



3RD EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO SEMINAR

Turin, Italy. 15 – 17 April 2002

Report by David Little, Seminar Co-ordinator



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European Language Portfolio

**A seminar sponsored by
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**Turin, Italy
15–17 April 2002**

**Report by
David Little
Seminar Co-ordinator**

Monday 15 April

Official opening

Chair: Marina Bertiglia

Antonio Moro, principal of the Pininfarina Institute, opened the seminar by welcoming the participants to Turin.

The sub-secretary of State, Ms Siliquini, welcomed the European participants to the Seminar. She hoped they would enjoy their stay in Turin and stressed the commitment of the Italian Ministry for Education to the dissemination of modern languages teaching.

She informed those present that the Parliament is currently in the process of approving a reform of the educational system and that the need for a European outlook is foremost in the Minister's thoughts.

The strengthening of modern languages teaching is a priority. She congratulated the participants on their innovative work which she felt would better equip future generations of Europeans in making their professional choices in a ever-complex world.

The Director General for International Relations of the Italian Ministry for Education, University and Research (M.I.U.R.), Ms Elisabetta Mideni, expressed her gratitude to those who had worked on the organization of the seminar and emphasized that the seminar was supported by the Ministry for Education, University and Research and the Regional Directorate for the Piedmont region in collaboration with the Council of Europe. She then introduced the main goals of the seminar:

1. to promote and enrich the debate on language teaching and learning with particular reference to the European Language Portfolio and the Common European Framework of Reference;
2. to improve the use of new tools for the teaching and learning of languages.

Underlining the relevance of the theme of the seminar for Italy at both national and international level, Ms Mideni provided some data on the number of Italian students studying a foreign language in primary school, which had increased from 22.36% in 1993 to 73% in 2000–2001. The Director General stressed that Italy has achieved significant results in this field. However, there is still scope for improvement.

Ms Mideni mentioned some of the positive and valuable aspects of language learning, pointing out that learning a foreign language represents an invaluable opportunity to foster mutual understanding between different cultures and peoples and thus enriches our spirit. She drew attention to the large number of recommendations and resolutions produced by the Council of Europe and the European Union with the aim of setting priorities and providing suggestions concerning the implementation of language policy within the member States. The Director General reminded everyone that the *Livre blanc: Enseigner et apprendre vers la société cognitive* had already proposed the goal that every European citizen should be able to speak at least three languages. Moreover the conclusions of the European Council meeting in Barcelona on 15–16

March 2002 encouraged member states to launch initiatives to improve basic skills by introducing early foreign language teaching.

Ms Midena then reminded the audience that the Italian Ministry for Education, University and Research has given full attention to the quality of language teaching and learning within the school system, placing special emphasis on the training of teachers and the use of Information and Communication Technologies. The following projects had been implemented:

- Early language teaching at primary level
- Pilot projects on teaching two languages in middle school (age range 11–14)
- Pilot projects at secondary level (International Lyceums, ERICA project, IGEA project, Lingua 2000 project)

Ms Midena concluded by emphasising that the European Language Portfolio and the Common European Framework are twin instruments. The ELP is an important teaching tool that has been conceived to enhance motivation by engaging the learner in reflection on all aspects of the learning process – objectives, planning, learning methods, and learning outcomes. At the same time it provides the teacher with an opportunity to reflect day by day on his/her teaching. Underpinning the ELP, the CEF provides a conceptual framework which those operating in the field of language teaching – teachers, teacher trainers and decision makers – have to take into consideration.

Mrs Bertiglia, chief of the Local Education Authority for Piedmont, welcomed the European participants and expressed her appreciation to the Council of Europe and to the Italian Ministry for Education in their choice of Turin as a city to host the ELP Seminar.

She commented that the Piedmont region has historically been an international crossroads and that the interest in European languages has always been present in its culture.

The schools of the region are very much involved in piloting the ELP.

She reminded everyone that Piedmont is also a crossroads of European history: the castles of Monferrato, of Langhe, of the Ossola and of the Alps were witness of the meetings of intellectuals and of artists during their travels throughout Europe.

The renaissance of a diverse and complex European culture, born of a common history and of national differences, can only have an influence upon the younger generation. It is in the light of this that an understanding of one's others languages assume an increasing importance.

The traditional Piedmont welcome is symbolic of the commitment being made in the field of education.

Mrs Bertiglia ended by wishing the participants a nice stay and that everyone would return home with good memories of Turin.

Speaking on behalf of the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, Joseph Sheils said that it was a great pleasure to be in Italy to launch the medium-term ELP

project (2002–04). Italy had always been strongly engaged on behalf of the ELP, and among the 26 ELPs validated so far, two came from Italy, one of them from the Piedmont region.

The success of the ELP depends crucially on the ministries of education of the Council of Europe’s member states: Joseph Sheils thanked the Italian Ministry of Education and the regional authorities for their strong support. He then outlined the framework within which the European ELP project operates: the *Principles and Guidelines* that define the ELP and its essential features, and the Validation Committee, comprising nine members and four consultants, which meets twice a year to validate and accredit the ELP models submitted to it. Joseph Sheils took this opportunity to pay tribute to the contributions of Christoph Flügel, a member of the Validation Committee, and Robin Davies, a consultant, both of whom had died in recent months.

Joseph Sheils reminded participants that only accredited ELPs are entitled to call themselves “European Language Portfolio” and use the Council of Europe’s ELP logo; and he emphasized the importance of new projects making early contact with the secretariat so that they can be provided with appropriate assistance.

The Council of Europe had requested all 48 states entitled to participate in the ELP project to name a national ELP contact person; 30 states had so far done so. It was essential to have efficient co-ordination of ELP projects at a national level, not least in order to ensure that translations of Council of Europe terminology and the self-assessment grid (a summary of the common reference levels of the Common European Framework) were accurate and consistent.

Joseph Sheils noted that the medium-term project was starting from a position of strength: in the evaluation of the European Year of Languages, 90% of countries had expressed an interest in pursuing ELP projects. The challenge facing us over the next three years will be to maintain quality and coherence as more and more ELP models are developed. He hoped that it would be possible to make copies of all validated ELPs readily available in order to help promote the ELP in countries where it was not yet known. He also hoped that it would be possible to organize workshops for ELP developers, interaction networks, and programmes of teacher training. The educational systems of Europe are very diverse, yet it seems appropriate that there should not be an endless proliferation of ELP models. To this end, the medium term project would look for ways of promoting convergence between models. The importance of intercultural competence is now widely recognized, and the ELP can do much to raise awareness of its importance, encouraging language learners to record and reflect on critical intercultural episodes in their own experience.

