



Language Education Policy Profile

ALBANIA

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Language Policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 *The origins, context and purpose of the Language Education Policy Profile*

Through its Language Policy Programme the Council of Europe offers member states assistance in carrying out analyses of their language education policies. According to the *Guidelines and Procedures*,¹

the aim is to offer member states (or regions or cities) the opportunity to undertake a ‘self-evaluation’ of their policy in a spirit of dialogue with Council of Europe Experts, and with a view to focusing on possible future policy developments within the country. [...] This does not mean ‘external evaluation’. It is a process of reflection by the authorities and members of civil society, and the Council of Europe experts have the function of acting as catalysts in this process.

The result of this process is a Language Education Policy Profile, which reports on the current position and possible future developments in language education of all kinds.

The *Language Education Policy Profile* differs from other international protocols on languages in two ways:

- It considers languages primarily from the viewpoint of education, both inside and outside national systems.
- It is based on the principle that language education should be viewed in a holistic rather than a compartmentalised fashion. Language teaching/learning concerns not only so-called foreign or second languages (to which it is usually limited) but also national/official language(s), regional and minority languages (including sign languages), languages of recently established immigrant groups, and so on.

The *Profile* process comprises six steps:

- The relevant national authority produces a Country Report that describes the current position and raises issues that are under discussion or review.
- A small number of experts selected by the Council of Europe from other member states (the ‘Expert Group’) visits the country for a week with a Council of Europe representative in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the current situation and the potential for future development. During its visit the Expert Group meets with relevant national authorities and a wide range of stakeholders, including language specialists in

¹ Document DGIV/EDU/LANG (2002) 1 Rev. 3. (www.coe.int/lang) The procedure described in this document has been revised in the light of experience. In order to shorten the process, the separate Experts’ Report and the Round Table are now omitted.

all educational sectors and representatives of civil society chosen by the national authorities (teachers' and parents' associations, business, the media, etc.). The Expert Group also visits schools and colleges.

- The Language Education Policy Profile is drafted by the Rapporteur, drawing on the Country Report and the analysis of the Expert Group, and taking account of comments and feedback received during the study visit.
- The draft Profile is discussed during a second visit to the country by the Rapporteur and revised as appropriate.
- The Profile is agreed in its final form by the Expert Group and the national authorities and published by the Council of Europe² in one of its two official languages and by the country in question.
- The Profile is launched, usually at a national event to which the Council of Europe experts contribute.

In providing comments, the Council of Europe Expert Group bears in mind both the priorities of the country in question and the policies and views of desirable practice presented in documents of the Council of Europe, in particular with respect to the promotion of plurilingual and intercultural education³ and the organisation's commitment to quality and equity in language education as key factors in promoting educational success and inclusion.⁴

1.2 Language education policy and social policy

The core objective of the Council of Europe is to preserve and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as was re-iterated in the *Warsaw Declaration* of May 2005. Within that context, crucial conditions for success are: the active involvement of citizens and civil society in democracy and governance; the promotion of a European identity and unity based on shared values; and respect for a common heritage and cultural diversity. As stated in the *European Cultural Convention* (1954), the study of languages, history and civilization is necessary in order to foster mutual understanding. The need for political, intercultural and inter-faith dialogue described in the Council of Europe's *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* of 2008 can be met only on the basis of such understanding.

² The Country Report and Profile are available online: www.coe.int/lang

³ See relevant documents of the project *Languages in Education, Languages for Education*, which can be found on the [Platform of Resources and References for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education](#). See also the guides to (i) the development of language education policies and (ii) the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education, details of which will be found in Appendix 2, sections 5 and 7 respectively.

⁴ See [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2014\)5](#), on the importance of competence in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success.

Language teaching and learning are therefore an essential part of social policy in Europe, and the analysis of language education policy is part of the effort which all member states make to develop their social policy. The Language Education Policy Profile is a contribution to this process.

1.3 Council of Europe language education policy

The language education policy of the Council of Europe is founded on the key concept of *plurilingualism*, which is not the same as *multilingualism*:

- *multilingualism* refers to the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one ‘linguistic variety’, by which is meant the mode of speaking of a social group, whether it is formally recognized as a language or not;
- *plurilingualism* refers to the repertoire of linguistic varieties used by individuals and is therefore the opposite of monolingualism; it includes the linguistic variety referred to as ‘mother tongue’ or ‘first language’ and any number of other varieties at any level of competence.

