

Intergovernmental Language Policy Forum

“The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and the development of language policies: challenges and responsibilities”

Strasbourg, 6-8 February 2007

Follow-up activities

planned by the *Language Policy Division*

www.coe.int/lang

As summed up by the Rapporteur in the conclusions to his report, *it is primarily the member states themselves which should seek solutions to the needs identified in order to promote good practice in making use of the framework. Everyone’s responsibility towards their partners is at least as great as their responsibility towards the Council of Europe, and better use must be made of the possibilities offered by a joint approach and by international co-operation.*

The Council of Europe’s own responsibility is enhanced as regards its guidance, mobilisation and co-ordination roles, in short serving as a catalyst to promote the desirable developments in the fields of education and assessment. The Council must remain a facilitator and continue to serve as an intermediary between all its partners.

While ensuring that member states retain the responsibility that rightly falls to them, the Language Policy Division intends to pursue its activities to exploit the full potential of the CEFR and its other tools by means of a series of initiatives, including those described briefly below:

1. [Recommendation](#) to the governments of member states concerning the use of the CEFR and the promotion of plurilingualism.

(including an *Explanatory Memorandum*) was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 July 2008

2. Revision of the pilot edition of the *Manual for Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR*

In the light of the feedback received following three years’ trialling of the pilot version of the Manual, this edition was revised by authors. The subsequent official version was published in January 2009.

3. Guide “CEFR - Language examining and test development” prepared under the direction of M. Milanovic (ALTE Association of Language Testers in Europe)

In the light of the experience acquired since its publication in 2002, the Guide was revised and expanded in 2008.

4. Inter-language seminar on calibration of samples of spoken performances

In order to promote the procedures for standardising interpretation of CEFR levels proposed in the *Manual on Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR*, calibration seminars for a

number of languages have been organised and a series of DVDs presenting calibrated examples has been produced in several languages.

In order to satisfy the growing demand from member states, an inter-language calibration seminar was held in Paris in 2008, thanks to the generous offer received from the CIEP. The examples for calibration showed young people coming to the end of their compulsory schooling expressing themselves in a foreign language. The DVDs produced following this seminar can prove to be of considerable benefit for teachers in the compulsory education system, especially following the introduction of the European Commission's *Indicator of Language Competence*, also based on the CEFR levels.

5. Drafting of a *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual education*.

Following the Manual on Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR, there has been growing demand for a guide on relating foreign/second language curricula to the CEFR.

The CEFR has a much more diverse content than merely detailing scales of language proficiency; in particular it sets out an integrated approach for language teaching in order to promote plurilingualism, which cannot be limited solely to the acquisition of foreign languages. This diversity was exploited in this Guide setting out procedures for curricula development for each individual language, along with other procedures for implementing an integrated approach. From the outset, assessment experts have been working in conjunction with curriculum experts for different types of languages; the finished product includes guidelines for assessing plurilingual proficiency, taking full account of the language profile of each learner.

6. Drafting of a document of linking Plurilingualism and Assessment *Guide to linking self-assessment as in the European Language Portfolio and the assessment of language skills based on the CEFR*

Publication of a study on "Assessment in Plurilingual and Intercultural Education (Peter Lenz, Raphael Berthele, Council of Europe 2010)

7. Development of a "Platform of Resources and Reference pour plurilingual and intercultural education" – www.coe.int/lang-platform

Foreign and second languages, which are the focus of the CEFR, are a means of developing learners' real or potential plurilingualism. They are also a means for citizens to play an active part in democratic society. But more important still for integration and social cohesion is proficiency in the main language(s) of school education; these languages are the mother tongue for the vast majority of learners, but a second language for children from migrant backgrounds or children of other minorities.

Drawing on the experience of the CEFR, the Language Policy Division is currently working on a reference document for languages of school education. This activity will also deal with the specific needs of vulnerable groups.

This Platform is intended to produce a global approach to plurilingual education: mother tongue(s), language(s) of instruction, foreign/second/minority languages. Particular emphasis has been placed on languages of schooling.