Joseph Sheils concluded by expressing his hope that the Turin seminar would come to be seen as a major step forward in the development of an ELP culture for Europe.

Introduction to the programme and working methods of the seminar – David Little, seminar co-ordinator

David Little explained that the plenary input sessions had been designed to provide information about the current situation of the ELP on a European level, give insights into ELP experience in Italy, Hungary, Ireland, Finland and Switzerland, and remind participants of the fundamental principles that underlie the ELP. The successive parts

of the programme would raise issues in ELP design, validation, implementation and dissemination; consider some of the implications of the ELP for language teaching and teacher training; and address procedures for monitoring and reporting on dissemination. Group work would afford an opportunity to share experience, understand success, and seek solutions to difficulties. As a whole the seminar would challenge participants to think together and form new networks.

Plenary session 1 – Council of Europe perspectives

Chair: Luigi Clavarino

***The European Language Portfolio: from piloting to implementation* – Rolf Schärer, rapporteur général for the ELP project**

Rolf Schärer began by noting two positive features: the interest that the ELP continues to arouse and the expertise in designing and implementing ELPs that is beginning to accumulate around Europe. Journals for language teachers increasingly take account of the ELP, and in addition to the 26 accredited models, 7 were pending validation, there were 18 non-validated models in use, and 16 in preparation. It was a fact, however, that the pedagogical enthusiasm of ELP developers sometimes led them to disregard essential requirements laid down in the *Principles and Guidelines*, which gave rise to difficulties when they submitted their ELP for validation. It was also a fact that some of the validated ELPs had still to be published and disseminated.

Rolf Schärer cautioned that the European Year of Languages may have aroused unrealistic expectations, especially at a political level: effective implementation takes time, as the instance of the Swiss ELP confirms. He also pointed out that there are many parts of Europe where the ELP is still not very well known, and in some places where it is known teachers have doubts.

Turning to the difficulty of reporting on ELP implementation on a European level, Rolf Schärer pointed out that it is impossible to know precisely how many copies of particular ELPs (i) have been produced, (ii) have been distributed, (iii) are actually in use, and (iv) are in stock waiting to be distributed and used. Funding remains a key issue, as does the provision of teacher training to support implementation. If the ELP is ever to reach a critical mass, “top down” and “bottom up” approaches both have a role to play: the ELP must be strongly supported by ministries, but it must also be welcomed by teachers as making their task easier and more rewarding.

Rolf Schärer then argued that much development work remains to be done on the proficiency descriptors that are central to the ELP. In particular, existing descriptors need to be adapted so that they are accessible to the learners for whom they are designed and yet relate the curriculum to the Common European Framework in an appropriate way. It is necessary to develop descriptors specific to the many different needs of adult language learners. He noted that there is already quite a lot of research published on the ELP and its use in pedagogical contexts, though much of it is not widely known because of linguistic barriers. Two recurrent findings are that learners using the ELP show increased initiative and that classes using the ELP develop a richer learning environment.

In conclusion Rolf Schärer made the following points:

- gathering experience is good, but sharing that experience is better;
- the ELP reaches beyond Council of Europe boundaries; for example, there have been strong expressions of interest in the concept of the ELP in North and South America and in China;
- the ELP is both personal and cooperative: it is the property of the individual language learner, and yet its effective use depends on a variety of interactive processes, not least those involved in linguistic communication;
- the European dimension of the ELP is its central driving force;
- the handful of languages reported on in any individual's ELP should not blind us to the fact that Europeans speak not a few but many languages.

The Guide for ELP Developers – Peter Lenz

Peter Lenz explained that the guide has two purposes: to support ELP developers and to inform relevant authorities. Essentially, the guide states and exemplifies the principles underlying the ELP, presents the options available to ELP developers, and gives practical advice designed to help developers to take appropriate decisions.

Peter Lenz then made the following points:

- The ELP is not a textbook, a curriculum, a standard test, or an exercise, though it may cause any of these things to change.
- The ELP is a companion to learning and an information tool, based on a broad view of assessment linked to the Common European Framework.
- The ELP needs to be embedded. Its success will always depend on
 - cooperation with relevant authorities
 - the adoption of the right kind of approach in pre- and in-service teacher training
 - the elaboration of transparent examination requirements (which may entail the updating of examinations and diplomas)
 - the provision of appropriate information and support material not only to teachers but to textbook publishers
 - publicity
 - a determination to shape ongoing innovations
- The ELP can focus and support innovation and reform in a variety of ways:
 - authentic assessment
 - self-directed learning
 - self-assessment
 - revision of examinations
 - increasing the value attached to migrant languages
 - immersion teaching
- The principle of learner ownership of the ELP means that
 - the learner has only one ELP at a time
 - the ELP is a tool for handling transitions in education and learning
 - the ELP is a stand-alone document
 - the ELP is open to all languages and every conceivable experience of language learning and language use
 - learners must be prepared for independent use of the ELP
 - other ELPs will arrive

- How many new ELPs should there be? Don't reinvent the wheel. Bear the following points in mind:
 - every context is different
 - creation means development and organic growth
 - developers need to be competent and dedicated disseminators
 - take over what is good in other ELP models – always with due acknowledgement
 - small scale should not mean poor quality
- Checklists may be used for various purposes: setting learning goals, selecting learning tasks, monitoring learning progress, analysing textbook content, etc.
- Descriptors should be positively phrased (“can do” statements), concrete, clear and short, not jargon-ridden, and they should make sense in themselves. (Note that the guide contains the common reference levels from the Common European Framework.)

Guidelines for submission of an ELP for validation– David Little

David Little reminded participants that the key documents to consider when designing an ELP are: *European Language Portfolio – Principles and Guidelines* (DGIV/EDU/LANG (2000) 33) and *European Language Portfolio – Guide for Developers*, by Günther Schneider and Peter Lenz. Validation and accreditation of ELP models is governed by three documents: *European Language Portfolio – Principles and Guidelines*; *Rules for the Accreditation of ELP Models* (DGIV/EDU/LANG (2000) 26 rev.); *European Validation Committee (ELP) Terms of Reference*.

