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Towards a Common European Instrument for Language(s) of Education

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Towards a Common European Instrument for Language(s) of Education

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1. Language education as part of social policy

Europe is a multilingual and a multicultural reality. It is a space in which a large variety of languages exist, where many languages are spoken next to one another: as a mother tongue in most cases, as second or third languages in others, as major languages of communication, as languages of identity, as minority or migrant languages. All of these languages have a right to exist and to be maintained, if Europe is to unfold and flourish. This concerns all languages including all mother tongues and school languages. Alongside of this enormous linguistic variety we find immense cultural diversity on our continent. The same is true for almost all of the Council of Europe's member states: indeed, linguistic plurality and cultural diversity is at the basis of our modern societies. This is the every-day experience of Europeans, leading to a number of specific challenges for the individuals and for institutional decision-making processes.

Given this multilingual and multicultural reality, Europe's citizens need to become plurilingual. This means that each individual is entitled to use more than one language for the purpose of communication and should be enabled to do so: for personal expression, for work, for leisure time, for professional use, for mobility, for social contact and democratic participation, in short, for a happy and fulfilled life as a person and as a social being. Any education system in Europe – and particularly the *school* as a core institution in our modern societies – needs to prepare the younger generation to become social actors and to participate as such in the common shaping of Europe (both now and in the future). A language policy to that effect is at the same time a policy of empowerment, of social inclusion, of developing self-learning and democratic citizenship – for the good of the individuals and the societies involved.

In other words, the Council of Europe clearly sees language education as part of a larger social policy. In particular, the importance of *social inclusion* has been stressed over and over again. The development of a new instrument for *languages of education* as a whole would thus be a further realisation of the Council of Europe's language policy, already encapsulated in several documents and instruments such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, the *European Language Portfolio* (both focused on 'modern' foreign languages), the *Guide for Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*, and the activity of producing *Language Education Profiles* carried out to assist (a number of) member states. All of these are founded on the belief that language education and language education policy cannot be separated from social policy. The central values and principles as they have been developed by the Council of Europe over the last years, can be summarized in a succinct form in the following policy statement:

The Council of Europe language education policies aim to promote:

PLURILINGUALISM: all are entitled to develop a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages over their lifetime in accordance with their needs

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY: Europe is multilingual and all its languages are equally valuable modes of communication and expressions of identity; the right to use and to learn one's language(s) is protected in Council of Europe Conventions

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING: the opportunity to learn other languages is an essential condition for intercultural communication and acceptance of cultural differences

DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP: participation in democratic and social processes in multilingual societies is facilitated by the plurilingual competence of individuals

LIFELONG LEARNING: development of learning strategies and learning skills which will help the learning process to continue throughout life.

SOCIAL COHESION: equality of opportunity for personal development, education, employment, mobility, access to information and cultural enrichment depends on access to language learning throughout life.

These principles are evident, for example, in the *Warsaw Declaration* of May 2005 and in the corresponding *Action Plan* decided by the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe at the same date; they are naturally all related one to the other. Let us look at one of the principles in more detail, namely that of *plurilingualism* (cf. the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe: From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education*, Draft 1 rev; Beacco & Byram, 2003).

2. Plurilingualism and Plurilingual Education

Plurilingualism is defined in the above document as well as in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) as follows:

“(Plurilingualism) is the ability to use languages for the purpose of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the

existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw” (Council of Europe, 2001: 168)

Language education policies should reflect that all Europeans are entitled to develop a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages over their lifetime in accordance with their needs. Plurilingualism is seen as *possible* and *practical*, as a concrete expression of our innate human capacity for learning and using more than one language. To become plurilingual, however, means more than adding one or another (foreign) language to one’s language repertoire, based on the language first acquired or the language of school education. It means at the same time to become aware of language diversity and language differences. Moreover, it leads to the awareness that language constitutes thinking and that new language experiences add to one’s perception and self-definition. To become plurilingual means to integrate as an individual all the language experiences one has at a certain point in time into *one holistic competence* and to link the different languages and language components learned into *one* linguistic repertoire (wherever the languages were acquired, whatever the degree of proficiency is for each one of them, whatever they are used for and whatever their status in society is).

