

Intergovernmental Conference

« *Taking into account the language dimension in all subjects for equity and quality in education and for educational success* »

Preliminary information note

1. Date and place

Council of Europe, Agora Building (Room G 02), Strasbourg, 14-15 October 2015

2. Organisation

The Conference is being organised by the Language Policy Unit - Education Policy Division, Education Department, Directorate General II. It is being held under the auspices of the Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE).

3. Aims and themes

This event will provide an opportunity for those responsible for curriculum development and teacher education (of any school subject) to reflect on the language dimension in any learning and teaching process, and how to take this dimension into account without turning all classes into language classes.

Most of the learners arrive at school with the necessary competences in the language of schooling for social and informal communication. But for the most vulnerable learners, those who use another language for informal communication or, in particular, those from poor socio-cultural backgrounds, acquiring competences in the language of schooling is a major issue. And so it is for all learners, because cognitive development is intimately linked to linguistic development.

Each school subject (history, sciences, mathematics, etc., including language as a subject in itself) uses its own forms of oral and written expression. The learners must acquire these standards in order to be able to learn the content and participate successfully in school activities. Already at this stage, social inclusion is a major issue.

It is important to distinguish between spoken and written forms. Spoken language is usually highly contextualized and often makes use of non-verbal clues. Written language on the other hand is usually more distant from the potential audience and needs to be more structured and precise. Too often it is assumed that learners with good spoken competences will acquire the written form quite naturally. And that learners with a migrant background only need support until they acquire the same level of informal and social communication as the others. However, the 'academic language', more based on the written form, is not acquired spontaneously; it must to be taught to all learners throughout the education stages.

The Committee of Ministers addressed a [Recommendation](#) to the member states on the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success.

This Recommendation (which reference is (2014)5) proposes measures to be taken by

- curriculum developers
- teachers, initial and in-service teacher trainers
- school administrative staff, and other educational players
- the Council of Europe

The Language Policy Unit has produced a Handbook which presents these measures in a more explicit and concrete way in order to support the member states in implementing them. This Handbook will be presented at the Conference and will be the basis of its programme.

4. Participants

Profile

The Conference is intended for those responsible for curriculum development and teacher training for any school subject. Therefore, we hope that two national delegates are nominated, and that the nominations indicate the functions of the delegates, their complete addresses and information about their competences in English and/or French.

Other participants may attend the Conference within the limits of available places.

Working languages

Participants should be able to work in French or English (the two official languages of the Council of Europe). Simultaneous interpretation will be provided between these two languages during the plenary sessions.

Travel and subsistence expenses

Travel and subsistence expenses shall be borne by the nominating authorities.

The Council of Europe will be able to cover the costs of about thirty participants (on the basis of one per country) upon receipt of an explicit request, which should be made in the relevant nomination. Requests will be accepted in order of arrival and within the limits of the budget available. The deadline for nominations is 6 July 2015.

5. Other information

Delegates are invited to book their hotel room as soon as possible given that important events are being held in Strasbourg in October 2015; practical information and a list of hotels are available [online](#) (see section events / practical information).

Further information as well as the draft programme and the documents for the Conference will be made available in due course on the website of the Language Policy Unit (www.coe.int/lang).

6. Nominations

Authorities are invited to send their nominations
by 6 July 2015 to the

*Language Policy Unit
Council of Europe F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex*

e-mail: language.policy@coe.int

Following receipt of the nominations of delegate(s), the Language Policy Unit will send an invitation letter directly to each participant.

Coordination of the conference:

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