He also reminded participants that applications for validation/accreditation must be made on the official application form (downloadable from the Council of Europe's ELP web site). In future they must also conform with the following six guidelines, approved by the Validation Committee in February 2002:

Guideline 1

According to the *European Validation Committee (ELP) Terms of Reference*, ELP models will normally be submitted by one of the following: national or regional authority; NGO or INGO; independent educational institution; private commercial or non-profit institution. The *Rules for the Accreditation of ELP Models* state (i) that “the committee will consider the advice of national committees or other relevant bodies” and (ii) that “the advice of national and regional educational authorities on ELP models for the school sectors is taken into account”.

If possible and appropriate, please elicit this advice and enclose it with your submission.

Guideline 2

Paragraph 3.3 of the *Principles and Guidelines* requires ELP developers to “adhere to terminological conventions, standard headings and rubrics as specified by the Council of Europe in at least one of the official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French) in addition to any other languages”. This principle must be applied to the Language Passport without exception.

For purposes of validation every part of your ELP must be translated into either French or English so that it is linguistically accessible to the Validation Committee.

ELP models are registered for validation only when every part of them has an accompanying translation into French or English. Failure to meet this requirement inevitably delays the validation process.

Guideline 3

The *Rules for the Accreditation of ELP Models* require that “the application should be accompanied by a mock-up of the ELP model proposed”. For practical reasons it is not always possible to present a model in exactly the form in which it will be disseminated once it has been validated. However, any ELP model submitted for validation should be presented in a form that indicates clearly what the finished ELP will look like.

The form in which you submit your ELP for validation should be as close as possible to the form in which it will be disseminated after validation. If its final form will differ in any significant respect from the form in which it is submitted, you should describe and explain the difference in your covering letter (see guideline 5).

Guideline 4

Sections 1, 9 and 10 of the Application Form must be completed in full. The remainder of the form should be completed in a maximally informative way. The principle of self-declaration (see *Rules for the Accreditation of ELP Models*) implies that it is not enough simply to tick all the *YES* boxes: many of the questions on the form may also require some kind of comment.

The Application Form has been designed to allow you to show in detail how your ELP model conforms to the Principles and Guidelines. It is in your own interest to provide as much information as possible on the form as well as in the covering letter (see 5 below).

Guideline 5

The validation process will be greatly assisted by a covering letter that explains in sufficient detail the relevance of your ELP model to its target audience, draws attention to any special features of content or design, and describes how the implementation of the ELP will be supported.

Use a covering letter to – for example – (i) briefly describe the learner population at which your ELP model is aimed, (ii) explain the relevance of your ELP to this population, (iii) draw attention to any special features of content and design, (iv) describe the support that will be provided for teachers working with your ELP, and (v) outline what role (if any) will be played by national, regional and local educational authorities in the implementation of the ELP.

Guideline 6

Only ELP submissions that comply with the above requirements will be registered for validation. Submissions *must* be registered at least six weeks before the meeting of the Validation Committee at which they are to be considered.

“The European Language Portfolio in use: some examples from the pilot projects”
– David Little

David Little explained that this study, due for publication later in 2002, will illustrate the variety of ELP designs that emerged in the pilot projects, show how the three components of the ELP interact with one another, and illustrate the ELP’s reporting and pedagogical functions. Each contribution to the study will provide (i) ELP examples (a maximum of ten A4 pages illustrating various aspects of the ELP of one or more learners) and (ii) an accompanying text that briefly describes the ELP in question, comments on the selected examples, and includes the views of the ELP owner(s). Contributions to the publication have been received from:

- *Czech Republic* – upper primary and lower secondary (examples from a learner of English)
- *Finland* – upper secondary (examples from a learner of English and Swedish)
- *France* – collège (examples from learners of English) and lycée (examples from learners of English)
- *Greece* – lower secondary (examples from learners of French)
- *Ireland* – lower secondary (examples from learners of French) and adult immigrants learning English as a second language
- *Russia* – lycée (examples from a learner of Ukrainian, German and English)
- *Switzerland* – upper secondary and tertiary (examples from learners of English, French, German, Italian)

Plenary session 2 – Italian ELP projects

Chair: Antonio De Gasperis

***An ELP for primary school* – Rosalia Ferrero**

Rosalia Ferrero reported on the ELP model developed for use in primary schools in Piedmont, which is based on the French primary ELP developed by CIEP, Sèvres, but adapted to the Italian context. It was promoted at the beginning of June 1999, launched on 1 March 2000 and validated on 9 March 2002. This ELP was piloted in 48 classes in 2000 and in 43 classes in 2002. The languages being learnt were English, French, German, and Spanish. Shaped in part by the availability of teachers, the pilot project had sought to take account of sociocultural issues. Objectives were:

- *Intercultural* – to encourage students to learn more than one language
- *Pedagogical* – to make students aware of the learning process, helping them to develop self-assessment skills and to become more autonomous
- *Research* – to test the practicability and extendability of the ELP

In the Piedmont ELP for primary learners the Language Passport contains four tables of descriptors for self-assessment according to the five skills of the CEF; the language biography emphasizes intercultural experience and self-profiling; and the dossier allows students to collect evidence of their language learning. The monitoring of the pilot project had involved teachers, parents and children. The strong points to emerge were the learners’ emotional involvement, enhanced motivation, and the development of reflection and self-assessment skills. The principal weak point was lack of time.

An ELP for secondary school – Carmela Sergi-Lo Giudice

Carmela Sergi-Lo Giudice introduced the Umbrian ELP for upper primary and lower secondary learners, which was the first Italian ELP to be validated. It was designed by fourteen teachers who followed a research-based approach. The need for learner-centredness is widely recognized and teachers are expected to guide their students in learning how to learn and help them to understand that they can manage their own learning: finding your own way is always better than being told by others. Foreign languages play a central role in these processes, and quality control plays a central role in education. The Umbrian ELP was designed with these considerations in mind. It emphasizes that language is a tool for communication but also a badge of identity; it encourages students to learn more languages; and it opens up possibilities for various kinds of language learning. Now that the Umbrian ELP has been validated, a distance training programme has been launched for teachers. About 700 learners have declared an interest in working with the ELP.