Plurilingualism, therefore, is as much a *competence* as it is a *process* of using and integrating language as a central function of life and of learning. It can also be seen as an *attitude* and as a *way of communicating* in a multilingual and multicultural setting. In this enriched understanding, plurilingualism goes beyond a multi-faceted linguistic competence, it *comprises*, by its very nature, *intercultural competence*: the ability to communicate and interact successfully as a social agent in a multicultural and multilingual (national and European) setting.

Language education in general and *plurilingual education* in particular is more than learning languages as subjects in school, at different levels of formal education (e.g. as a mother-tongue, as second languages or as foreign languages). Rather, it means re-thinking the role of language(s) in one’s life, developing an integrated view of language(s) and language use, and participating actively in negotiating and shaping Europe’s future via language-based competencies. Plurilingual education, as outlined here, is central for the social development of Europe: ensuring that European diversity does not lead to disintegration or to social exclusion of any individual or group, but rather that diversity is explicitly recognised (and even appreciated) and can unfold as a source of richness and identity-building in the mind, in the behaviour and in the interactions of Europeans.

In this context, particular attention should be drawn once more to the final element in the list above, namely to the *importance of social inclusion for social cohesion*. A look at language(s) of education might be of particular importance in this respect in response to the experience of learners who fail to attain satisfactory levels of competence in this language or these languages and who, as a consequence, will have problems because they are not included (adequately) in a society. In other words, without these language competencies learners do not acquire the qualities, competences and qualifications which are crucial for full membership of society. Those most at risk are learners who are “disadvantaged” by not acquiring in the home or during their primary socialisation the same language or language variety as the languages used for learning at school and throughout life. There are two major groups of such disadvantaged learners:

- immigrants or the children of immigrants with low educational attainment¹

¹ A recent large-scale study in Germany showed that contrary to these immigrant learners, children with a *bilingual family history* where only *one* of the parents comes from a different cultural-linguistic

- other children of low socio-economic status, lacking educational support at home /in their families, whatever their origins (including native speakers of the language of school education).

These groups of learners will have to be addressed specifically within the new perspective – and each member state will have to make particular provisions for them, based on the analysis of their specific problems and needs.

3. Focus on *Language(s) of Education*

As distinct from the existing *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* which deals with *foreign or second* language education, the new instrument should focus on *language(s) of education* in school and beyond. The terminology is not easy to handle in this respect, but important here. Given the diversity of contexts in member states of the Council of Europe it is not possible to use the terms “national language”, “official language” or “mother tongue”. Even if these are used in the plural to acknowledge that some states have several national languages, or official languages and some learners have more than one mother tongue, the terminology is inevitably inappropriate in some circumstances. Some states do not have official languages, in others the concept of national language is not appropriate and to use the phrase *mother tongue* for the language(s) in question is to ignore the fact that for many children the language(s) of education are not mother tongues, but rather second or third languages.

The Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe suggests therefore to use the term *Language(s) of Education (LE)* to include:

1. the languages as subjects taught in school (e.g. French taught in France, Romanian in Romania, English in the UK): *language as subject (LS)*
2. the languages used as a medium of instruction and learning of other subjects (in schools and for lifelong learning): *language across the curriculum (LAC)*
3. the languages as part of an integrated language curriculum which embraces all the languages a learner meets; e.g. a learner in France might meet French as the official language taught as a subject, Arabic as their language of the home taught as a subject, English and/or German and/or Spanish as a foreign language taught as a subject (**FL**): *the language curriculum as a whole (LC)*.²

The new instrument could /might focus on the languages of *school* education, but should also include languages in pre-school institutions or in institutions of education after the period of official or *de facto* compulsory education. Language education policy has to be seen in the context of other social policies, and consequently it is during the period when all children and young people are using the language(s) of education - i.e. during *obligatory schooling* – that language education is most crucial.

4. Scope of a new instrument for Language(s) of Education

As seen, there is a need for a larger framework than the one already existing, namely the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)*. This framework was developed by the Council of Europe for defining and describing *foreign language learning, its teaching and the evaluation of*

background, perform extremely well, not only in English as a foreign language, but also in the language of school education, namely German in this case (cf. DESI, www.desi.de).

