevant to the ELP (the next seminar might include a brief input on these issues); (iii) perhaps we should look at the reactions of minorities to the challenges of interculturality.

Gaby Kunsch expressed concern regarding certification on the basis of the CEFR. There is an EU project to establish an item bank, and in Luxembourg the question has been asked: Will this bank be freely available, or will it be necessary to pay to get access to it? This appears to be an issue for the Council of Europe, which owns copyright in the Common Reference Levels. Joseph Sheils said that the question must be answered by the EU Commission: the Council of Europe is providing calibrated performance examples and a CD-Rom with reading and listening items, but not an item bank.

Gilbert de Samblanc observed that although interculturality is an issue that touches all pupils and students, in Belgium 40% of pupils in schools and 50% of students in technical schools do not take language courses. They will never have an ELP and will be untouched by education for democratic citizenship. Also, for several years ELP models seem to be getting bigger and bigger, grander and grander. We have turned the ELP into a luxury item, adding new elements and devising more and more complicated rules. For many countries, developing an ELP takes three or four years, and there is a fear that by the time they submit their model for validation, it may no longer correspond to the Validation Committee's expectations.

Mireille Cheval noted that foreign embassies in Russia could show how much importance they attach to languages and language learning by supporting the ELP and expressed an interest in working with schools.

On behalf of the Validation Committee Francis Goullier thanked the Russian organizers for all their help and support. He found it striking that there is more and more support for the pedagogical implementation of the ELP, including the two ELP-related projects of the ECML. We cannot think of the ELP in isolation: we need also to be aware of what is going on in the larger world of language teaching and learning, as Michael Byram's contribution reminded us. The earliest ELPs to be validated may now need to be revised in the light of more recent developments. Noting the important role that the Validation Committee plays in relation to ELP policy, Francis Goullier declared that we need to identify good practice and make innovations better known. The seminar had focused on things we need to deal with (e.g., descriptors for young learners) and things we need to consider but which do not necessarily have a follow-on (e.g., intercultural competence and the cultural autobiography). We also need to improve the flow of communication and ensure that all participants in future seminars can have timely access to documentation. Finally, on the question of the validation of supplementary elements, he noted that they must be accompanied by the ELP that has already been validated. In conclusion Francis Goullier thanked all the participants for their hard work.

## **Close of seminar**

Thanking Irina Khaleeva and her colleagues for their hospitality and all their efforts on behalf of the seminar, Joseph Sheils said that Moscow State Linguistic University was a remarkably effective institution and an outstanding ambassador for the ELP. Run in an atmosphere of friendly efficiency, the seminar had been a great success. He thanked David Little, Francis Goullier and Rolf Schärer for their preparatory work, and the Russian pupils and students who had shown us the joy of language learning.

Ms Zita Mazuoliene announced that the 2006 European ELP seminar will be held in Lithuania (Vilnius), from 28 to 30 September.

Irina Khaleeva brought the seminar to a close by thanking the Language Policy Division for granting Moscow State Linguistic University the honour of organizing the seminar. She expressed the hope that the participants would enjoy the remainder of their stay in Moscow and declared the seminar closed.

### **Exhibition of ELPs and ELP projects**

There were twenty exhibitors as follows: ALTE/EAQUALS, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

## Appendix 1

### Evaluation questionnaire

The evaluation questionnaire was completed and returned by 20 official ELP contact persons and 8 other participants.

Participants were asked to rate the importance/relevance of the three main themes of the seminar for their own context on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = *not at all important/relevant* and 5 = *very important/relevant*. Average ratings were as follows:

	Official ELP contact persons	Other participants
1. Annotated <i>Principles and Guidelines</i>	3.9	4.5
2. Self-assessment grids and descriptors for young learners	4.6	4.0
3. Autobiography of key intercultural experiences	3.9	4.0

Participants were asked to rate the interest/helpfulness of the exhibition and the show-and-tell session on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = *not at all interesting/helpful* and 5 = *very interesting/helpful*. Average ratings were as follows:

	Official ELP contact persons	Other participants
Exhibition	3.7	4.0
Show-and-tell session	4.4	4.6

Participants were asked to rate different aspects of the seminar on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = *very unsatisfactory* and 5 = *very satisfactory*. Average ratings were as follows:

	Official ELP contact persons	Other participants
Preparation and organization of the seminar	4.7	4.5
The structure and process of the seminar	4.6	4.8
Seminar facilities	4.7	4.6
Accommodation	4.9	4.9
Social programme	4.5	3.8

In addition to rating different aspects of the seminar, participants were invited to offer comments and suggestions. These will be taken into account when planning the 2006 European ELP seminar.

## Appendix 2

### List of participants

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European Language Portfolio (ELP)

Moscow, 29 September - 1 October 2005

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