In multilingual areas it is usual for some individuals to be monolingual and others to be plurilingual.

Europe as a geographic area is multilingual, as are Council of Europe member states. The Council of Europe has developed an international consensus on principles to guide the development of language education policies. These promote plurilingualism for the individual as a central aim of all language education policy. This position is formulated in a number of documents listed in Appendix 1.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* defines plurilingualism as:

the ability to use languages for the purposes 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.⁵

Thus, plurilingualism refers to the full linguistic repertoire of the individual, and in this Profile we are concerned by implication with all language education in Albania: education in Albanian, regional and minority languages, and foreign languages.

⁵ Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. English version: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.168. Available online at www.coe.int/lang-CEFR. See also Appendix 2.

This perspective places not languages but those who speak them at the centre of language policies. The emphasis is on valuing and developing the ability of all individuals to learn and use several languages, to broaden this competence through appropriate teaching and through plurilingual education, the purpose of which is the creation of linguistic sensitivity and cultural understanding, as a basis for democratic citizenship. In this way language education serves the same agenda as the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture that the Council of Europe has recently developed.⁶

This Profile is informed by the Council of Europe position, contained in the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe⁷ and in instruments such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, and presented in detail in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*.⁸ This latter document makes clear that plurilingualism is also a fundamental aspect of policies of social inclusion and education for democratic citizenship:

By making education for democratic citizenship a priority for the Council of Europe and its member states in 1997, Heads of State and Government set out the central place of languages in the exercise of democratic citizenship in Europe: the need, in a democracy, for citizens to participate actively in political decision-making and the life of society presupposes that this should not be made impossible by lack of appropriate language skills. The possibility of taking part in the political and public life of Europe, and not only that of one's own country, involves plurilingual skills, in other words, the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with other European citizens.

The development of plurilingualism is not simply a functional necessity: it is also an essential component of democratic behaviour. Recognition of the diversity of speakers' plurilingual repertoires should lead to linguistic tolerance and thus to respect for linguistic differences: respect for the linguistic rights of individuals and groups in their relations with the state and linguistic majorities, respect for freedom of expression, respect for linguistic minorities, respect for the least commonly spoken and taught national languages, respect for the diversity of languages for inter-regional and international communication. Language education policies are intimately connected with education in the values of democratic citizenship because their purposes are complementary: language teaching, the

⁶ Council of Europe, *Competences for Democratic Culture: Living together as equals in culturally diverse societies*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2016. Available online at <http://www.coe.int/en/web/education/competences-for-democratic-culture>

⁷ See Appendix 1.

⁸ *From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe*. Revised version published in 2007 by the Language Policy Division, Council of Europe. The guide exists in a 'main' and an 'executive' version to suit the needs of different groups of readers. Available online at www.coe.int/lang, it is accompanied by a series of 21 reference studies which provide in-depth analysis of key issues mentioned in the Main Version.

ideal locus for intercultural contact, is a sector in which education for democratic life in its intercultural dimensions can be included in education systems.⁹

As a consequence, the Council of Europe's language education policy is to promote ' plurilingual and intercultural education ' as defined in the document *Plurilingual and Intercultural Education as a Project*:¹⁰

Plurilingual and intercultural education needs to be conceived as a global language education, across all languages of the school and in all disciplinary domains, which provides a basis for an identity open to linguistic and cultural plurality and diversity, insofar as languages are the expression of different cultures and of differences within the same culture. All disciplines contribute to this language education through the contents which they carry and the ways in which they are taught.

It should be noted that while the development of plurilingualism is an accepted aim of language education, its implementation is only just beginning in most countries in Europe. Measures may be more or less demanding, e.g. ministerial regulations concerning curriculum, or new forms of organisation, which may require special financial arrangements, or political decisions, implying extensive discussion at all levels.

Implementation of policies for the development of plurilingual and intercultural education can be approached in different ways, and it is not necessarily a matter of 'all or nothing'. The responses to the Language Education Policy Profile in any particular country are thus likely to vary according to that country's circumstances, history and priorities.

Over several decades the Council of Europe has developed a range of programmes and tools to foster the development of plurilingualism. More recently, in response to a concern that exists many member states, it has focused on languages of schooling and their importance for educational success, as emphasised by a Recommendation from the Committee of Ministers to member states.¹¹

⁹ From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe (main version), p.36.