² A holistic concept of the language curriculum treats these as related aspects of the learner's plurilingualism which in turn has consequences for curriculum planning.

its outcomes - so as to make these more transparent and comparable Europe-wide, and to provide a common basis and language for coherence and communication among all the partners and stakeholders concerned. The Framework does not promote a European curriculum but offers a common basis for developing objectives and describing progress according to the needs of each situation using shared reference points.

The CEFR, published only five years ago, has been spreading quickly and is now widely used in professional circles all over Europe and beyond, while at the same time it is being further developed and enriched by a series of supporting tools and guidelines. The existence of this foreign language framework will certainly be very helpful in identifying and tackling some of the tasks ahead with regard to the new instrument to be developed. It could serve as a model or at least as a frame of reference for the design of the new tool.

The perspective now is to develop a more comprehensive view on language education and particularly on language(s) of education. In other words, it is necessary to look at *language education as a whole*, namely at the relationship between *language as a subject* (LS) and *language(s) used as tools across the curriculum* (LAC), but also at the relationship between first and second (or third) language learning and between monolingual and bilingual education, as well as all other types and forms of (informal) language acquisition/contact and (formal) language instruction. These elements and relations can be described in more detail as follows:

1. The central focus of the new framework would be on the *language first encountered in institutions like pre-school, school, secondary or post-secondary education*, which is normally the dominant language of education (LE), the language in which the school and other educational institutions normally operate in all subject areas. This language is taught from the very first day onwards as a subject (LS): it is likely to be the mother-tongue for the majority of school children, whereas for many others (for up to 15% or 20%, depending on the state or region) this may be their second or even their third language. This language is responsible for cognitive, social and attitudinal development of the individuals; it constitutes the basis for all other language learning, indeed for all other learning experiences (e.g. through conceptualisations of reality) and is thus the basis for personal development, for identity-building, for value formation, for literary and aesthetic perception and competence development as well as for creative expression etc.
2. In addition to the central role of this *language as a subject* and all that it involves (e. g. shaping the intellectual and social personality), the new document should also deal with language education and language learning that takes place *across all subjects*. This linguistic dimension is more hidden or partly implicit only and therefore often underestimated in its importance: *Language across the curriculum* (LAC), however, can be understood as an *extension of the standard language variety of LS into subject-specific ways of thinking and communicating or disciplinary modes of language use*. One could see this as a (first) form of plurilingualism, understood here as the acquisition and command of new varieties of language use within one and the same language.
3. A comprehensive framework of language education might then have to consider the relationship between what has been identified so far and the learning of a foreign language or several foreign languages. We know from

research that the acquisition of the *first foreign* language (FL1, for majority children) undergoes different processes and leads to different results than that of a second or third foreign language (FL2, FL3 etc.). We need to consider how far FL acquisition can and does profit from “mother-tongue education” and vice versa. We should also ask what links exist or could be established on the competence, the strategic or the methods level between FL1 and FL2 learning, and also between L1/LS and LAC or the learning of tertiary languages (FL2, FL3 etc.). It is questions like these (and many more of a similar type) that will have to be addressed in the new document.

4. Finally, the conditions and effects of using more than one working language in school (“bilingual education”, “trilingual education”) could and should be included and analysed in a larger framework, because it is the learning reality for a growing number of children in Europe and might lead to important insights concerning subject-specific discourse competence. In this context, it is of particular importance to look at the possibilities and functions of content-based language instruction (CBI) and, more specifically, at ways of integrating content *and* language learning within an approach named /labelled accordingly, “Content and Language Integrated Learning” (CLIL).

5. Purpose of a European instrument for Language(s) of Education

As mentioned earlier, a document on the languages of education will have as its major purpose the facilitation of *discussion of and communication about* languages in education in general and the specific areas of LS and LAC. In this respect it will have a similar purpose to the existing *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, where the importance of communication is stressed:

“The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages provides a **common basis** for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. (...) The Common European Framework is intended to **overcome the barriers to communication among professionals** working in the field of modern languages arising from the **different educational systems** in Europe. (...)