An ELP for university learners – Paola Evangelisti

Paola Evangelisti introduced the Italian ELP for university students. It was designed, implemented and evaluated at the University of Calabria from 1998 to 2001. In the current academic year it was introduced to new groups of students, and from 2002 the Italian project will form part of a Europe-wide ELP project coordinated by CERCLES (Confédération Européenne des Centres de Langues de l'Education Supérieure).

To begin with the ELP was used on a small scale: 100 students (learning English, French and German) in 1998–99 and 100 students (learning English and French) in 1999–2000. But in 2000–01 it was used by 1,000 learners of English and French. In 2001–02, with the formation of new groups, numbers were again smaller: 200 learners of English and French. Students of Economics were the first to use the ELP, followed by students of Political Science. The teachers involved had been one associate member of the university, two researchers, and two assistants. They had found that working with the ELP is a way of thinking about teaching.

The results of the experimentation were:

- *Pedagogical* – helping students to mobilize their linguistic knowledge, develop self-assessment skills, set their own learning goals, and gain insight into their own strategies
- *Affective/emotional* – there was an increase in students' self-awareness and their sense of relationship with their target language, and they reacted positively in interviews and responses to questionnaires

Among the difficulties encountered, it proved difficult to manage large numbers of learners, self-assessment clearly needs careful guidance, and (according to questionnaire responses) students were much influenced by their previous learning experience and expectations and tended to implement strategies on an individual basis. At the same time, there was some correlation between teacher assessment and students' self-assessment.

As regards dissemination beyond the University of Calabria, between May 1999 and January 2002 eight seminars/conferences had been held in the Italian university sector and the ELP had gradually spread to other Italian universities.

A portfolio for Italian as a second language – Massimo Vedovelli

Massimo Vedovelli reflected on the conditions that would have to be met by an ELP for use by learners of Italian as a second language. Pointing to the association of the Italian language with high intellectual aspirations and to the recent increase in the number of immigrants to Italy, he wondered where the limit should be set in providing for Italian as a second language. To begin with school had been at the forefront, then the focus shifted to immigrant workers and women at home. How can Italian as a second language compete with other languages in the global market place? Linguistic, socio-cultural and training conditions must be met. Our model of language must be practical as well as cultural. The last decades have seen a linguistic revolution, which has led to the spread of the use of Italian throughout the country, while in the past it was mainly a literary language.

Plenary session 3 – Presentation of ELPs from other countries

Chair: Antonio De Gasperis

Ireland – Barbara Lazenby Simpson

Barbara Lazenby Simpson explained that Ireland has six validated ELPs. The model designed for learners in post-primary schools had been presented at the Coimbra ELP seminar in June 2001, so she would focus on the three ELPs for adult immigrants and the two ELPs for non-English-speaking pupils in primary and post-primary schools.

The ELPs for adult immigrants correspond to three learner levels:

- Reception 1 – learners with little or no English, often with little or no formal education and no literacy skills either in their mother tongue or in the Roman alphabet
- Reception 2 – learners with some English, including literacy
- Pre-vocational – learners preparing to enter employment or take a mainstream vocational training course through English

It was felt necessary to develop three ELP models because (i) many immigrants have not had the opportunity to develop their learning skills and (ii) the ELP must be mediated to them through their target language, English.

The design and use of all five ELPs are underpinned by three principles, whether the learners in question are 4 or 76 years old:

1. Learners set their own objectives
2. All activities that focus on the ELP are calculated to prompt reflection on the why and the how of language learning
3. Self-assessment plays a central role in the development of the learner's reflective capacities

The two ELPs aimed at immigrant pupils in primary and post-primary schools also draw on English language proficiency benchmarks that focus on curriculum needs and were elaborated on the basis of the CEF.

All five ELPs made it possible to achieve more than had been expected as regards the development of learners' reflective skills.

Hungary – Zsuzsa Darabos

Between the ELP seminar held in Tampere (Finland) in May 1999 and September 2001 the Hungarian ELP project went through a developmental process that posed various dilemmas, required sometimes difficult choices, and yielded ELPs for children, adolescents and adults. Zsuzsa Darabos demonstrated this by comparing the ELP for adolescents that was first presented at the ELP seminar held in Soest in November 1999 with the version that was validated in November 2001. At the end of the first phase of experimentation the Hungarian team came to the conclusion that they must develop a family of ELPs and an accompanying guide for teachers. Primary teachers were strongly attracted to the ELP, and especially to the fact that the language biography focuses on the development of the learner's self-knowledge. Zsuzsa Darabos also outlined the characteristics of the adult ELP, where particular importance has been given to portability. She also described the checklists that are a central part of each of the Hungarian ELPs. She concluded by pointing out that in Hungary the development of the ELP was supporting a change in the approach to language teaching, less emphasis being placed on grammar and more on communication.

Workshop 1

Question for discussion:

What are the main challenges linked to the design, implementation and dissemination of the ELP in your environment?

Tuesday 16 April

Workshop 1: reports from the working groups

Chair: Teresa Boella

Group 1 (Co-ordinator: Gareth Hughes

Rapporteur: Hans-Ulrich Bosshard)

1. The challenge of the co-ordinator!
The initial debate:
Why not a standard ELP-grouped by age range- common to all countries?
2. How to keep a "common" structure for the ELPs? (Validation Committee!)
3. The various functions of the ELP: danger of overloading the ELP- "you can't be all things for all men".
4. Is the ELP a subversive instrument?
Can it be used to reform schools?
5. Last question:
Do/Can we integrate the ELP with formal language certificates?
Towards a new culture of evaluation: transparency and coherence.

Group 2 (Co-ordinator: Peter Brown

Rapporteur: Kira Iriskhanova)

The attention and focus of the group was on the ELP not only as a product but as a process. The members of the group were fully aware that the process cannot be validated, but it can be helped. The group emphasized a significant need for political and practical support on the part of the Council of Europe and the various national ELP projects. This might involve

- raising general awareness of the ELP and other important documents of the Council of Europe;
- organizing input workshops for those who have little or no experience of working with the ELP;
- working out an on-line glossary of terminology and its accurate translation (particularly in less widely used languages);
- relating the Framework scales to national syllabuses;
- reporting not only challenges but positive achievements of ELP projects;
- identifying the end-user.