¹⁰ See *A Platform of Resources and References for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education*, section 'The learner and the languages present in school'; www.coe.int/lang-platform.

¹¹ Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5 on the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success

1.4 The process of preparing the Language Education Policy Profile for Albania

This Profile is the outcome of the following:

- a preparatory meeting held in Tirana in September 2015;
- a Country Report¹² prepared under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Sport, Albania, and written by Handromaqi Haloçi, Albert Sheqi and Mihallaq Zilexhiu;
- a week-long study visit in May 2016, during which four Council of Europe experts and two members of the Council of Europe secretariat held discussions with officials, language professionals and stakeholders and visited a variety of educational institutions;¹³
- a meeting between the Rapporteur and the Albanian expert group and liaison person held in Tirana in April 2017.

The members of the Council of Europe Expert Group were: David Little (Rapporteur), Ireland; Harry Kuchah, United Kingdom; Heike Speitz, Norway; Eike Thürmann, Germany; Villano Qiriazhi and Philia Thalgott, Council of Europe secretariat.

Tatjana Vuçani, Ministry of Education and Sport, acted as Albanian liaison person and adviser.

¹² available online: www.coe.int/lang → Language Education Policy Profiles → Albania

¹³ See Appendix 3.

2 An overview of language education in Albania

This chapter provides a descriptive overview of the current situation of language education in Albania. It is heavily indebted to the Country Report, which should be read in parallel with the Profile.

2.1 *The languages of Albania*

2.1.1 Albanian

Albanian, the national language of the Republic of Albania, constitutes a separate branch of the Indo-European language family. It has two basic dialects, Gheg and Tosk, which are spoken respectively north and south of the Shkumbin river. The standard version of the language was determined by a scientific congress held in Tirana in 1972. All Albanian-speaking regions were represented and the standard that emerged has become the widely recognized official version of the language.

Albanian is also the official language of the Republic of Kosovo,¹⁴ and is spoken in Montenegro, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Italy (Arbëresh), Greece (Arvanitika), and by Albanian immigrant communities in many other countries.

2.1.2 Minority languages

The Albanian Constitution guarantees equal rights and freedoms, as well as equality before the law, for all national minorities. According to the 2011 national census, minorities made up 1.4% of the country's population. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which has been ratified by Albania,¹⁵ serves as the foundation for the protection of minorities and their fundamental rights, including the right to use and receive basic education in their languages. It also provides the basis for implementing policies concerning minorities in the country. The **Greek** and **Macedonian** communities are recognized as ethnic minorities, and the **Roma** and **Aromanian** communities as ethno-linguistic minorities. There is also a **Serb-Montenegrin ethnic minority** located mainly in the district of Shkodra. **Albanian Sign Language** was officially recognized by the Albanian government in 2014.

¹⁴ All references to Kosovo in this text, whether to the territory, institutions or population, are made in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

¹⁵ Ratified by Law No.8496 dated 3.06.1999, which took effect on 01.01 2000.

2.2 The education system of Albania

2.2.1 Legal and administrative frameworks

Whether state-run or private, educational institutions in Albania operate under the jurisdiction of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Education and Sports. The education system functions at national, regional and school levels.

At national level the **Assembly** ratifies the government programme, annual budget, and specific laws, including those affecting the education sector. The **Parliamentary Committee on Education and Media** deliberates on draft laws before their ratification by the Assembly. The **Council of Ministers** approves national or sectoral development strategies, the mid-term framework of expenditure, and the draft annual state budget; it also issues decrees and directives on the enforcement of laws. The **Ministry of Education and Sport** is the main government agency in charge of the implementation of education policy.