By providing a common basis for the explicit description of objectives, content and methods, the Framework will **enhance the transparency of courses, syllabuses and qualifications**, thus promoting **international co-operation** in the field of modern languages. The provision of objective criteria for describing language proficiency will **facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications** gained in different learning contexts, and accordingly will aid European mobility.” (Council of Europe, 2001: 1).

The emphasis in this document on *international* communication should be complemented by a similar attention to *intra-national* communication among teachers/professionals of LS, teachers/professionals of modern foreign languages (FL) and all other teachers since the latter are inevitably using language for instruction (LAC and CLIL Content and Integrated Language Learning).

It is important to note that the *form* of this *common basis of communication* created in the CEFR limited itself to *presenting discussion of issues, posing questions which these raise and suggesting a form of reflection and communication which might ensue*. Neither the CEFR nor the new document proposed here aim to provide *prescriptions* or *answers* to the questions raised, as the following extracts from the CEFR make clear:

Example for asking questions (Council of Europe, 2001: 145):

6.4.3 What part should be played by **texts** in language learning and teaching?

6.4.3.1 How may learners be expected or required to learn from spoken and written texts?

- a) by simple exposure;
- b) by simple exposure, but ensuring that new material is intelligible by inferencing from verbal context, visual support, etc.;

(....)

6.4.4 How far should learners be expected or required to learn from *tasks* and *activities*:

- a) by simple participation in spontaneous activities?
- b) by simple participation in tasks and activities planned as to type, goals, input, outcomes, participant roles and activities, etc.?

(...)

Example for making suggestions for reflection (Council of Europe, 2001: 147):

Users of the Framework may wish to consider and where appropriate state the place of texts (spoken and written) in their learning/teaching programme and exploitation activities: e.g.

- according to what principles texts are selected, adapted or composed, ordered and presented;
- whether texts are graded;
- whether learners are a) expected b) helped to differentiate text types and to develop different listening and reading styles as appropriate to text type and to listen or read in detail or for gist, for specific points, etc.

(...)

In the same way any new framework of reference can only be descriptive (but *not* prescriptive) in that it names and discusses the elements and dimensions involved, their relationship to one another and thus their own dynamics to the extent that we know about these. Generally speaking, we can only present the pieces of knowledge that we have about certain issues and identify the points where we do not know enough and where we would have to create more understanding and insight in the future. In this sense, the goal of the new framework is as modest, pragmatic and instrumental as it is daring, challenging and visionary. It corresponds to the overall vision of the *European Union* for a knowledge-based society and for democratic participatory citizenship (cf. *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. A European Reference Framework*. Brussels 2004). The basic abilities for multiple language use and for plurilingual communication (as well as the application of central communication skills in *all* other key competences) will be most important, if not *crucial* for the success of this endeavour – today, in the years to come and in the more distant future.

6. Possible content of a framework for Language(s) of Education

Whereas the previous *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) is related mainly to adolescents and adults and the development of their

competence in foreign languages, the new instrument will have to deal with a much broader group of learners (probably from kindergarten to university entrance). This might lead to a differentiation within the new document according to school level or age group.

Otherwise, one could consider modelling the new framework on the already existing one for foreign languages. Possible topics and chapters might, for example, include the following:

- Linking the idea of citizenship, identities, social cohesion and participation to that of language education in general and plurilingual education in particular
- Describing language as an activity for personal development and as an instrument for learning – in school and throughout life
- Defining a competence model and components of competence in language as an activity and as a tool for thinking and learning
- Identifying the domains and prototypical situations in which the language is used and/or for which it is needed
- Describing proficiency in language performance (or possible reference points for establishing levels of competence)
- Discussing possible methodologies of teaching and learning
- Discussing assessment and evaluation procedures and appropriate criteria.