Group 3 (Co-ordinator: Gisella Langé

Rapporteur: Günther Abuja)

A – ELP design and general issues

- The ELP should be considered as a learning tool and almost inevitably has to reflect the educational context of a country (e.g., reflect the syllabus, meet the demands of external assessment as opposed to learners' self-assessment)
- From a psychological point of view the roles of teacher and learner are exchanged; self-assessment with the help of an ELP is a strong motivational tool – ELP design should support this role
- The ELP should be designed as a very operational tool, so that students can soon and easily see what their working efforts have led to. That again will support their motivation
- It was also mentioned that the support of learner autonomy would also benefit the teaching of other (non-linguistic) subjects in the curriculum

B – Implementation

- One difficulty is to convince parents of the usefulness of the ELP (example of the junior Italian ELP)
- The ELP has a strong impact on teaching methodology; teachers and/or students are often insecure about the new instrument that brings about a change of teaching/learning style. This point, however, was considered to be more relevant in some countries than in others (e.g. the problem does not exist in Denmark)
- There is often a wide gap between self-assessment and the application of traditional assessment methods; in this context it was underlined that self-assessment has to be gradually developed and is a process that needs guidance from the teacher
- The question of the cost-effectiveness of the ELP in implementation was raised
- Some countries would be reluctant to use a supra-national instrument like the

standard adult passport because to do so runs against the tradition of using instruments created in the country, region or individual school (due to decentralization and increasing school autonomy, as in Denmark)

C – Dissemination

- The group did not reach conclusions under this heading due to lack of time.

Group 4 (Co-ordinator: Glória Fischer

Rapporteur: Luigi Clavarino)

The group, which embraced many different levels of ELP experience, identified the following challenges:

- The need to convince the authorities that the ELP is a useful and desirable tool
- The problem of collecting resources should be analysed and solved, insofar as an ELP can be a very expensive project
- The need for a national committee to coordinate regional activity in those countries divided into regions
- Minority languages must be taken into account
- The national language can require special attention as far as immigrant communities are concerned
- Classical languages

Group 5 (Co-ordinator: Anna Butasova

Rapporteur: Stefania Ressico)

Favourable conditions and positive results

- The creation of networks among different target audience (schools, head teachers, teachers, inspectors and decision makers);
- dissemination of pertinent informations;
- sharing of experience and ELP models already conceived;
- involvement of all teachers and schools in the ELP project and philosophy;
- continuity of programmes, of teachers' in-service training and methods (which have to be adapted to the age of learners);
- change in the methodology approach and attitude of teachers (self-evaluation);
- matching the self-evaluation process and the formal competency certificates.
- Revision of the curriculum.

Weak points and difficulties

- Additional work for teachers;
- involvement of the school at all level (difficulties in the Secondary schools);
- use of the ELP for other subjects:
 - description of all competences;
 - find an agreement between language teachers (usually more ready to change) and the others;
- change of teachers' attitude and sharing of a new methodology;
- adaptation and revision of initial and in-service training.

Group 6 (Co-ordinator: Dick Meijer

Rapporteur: Lid King)

This group, which embraced a wide range of experience, raised more questions than it found answers

- Newcomers would have liked more hands-on analysis of actual ELPs
- The group identified two major issues of implementation:
 - Motivation: the ELP will work only if it can be seen as the solution to a problem (“What’s in it for me?”). It may solve some of the problems that teachers have, but that raises the question: Whose ELP is it?
 - How can the ELP remain visibly European and yet meet particular national, regional and local needs

Plenary session 4 – The ELP and teacher training

Chair: Teresa Boella

The ELP’s pedagogical function – David Little

David Little began by recalling that in its pedagogical function the ELP is designed to make the language learning process more transparent to learners, develop their capacity for reflection and self-assessment, enable them gradually to assume more and more responsibility for their own learning, and thus make them more autonomous.

He went on to argue that self-assessment is central to the use of the ELP. Self-assessment is (i) summative in the language passport, where the learner periodically reviews his/her proficiency in languages other than the mother tongue; (ii) formative in the language biography, where the learner regularly sets learning targets, monitors learning progress, and evaluates learning outcomes; and (iii) both formative and summative in the dossier, whose contents the learner regularly reviews with a view to maintaining an up-to-date overview of his/her proficiency and experience.

David Little proposed that self-assessment is the basis of reflective learning. It underlies the setting of learning goals, the planning and monitoring of learning tasks, and the evaluation of learning outcomes. Learners become good at summative self-assessment by becoming good at formative self-assessment; and they become good at formative self-assessment by sharing responsibility for setting learning goals and planning and monitoring learning tasks. David Little suggested that from the beginning reflection and evaluation should be carried out in the target language.

David Little concluded by relating these arguments to some examples of the ELP in use. He showed pages from ELPs belonging to (i) a Czech lower secondary learner of English, (ii) two adult refugees learning English in Ireland, (iii) an Irish lower secondary beginner in French, and (iv) a Finnish upper secondary learner of English and his teacher. Finally he showed a selection of comments from Greek lower secondary learners of French working with the ELP:

- The ELP helps me to become aware of my competences and to concentrate on improving those areas where I most need help. I like it because it is a very useful tool for learning foreign languages;
- I like the ELP because it helps me to reflect on my learning process;
- The most important thing to me is to complete the Dossier;

- The ELP helps me to develop my competences and to use my competences in a foreign language;
- The most onerous task is when I have to reflect on my learning goals and to fill in the self-assessment checklist;
- The ELP is for me a game which I like a lot.

Experience of teacher training

1. Italy – Flora Palamidesi

Flora Palamidesi began by emphasizing (i) the large number of people who had been involved in the development of the Umbrian ELP, (ii) the central role played by the biography in the ELP process, and (iii) the pragmatic role of language as a way of launching the in-service training that accompanied the piloting of the ELP. She then outlined the successive steps that had been taken, noting that it had been necessary to adjust descriptors (from A1 to B2) to allow for the transition from primary to secondary school. The descriptors themselves had played an important role in the whole project, providing a central point of reference, and learner autonomy had developed out of the formative and summative self-assessment that was based on them. In the classroom the ELP provides the basis for an explicit, modular, flexible and transferable teaching-learning process. Given the centrality of the biography to this process, the language passport comes not at the beginning but at the end of the Umbrian ELP.