Five institutes support policy implementation at national level:

- The **Institute for the Development of Education** has three directorates, for curricula, standards and qualifications; didactics and teaching technologies; and policy development.
- The **National Examinations Agency** is responsible for the design of state examinations in the pre-university education system, admissions to higher education, and state examinations for regulated professions.
- The **National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualifications** is responsible for implementing reforms in vocational education and professional qualifications. Currently under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, it drafts the national list of professions and the framework curricula for education and professional qualifications, and evaluates, accredits and certifies service providers.
- The **Agency for the Accreditation of Higher Education** is responsible for assessing quality in higher education institutions, accrediting programmes of academic study, and supporting universities in the process of self-assessment.
- The **National State Inspectorate of Education** is responsible for the improvement of quality in pre-university educational services and the implementation of legal requirements in pre-university and higher education

The twelve regions of Albania and the city of Tirana each have a **Regional Education Directorate** (thirteen in all) that is responsible for implementing policy in pre-university education, managing human resources, organizing inspection schedules in public and private schools, assessing the quality of services, and organizing teacher qualification in cooperation with specialized institutions. **Education Offices**, located in 25 cities around the country, are responsible for managing human resources in their city, collecting statistical data and

information, supervising schools and their extra-curricular activities, and managing the funding of some parts of the system, such as teaching materials and resources.

At local government level, elected **District Councils** are responsible for the distribution of investment funds for municipalities in the field of education. **Municipal Councils** are responsible for allocating central government funds from state budgets such as grants for school maintenance.

At school level **School Directorates** are usually composed of the school director (principal) and three vice-directors (the number of vice-directors depends on the number of pupils attending the school). School directors are responsible for the quality of teaching in their schools and for administrative procedures as determined by the Regional Education Directorate; they report to their local Education Office or Regional Education Directorate. **Parents' Councils** are advisory bodies that are intended to strengthen relations between the school and students' families. **School Boards**, also advisory bodies, aim to involve the community and business enterprises in solving school problems.

2.2.2 Stages in formal education

Pre-school education in Albania is public or private and is not compulsory. It comprises nurseries (0–3 years) and part-time and full-time kindergartens (3–6 years). Nurseries are under the management of local government authorities, whereas kindergartens are under the management of the Ministry of Education and Sport. All pre-school education is based on programmes approved by the Ministry and designed to promote children's personal development and prepare them for school. Foreign languages are not part of the pre-school curriculum, though some private kindergartens offer simple foreign language elements. Kindergartens operating in minority areas provide teaching in the pupils' mother tongues.

Basic education starts at the age of 6 and lasts for 9 years; pupils are legally obliged to attend school until the age of 16. Basic education has two levels, elementary (Classes I–V) and secondary (classes VI–IX). At **elementary level** teaching is class-based, whereas at **secondary level** it is subject-based. In remote areas with a limited number of pupils, basic education functions in merged classes, with one teacher responsible for elementary level and two or three teachers responsible for secondary level. Basic education ends with the State Examination for Basic Education. Since 2015 the examination has comprised three mandatory subjects, Albanian, mathematics, and a foreign language (English, Italian, French or German).

All pupils who successfully complete basic education are entitled to attend high school. However, **high school education**, which lasts for three years and concludes with the State Graduation Examination (Matura), is not compulsory in Albania. There are two main school types, **comprehensive** (part-time and full-time) and **vocational**. Full-time comprehensive high schools provide pupils with an education that is designed to deepen and extend the knowledge acquired in basic education.

There are nine fields of study:

1. Arts
2. Physical education and sports
3. Foreign languages
4. Albanian language and literature
5. Career development and life skills
6. Mathematics
7. Technology and ICT (Information and Communication Technology)
8. Sciences
9. Social sciences

The curriculum reform currently in progress aims to develop seven European key competences:

1. Communication and expression
2. Thinking
3. Learning
4. Lifework and environment-related
5. Personal
6. Civic
7. Digital

The fields of study are correspondingly reduced to seven:

1. Languages and communication
2. Mathematics
3. Natural sciences
4. Society and environment
5. Arts
6. Physical education, sports and health
7. Technology and ICT

Part-time comprehensive high schools provide high school education for adults. The duration of studies is four years and students again conclude their studies by taking the State Graduation Examination.

Vocational education is available to all students who graduate from basic education. It aims to provide students with the knowledge and practical skills they need for a successful professional life while enabling them to qualify for admission to institutions of higher education.

The Law on Pre-university Education grants **private education institutions** the right to operate at all levels of pre-university education. Secular institutions that teach through Albanian must be approved by the Ministry of Education and Sport and licensed by the National Licensing Centre. Private institutions that teach through a foreign language and institutions that teach religious

subjects require special approval from the Council of Ministers; they are licensed by the National Licensing Centre.

Pupils who belong to national minorities are entitled to education in their mother tongue; they are also entitled to learn their own history and culture within the framework of the pre-university curriculum.