However, as the new instrument would focus on language(s) of education (mainly LS and LAC), it cannot afford to focus only on *general* issues of language learning, language teaching and language evaluation, as listed above. Rather, the new instrument is likely to address many more complex issues than the current CEFR, namely

- issues of multiple identity building through language use and education
- issues of personal enrichment and autonomous learning
- issues of “Bildung³” through language education
- issues of thinking and cognitive development, based on language learning
- issues of knowing and acknowledging different linguistic and cultural traditions
- issues of functional language use and/or domain-specific language choice
- issues of literary, aesthetic and creative language use
- issues of language varieties (and their equivalence among one another)
- issues of reflecting about language and languages (e.g. as a system, as a grammar, as a historical development, as discourse structure, as a tool for communication or as social capital)
- issues of (advanced) bilingualism and how individuals can further develop their plurilingual profile beyond bilingualism
- issues of participation, social inclusion and social cohesion

³ BILDUNG (in German) means to develop and bring out the full potential of a human being, based on his/her nature, but stimulated and structured by education (nurture). This dynamic concept encompasses the product or relative state reached by a human being as well as the process of becoming educated/becoming one's own self. During this process the mental, cultural and practical capacities as much as the personal and social competencies are being developed and continuously widened in a holistic way.

- issues of developing intercultural competence
- issues of cognitive, social and cultural disadvantages of certain groups of learners - and ways to counteract or overcome them in the long run.

This list is by no means exhaustive. But it shows what a challenging task lies ahead. The new project, focussing on language as a subject and on the role of language within this subject, *needs to take account of many of the issues mentioned at the same time*, but it needs to address also quite specifically *the teaching of literature and other kinds of text*. Traditions of literature teaching usually include at least the following activities which go beyond the issues mentioned above:

- teaching the canon and 'national literature'
- developing imagination and literary competence
- providing experience of (one of) the richest sources of language use
- stimulating reflection on language (less as a grammatical system than as a system of rhetorical modes and stylistic devices).

With regard to the inclusion of LAC, additional questions arise, for example:

- Can language really *develop* through its purposeful use alone?
- What are the learning effects of domain- and task-specific communication requirements?
- What is the relationship between verbal and non-verbal forms of mental representations and information processing?
- How do language and/or the manipulation of other semiotic systems *contribute* to cognitive development, especially in subject-specific contexts?
- How can we describe and assess the development of subject-specific communicative competence?

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that issues of language(s) of education must also be part of a reflection on the language(s) curriculum as a whole, *within one* institution and also *between* institutions (or levels of education): The new instrument should therefore include explicit reference to the teaching of second or foreign languages in order to create a holistic vision of language learning and of the language "curriculum".

By integrating all or many of these issues into a new "framework", we may develop a comprehensive model of *literacy*, handling language appropriately and competently in different contexts, including subject-specific discourse genres. Possible components of such a comprehensive competence model might be:

- Listening Comprehension Competence
- Auditory-Visual Competence
- Reading Competence
- Writing Competence
- Speaking Competence
- Symbolic Decoding/Encoding Competence (including non-verbal semiotic systems)
- Media Competence (within and between language systems)
- Literary and Aesthetic Competence

- Functional-Pragmatic Competence across genres and languages
- Intercultural Competence
- Language Learning Competence
- Metalinguistic Competence/Language Awareness.

The complexity of these issues, some of which have not been studied or researched in any detail, may have an effect on the decision-making concerning the structure of the new instrument. For example, the goal of defining the above-mentioned competencies for the different areas of language learning and of defining levels of proficiency (as presented in the CEFR for foreign languages) may have to be postponed or can only be dealt with provisionally for now (pending further research and development in due course) when the underlying issues involved and to be taken into consideration have been adequately examined and discussed.

7. Structure and function of an instrument for Language(s) of Education

The structure and format of the new instrument could be modelled after the existing CEFR, or it could concentrate on identifying, naming and relating the many issues and variables involved in language learning, teaching and education as a whole, as outlined in the preceding sections. This latter perspective, although reduced, i.e. without any extensive definition of competences or levels of language proficiency offered, would be an important first step; it would require the writing of a something more like a *handbook* than of a *framework of reference*. At a later stage, a more precise description of competences involved and proficiency levels to be attained could then be added.

Nevertheless, the new document could probably have a basic structure and function similar to that of the existing Framework (CEFR), at least in the way it proceeds, asks, argues, links, suggests or “concludes”. Its main function would be as follows:

- to guide and help decision-makers in reflecting upon and mapping out the landscape of language issues to be dealt with in education
- to communicate these issues explicitly to others (intra-nationally and transnationally)
- to consider policies that work and sort out those that do not work or that seem inappropriate given the self-set goals
- to describe and evaluate (at least in general terms) the standards of performance for language(s) of education as well as educational policies to develop them.