2. Finland – Viljo Kohonen

Viljo Kohonen began with a quotation: “The real voyage of discovery consists not of seeking new lands but of seeing with new eyes”. Pedagogical innovation has to do with the same classrooms, learners, materials and working environment. He went on to identify some of the principal concerns of experiential learning:

- Who is the learner? Who am I as a learner? (These questions focus on beliefs about language learning and about the roles available to learners in the learning process)
- How do we learn? (This question focuses on our orientation to the learning process.)
- What are we learning? (This question focuses on task awareness and task competence as outcomes of learning.)

Seeking answers to these questions provides a basis for interactive learning in which cooperation, collaboration and community all play a central role.

The Finnish project adopted essentially the same approach to teacher training as to teaching. In other words, it began by examining teachers’ identities, roles, and beliefs. Inevitably this approach can lead to uncomfortable discoveries, but it is essential if teacher development is to be characterized by delegation of pedagogical expertise.

In the Finnish project self-assessment in general terms (conducted independently of the CEF/ELP self-assessment grid) was the point of integration between the ELP and the curriculum; the Finnish curriculum is apt to emphasize the link between the ELP and learner reflection.

Teacher development pursued along these lines leads to an enhanced, complex

professional identity in relation to (i) subject matter, (ii) pedagogical expertise, and (iii) school renewal.

3. *Switzerland* – Pia Gilardi-Frech

Pia Gilardi explained that the ELP was introduced generally in Ticino in 2001–02. Documents on teacher development had been circulated on 15 January and 30 June 2001, and the ELP had been distributed to 4,500 learners in 318 classes. The learners were aged between 16 and 25 years and were either in full-time schooling or in vocational education. German and English were the languages most fully represented; French and Spanish were also involved.

The objectives were (i) that the learners should document their second/foreign language as a way of becoming more aware of their potential for plurilingualism; (ii) that their motivation should be enhanced; (iii) that they should become more autonomous in their learning; (iv) that their mobility for further study or work should be facilitated; and (v) that they should use the ELP to meet their individual needs.

The project was organized in such a way that one teacher was responsible for the ELP in each institution. Classes were visited, advice was provided for individual teachers, and teachers worked together on coordinated activities. Teacher development made use of 12 multipliers who provided five half-day seminars between February and August 2001. These focused on learning activities, the preparation and organization of work, and the exchange of experience and discussion of problems. A second series of seminars began in September 2001, with a focus on the structure of the ELP, self-assessment, and learning activities.

Pia Gilardi concluded her presentation by briefly summarizing the financial dimensions of the project and the results of internal and external evaluation.

***The European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (Graz): the new medium-term programme* – Josef Huber**

Josef Huber explained that as deputy director of ECML he had come to the seminar to look, listen and learn. The ECML had not so far been involved with the ELP, but it plans to support implementation and further development via teacher training.

ECML was founded in 1994 on the basis of a partial agreement between eight member states of the Council of Europe. Its function is to support the implementation of change, training and information exchange by organizing international and regional workshops. The programme for 2003–04, currently under discussion, would include the ELP and its implementation in research-and-development projects, awareness-raising events, and international and regional training events.

Workshop 2

Questions for discussion:

1. *What issues does the ELP raise relating to language teaching and teacher training in your environment?*
2. *How can ELP-related teacher training be organized at national and European levels?*

Reports from the working groups

Chair: Johanna Panthier

Group 1 (Co-ordinator: Gareth Hughes

Rapporteur: Hans-Ulrich Bosshard)

Three “case studies”: Umbria, Switzerland and Finland.

- Qualitative evaluations
 - ⇒ questionnaires: evaluation of the work done with the ELP
 - Users
 - Teachers
 - Multipliers
 - ⇒ to be done: the employers/the economy
- Quantitative evaluation
 - ⇒ evaluation of competences according to the CEF (in Switzerland since 2004).

Other topics:

- Self-declaration for certificates from institutions → transparency;
- diagnostic tests i.e. Dialang;
- giving value/ “certification” of languages of migrants;
 - how to find feasible solutions?

Group 2 (Co-ordinator: Peter Brown

Rapporteur: Kira Iriskhanova)

Language teaching

- Teachers should be open-minded towards change
- Change is needed in perspective and content
- There is a difference between the ostensible and the hidden curriculum
- The ELP helps to make informal learning visible

Teacher training demands

- a lead-in timescale
- training for the trainers
- support strategies and materials for teachers

Organization

- We need a three-tier organization that has appropriate infrastructure at local, national and European levels
- It is necessary to take account of group diversity
- We need to win hearts and minds

Group 3 (Co-ordinator: Gisella Langé

Rapporteur: Günther Abuja)

1. “Teachers should learn (about) what they teach”

- It was generally considered important that future teachers and users of the ELP should get acquainted with it by directly trying it out themselves. The CEF as the foundation of the ELP should be explained. The group could not decide, however, to what extent this should be done – whether superficially (teachers are sometimes put off by theoretical considerations) or to a greater extent. Both seemed possible, according to the different teacher training traditions of different countries.
- By a kind of “exploratory approach” teachers should get the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new instrument, especially starting from their own learning and former teaching experience. It has also been stressed on several occasions that collaborative and interactive methods should be used in teacher training (because we also expect this from our teachers when they are working with their students). The use of the ELP should be taught in an integrative approach, touching also on other aspects of modern language didactics or pedagogy in general.
- Several possibilities were suggested:
 - Create an ELP for use in teacher training
 - Let teachers reflect together with the trainer on the purpose of the CEF and the ELP
 - Start with activities which would introduce teachers to the concept of learner autonomy and self-assessment *before* introducing the ELP as a pedagogical instrument
- In preparation it would also be helpful
 - To clearly distinguish the ELP from other forms of portfolio (e.g. as used in North America)
 - To reconsider the term “portfolio”: in some countries (e.g. Denmark) it cannot be used because it is already familiar in other contexts, and in other countries (e.g. Iceland) the word does not exist in the local language

2. Organizational/motivational aspects

- We shouldn’t underrate the opportunity given by using the ELP in pre-service training because the student is still a language learner
- It would be a good idea to link pre- and in-service activities, possibly combined with university activities exploring different aspects of teacher training in doctoral dissertations and the like
- As the ELP is a complex instrument, continuity of training should be considered from the beginning (e.g. by planning a series of courses or course modules, or other follow-up activities)
- Special value should be attributed to the instrument itself and to the new

teaching methods that it supports

- Credit should be given to teachers who are willing to invest themselves in the application of this innovative tool
- Incentives should be created so as to stimulate teachers to engage in the implementation of the ELP
- Private funding and sponsorship should be considered for teacher training courses

At a national level:

- Create a website/forum on which teacher trainers get the opportunity to share experiences (e.g. in the form of case studies)
- Teachers from different parts of a country could have regular meetings for the exchange of ideas and experiences

At an international level:

- Also create a website and promote the dissemination of case studies
- Use LINGUA or SOCRATES programmes for student exchange – the task of these students would then be to shadow a teacher who is already using the ELP in his/her classroom (this would also be possible at a national level)
- The Council of Europe could collect a series of international case studies in order to show the variety of teacher training approaches. These case studies should follow a common format and be accessible from the Council of Europe home page and/or be available as a printed document.

Group 4 (Co-ordinator: Glória Fischer

Rapporteur: Luigi Clavarino)

Issues raised by ELP implementation for language teaching and teacher training:

- International coordination
- National school policy
- Regional curricula
- Municipal and school: teacher training (initial and in-service) and financial support
- Individual teacher: materials
- Individual learner: time

Related issues: a new school culture is required that includes:

- Cross-curricular cooperation and a reflective approach (for all languages and all subjects)
- Open-ended materials: a new conception of textbooks and other materials used
- An atmosphere conducive to sharing experiences and evaluation practices and creativity
- Coordination between different levels of participation
- The ELP as an instrument for change

Think big, act small!

ELP teacher training at a European level:

- Develop the structure, principles, philosophy and guidelines
- Inform multipliers (national delegates)

- Collect examples of good practice and disseminate (maintain an accessible database)
- Update the CEF and develop the concept of the ELP

ELP teacher training at a national level:

- Inform multipliers (regional delegates, teacher trainers, training institutions, head teachers, teachers, media, parents)
- Disseminate examples of good practice at a national level
- Create space and atmosphere for exchange of ideas, practices
- Curriculum work

Focus on sharing, rely on creativity

Group 5 (Co-ordinator: Anna Butasova

Rapporteur: Stefania Ressico)

Language teachers training:

1. Different training models (i.e. bottom-up in Italy; top-down in Portugal);
2. what is the teacher's profile? What is the predominant function- the pedagogical one or the documental one?
3. Sensibilisation of all subjects concerned (head teachers, families, decision makers);
4. indispensable initial training (which has to be solid but not imposed);
5. to follow and monitor the practice in classes taking into consideration the ELP philosophy;
6. for the dissemination: action-research, guidance and support of experts;
7. give training to all teachers in order for them to be able to use the ELP.

European training:

1. Stocking regional centres with reference documents on the ELP;
2. using EU programmes (i.e. Socrates etc.) in order to spread the ELP philosophy;
3. setting up an exchange forum for ideas and fostering of the debate at an international level;
4. asking Graz to deal with the in-service training of teacher trainers' trainers;
5. content of the European training: exchange of practices, comparisons of models.

Group 6 (Co-ordinator: Dick Meijer

Rapporteur: Lid King)

In order to convince teachers we must overcome three kinds of obstacles: time and resources; credibility (What's in it for them?); and the systems into which the ELP must be integrated (Is the ELP always appropriate? What about the democracy of the ELP?). We must also justify the ELP by pointing to results that are supported by appropriate research, integrate the ELP into our educational systems, and include it in pre-service teacher training.

Successful INSET must

- show the benefits of the ELP and give teachers something tangible
- address the problems that we know teachers have
- give teachers money or responsibility
- develop and pursue an action research model
- at a European level, promote the Council of Europe's ELP-related publications, develop multipliers, and promote international exchange

Plenary session 5

Chair: Johanna Panthier

How can the results of ELP experiences be monitored and disseminated? – Rolf Schärer

Rolf Schärer identified two tasks: to monitor experimentation with the ELP and to disseminate results. In this process some of the key issues are pedagogical and others are not:

Pedagogical issues:

Effects on learners, teachers, class work, learning institutions, lifelong learning. We have information on the pilot projects but we do not know much about what happens with individual learners on a large scale.

Non-pedagogical issues:

Relevance, achievement of goals, added value, cost-effectiveness, impact on society. These issues have to do with such Council of Europe goals as: communication; mutual understanding, respect and tolerance; helping Europeans to respond positively to international mobility and cooperation. They also have to do with the principles of transparency, coherence, and comparability.

Rolf Schärer reminded participants of the principles that underpin the ELP: it is the property of the learner; it has pedagogical and reporting functions; it values *all* learning positively; it promotes language learning in and out of school; and it views language learning in a lifelong perspective. He suggested that it may now be appropriate to consider whether the ELP's common core should be strengthened and whether the various models might be capable of convergence.

Rolf Schärer concluded by suggesting that if we don't try for long-term benefits we may lose a lot, and he posed these two questions:

1. In terms of the information to be collected, what is the minimum, what is the optimum, and what is too much?
2. How are we to gather information on short-term results, which are important for the continuation of the ELP project?

Wednesday 17 April

Workshop 3

Questions for discussion:

1. *How can ELP dissemination be monitored?*
2. **How can short- and long-term ELP evaluation projects be set up?**

Reports from the working groups

Chair: Antonio De Gasperis

Group 1 (Co-ordinator: Gareth Hughes

Rapporteur: Hans-Ulrich Bosshard)

A. Problems

- A ELP for L1- same or other descriptors?
- the ELP and its environment: large classes, programmes, exams etc.
- motivation: authorities, teachers and students.
-

B. Training

International programme:

- For developers: how to sell it;
- For trainers: expert visits and networking

National plan

- For teachers: information, concrete examples, own experiences, resource centres, initial and in-service training;

C. and moreover the external lever
at national, regional and local level

- the economy
- parents
- the press
- society

Group 2 (Co-ordinator: Peter Brown

Rapporteur: Kira Iriskhanova)

Group 2's discussion was reported graphically, using the image of a clock. This was chosen to emphasize (i) that all ELP projects must proceed according to a predetermined sequence, in which planning, piloting, reflection, and dissemination all play an essential role; (ii) that some of the processes involved are cyclical in nature; (iii) that decisions must be taken at regular intervals; and (iv) that time and ELP projects never stand still.