Although the new document would aim at stimulating discussion among professionals / teachers, researchers and educational decision-makers (on a national and international level), member states will have to check and decide for themselves what the most appropriate language policies are or could be (given the resources, the traditions and the problems at hand) and what the best ways are within their respective states or regions of educating plurilingual individuals - in the enriched understanding of the term, e.g. becoming interculturally competent at the same time (see section 2 above). Some educational strategies might work on a national level, others may only be regionally or locally appropriate, still other solutions for certain issues could be experimented with for some time (e.g. with the help of evaluative research) before they are institutionalised or put into practice for a larger group of learners. In addition, there could be mutual consultation and co-ordination among

member states, or even cooperation through joint projects across border-lines of national states sharing similar problems and perspectives.

8. Perspectives

As in the case of the existing CEFR which took almost 10 years of development, revision and final publication, this new initiative will have to be developed gradually, supported by consensus and explicit agreement among the member states of the Council of Europe and the relevant groups therein. Therefore, it is most important to identify the influential actors (be they cultural, academic, political or ethnic) within each country and within the existing networks (grouped around the existing CEFR). Moreover, it is important to get to know the relevant groups and discourse communities, their lines of thinking and arguing, and the potential conflicts among them. And new networks of people might have to be developed who will identify with the aims of the new Council of Europe initiative and carry it further beyond the initial idea today. To state the issue succinctly- such a vision and precise knowledge of the issues and variables at work (as partly identified and named in this overview) aims to enhance the development of plurilingualism and mutual understanding in Europe.

9. Summary/Main ideas

Europe is multilingual as are its constituent states. Europe aspires to become a knowledge-based society. Based on the principles laid down by the Council of Europe – human rights, pluralist democracy, rule of law, democratic citizenship, acknowledging the value of diversity while developing a common identity - Europeans need to acknowledge and value their language repertoire and enlarge it through plurilingual education. Plurilingualism is the ability to use languages for the purpose of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. Plurilingualism (in this enriched definition) includes intercultural competence; it also includes the awareness and acknowledgement of diversity and thus respect for others. All Europeans are entitled to develop a high degree of this integrated communicative ability in a number of languages over their lifetime, according to their needs. This highlights the fact that language education *is* and *must be* part of social policy: it has to ensure social inclusion, especially of the more disadvantaged learners and citizens, and to support the development of social cohesion in the context of pluralism and diversity.

A new tool for language(s) of education - based on the Council of Europe's principles mentioned above and "the best that we know" - will have to address and demonstrate how policy deciders, schools and other educational institutions can reflect on and plan to meet the needs of different groups of learners, i.e. by helping them *to become plurilingual*. In this context, the new instrument should identify and discuss the implications of this overriding goal for language education (LE) as a whole, namely for the teaching and learning of language as a subject (LS) and for using language as a medium of instruction in other subjects (Language across the curriculum, LAC). In any reflection on the language curriculum as a whole the role of foreign languages and of bilingual education will have to be included, as much as reflection about the relationships between the different components of a holistic concept of language education (aiming at developing plurilingualism).

More specifically, the new LE *handbook* or *framework* (whatever form seems most appropriate) will need to present the different issues involved (as partly identified in this paper) and discuss options for at least the following levels of consideration:

Aims, Objectives/Outcomes, Content/Methods, and Assessment. It could do so for each of the different components of LE separately, namely for LS, for LAC and for FL (incorporating main aspects of the existing CEFR) and by way of cross-referencing and networking between them – all of it under the overarching concept of education for plurilingualism. A specific chapter or outlook on what research can tell us up to this day might be included, or else this discussion could be incorporated into the different chapters.

Given the differences in the educational systems and national policies in the member states concerning language education in general and language(s) of school education in particular, the main purpose of the new instrument would be to establish categories, a common ground for conceptualisation and a common language for reflecting, exchanging and communicating *between* countries and *within them*, *among* groups of teachers/professionals, researchers and decision-makers as well as *between* them, *intra-nationally* and *trans-nationally* alike.