Group 3 (Co-ordinator: Gisella Langé

Rapporteur: Günther Abuja)

This was a very difficult discussion: the group came up with more difficulties and questions than it found answers.

- Although this was an international seminar and the group had to consider dissemination and monitoring as well as evaluation strategies on a more general, international level, it was also felt that some hands-on experience would have been useful
- Copies available possibly through the Council of Europe

It was generally felt that there was more need for *national* development, monitoring of dissemination and evaluation *before* thinking at an international level. International monitoring and exchange of evaluation schemes and results may be a next stage in this process.

In this context it was mentioned that the seminar did not cater adequately for the heterogeneity of the developmental stages of different countries as far as the conception, piloting, implementation and evaluation of the ELP is concerned. Groups could have been formed according to previous experience:

- When you are preoccupied with developing a project you are less concerned with monitoring processes that still lie in the future.
- Although the group was aware that this was one of a series of seminars, it is a fact that the same people do not always attend and some countries do not yet have a national ELP contact person or institution.

As to monitoring dissemination at a national level (as mentioned previously, this was a preoccupation of most members of the group), several questions were raised as to how and by whom that could be done. The group agreed however on the following points:

- Inform everyone involved in or affected by the use of ELPs (teachers, students, headmasters, etc.)
- Strong official support should be given to the teachers actually introducing the ELP, otherwise it will not be regarded as important enough to be successful. Financial support is also necessary.

Finally, the group would like to stress again that there was some unease about the lack of differentiation in the focus of the seminar. Different stages of ELP development were represented, but also a positive mix of practitioners, developers and teacher trainers. This situation should be taken into account at future seminars.

Group 4 (Co-ordinator: Glória Fischer

Rapporteur: Luigi Clavarino)

- How do we monitor the dissemination of the ELP? How can we set up short and long-term ELP evaluation projects?
- Instruments of evaluation: not only quantitative but also qualitative: interviews, questionnaires, video surveys (also useful as a form of advertising)
- In the monitoring process we should involve all the different levels of intervention:

Internal monitors:

- Universities (initial training resources, in-service training and research)
- Inspectors, head teachers, teacher trainers, expert teachers, teachers' associations, parents, students

External monitors:

- Industrial associations, chambers of commerce (take advantage of the multiplier effect: each of these categories is a potential multiplier)

Dissemination through networking:

- All of the above-mentioned stakeholders can be involved in this

The main ideas of the ELP must always be reinforced:

- Philosophy: social responsibility, learner autonomy
- Principles: self-assessment, learning how to learn
- Possibilities: motivation, discovery and creativity
- Challenges: education for citizenship, personal growth

Internalization of principles and professional understanding: teachers as lifelong learners.

Peter Bichsel, "Des Schweizers Schweiz": I'm a Swiss citizen because I have a red Swiss passport.

Future development: "I'm a European citizen: here is my European Language Portfolio."

Group 5 (Co-ordinator: Anna Butasova

Rapporteur: Stefania Ressico)

Problems

- evaluation of the process and of the product
- how to match competences at European level;
- evaluation of the ELP as pedagogical and self-assessment tool;
- evaluation of the ELP at the CoE level and at local level;
- how to monitor the dissemination of the ELP?
- how to realise projects for the evaluation of the ELP in the medium and in the long term.

A. Local level

- Sample of schools at national level;
- to have a national committee whose members represent the ELP projects;

B. European level

- Create networks of experts responsible for the ELP projects and make available copies of the validated ELP models;
- to organise at European level meetings for local experts responsible for the validated models;
- provide rules for the evaluation process (on the CoE side);
- CoE tutoring for the evaluation of the validated ELPs.

Co-ordinator's summing-up of the seminar: towards Luxembourg 2002 – David Little

David Little began his summing-up by reiterating the twofold importance of the Turin seminar: it was the first European seminar on the ELP since the European Year of Languages; and it was also the first European seminar of the new medium-term project (2002–04). The aims of the programme were to inform ourselves of the current situation at a European level; to gain insight into the Italian ELP experience; to remind ourselves of fundamental principles; to share experience, understand success, and seek solutions to difficulties; and to think together and form new networks.

Our stocktaking reviewed developments since the first European ELP seminar in Coimbra in June 2001, and we had presentations of ELP projects in Italy, Ireland and Hungary. Working in groups, we explored some of the challenges posed by the pedagogical implementation of the ELP, giving particular attention to our task of persuading teachers to adopt and use the ELP and the need to provide them with appropriate training and support. And we considered some of the issues generated by the need to report on ELP implementation in the short but also in the longer term.

David Little suggested that perhaps the first thing we learned was that the ELP is still not as widely known and understood as we might wish. Clearly, at the Luxembourg seminar we must provide appropriate hands-on induction for newcomers to the ELP. We were also able to confirm that there is a strong consensus on how we should respond to the pedagogical challenges posed by the ELP (here the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz clearly has an important role to play) and on the difficulty of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the ELP on a European level.

David Little concluded by arguing that our task for the medium-term project is to build a consensus on a long-term strategy for the ELP and to make the experience we have gathered so far available to newcomers. This latter goal might best be achieved by developing ELP templates for the various domains of learning we are concerned with (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, university/adult) and building up a bank of descriptors appropriate to these domains. Besides providing a hands-on induction for newcomers and an exchange of experience based on actual ELPs, the Luxembourg seminar will devote time to (i) exploring the desirability and feasibility of developing ELP templates, (ii) working on descriptors, and (iii) reconsidering the question of the ELP's common core. Each of these topics will inevitably involve us in larger strategic issues.

Closing of the seminar

On behalf of the Council of Europe, Johanna Panthier thanked the Italian authorities and the organizers of the seminar for their hospitality and support and the participants for their hard work; on behalf of the Italian organizers, Antonio De Gasperis thanked everyone involved in the seminar for their help and participation.

Appendix

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