Higher education in Albania comprises universities, academies, professional colleges, higher education schools and inter-university centres, all of which offer accredited study programs. Altogether there are 11 public and 22 private institutions and a Centre for Albanological Studies. Higher education institutions offer full-time study and distance learning courses.

Albanian higher education has been reformed and restructured according to the principles of the Bologna Process. Studies are organized in three cycles: bachelor's (three years; 180 ECTS units), master's (two years; 120 ECTS units), and doctoral level. Integrated study programs to master's level thus comprise 300 ECTS units and last for five years. Doctoral studies are based on independent scientific research, include organized studies comprising 60 ECTS units, and last for at least three years.

Adult education is delivered in a number of ways:

- through special programmes in compulsory education offered to individuals over 16 who have not completed their basic education;
- through special programmes offered by part-time high schools to individuals interested in completing their high school studies;
- through courses in professional formation and vocational training offered to adolescents and adults by public and private centres officially recognized by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth;
- through formal or informal programmes of professional development implemented by state institutions for the training and qualification of their staff (teachers, police officers, civil servants, etc.);
- through informal training programmes implemented by private companies and businesses for their personnel;
- through informal training offered to different categories of adults by public and private institutions and organizations (especially projects organized by different donors or NGOs);
- through informal teaching and experience exchange activities offered to adults in a variety of ways.

2.3 Language education in Albania

2.3.1 Albanian as language of schooling and curriculum subject

Albanian is the language of schooling for the great majority of students; it is also a subject in its own right, comprising the curricular field ‘Languages and communication’ together with foreign languages. The curriculum for Albanian aims to enable students to

- express and interpret concepts, ideas, feelings, facts and opinions in oral and written form;
- find, compare, analyse and assess different types of information;
- understand key features of Albanian grammar;
- make appropriate and responsible use of language in social relationships;
- understand and evaluate texts from different periods of Albanian literature.

Albania first participated in PISA surveys of student performance in science, reading and mathematics in 2000. Since then, the performance of Albanian students has shown steady improvement. In the 2012 survey Albania was one of three countries (the other two were Poland and Israel) that showed the highest increase in the percentage of students achieving high results and the highest decrease in the percentage of students with low results. The results of the 2016 survey showed further improvement, but Albania remains below the OECD average, and this has led to the recent decision to separate the teaching of Albanian language and literature in order to allow teachers to focus more sharply on the development of students’ communicative abilities.

2.3.2 Education in minority languages¹⁶

The **Greek ethnic minority** is the responsibility of the Regional Education Directorate of Gjirokastra and the Education Offices in Saranda and Delvina. There are eighteen classes for the Greek minority in Delvina (118 pupils), and 24 classes in the Regional Education Directorate of Gjirokastra (227 pupils). In these schools, 78 teachers are employed to teach a total of 615 pupils. Based on agreements between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Greece, all pupils belonging to the Greek minority who study in public schools in Gjirokastra, Delvina and Saranda are provided with textbooks free of charge.

For the **Macedonian ethnic minority** there are 19 classes (148 pupils; 25 teachers) in the Regional Education Directorate of Korça, in the villages of Liqenas, Gorica e Madhe and Gorica e Vogël. Special classes are not provided for the **Serb-Montenegrin** minority.

Significant efforts have been made in recent years to improve the general situation of **Roma**, and the education of children from the Roma and Balkan-Egyptian communities has been an

¹⁶ The figures given in this section refer to the academic year 2016–2017.

important priority. Financial support has been provided to encourage improved attendance at school, and in higher education students from these communities are exempt from study fees. Romani is not a language of school instruction, but a department of Roma Language and Language Teaching opened recently at the University of Elbasan.

The 2011 national census found that there were 5,300 people with ‘total hearing loss’ in Albania, which amounts to 2.4 per 1,000 inhabitants. The Albanian government has officially recognized **Albanian Sign Language** and granted Deaf students in pre-university education the right to communication in sign language. On the basis of a Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Albanian National Association of the Deaf, a working group is currently investigating the situation of Deaf people in Albania. What promises to be an important development is still in its early stages.

2.3.3 Foreign languages at school

In **basic education** a first foreign language is compulsory and a second foreign language is optional. The languages taught are English, Italian, French and German. Pupils usually start their first foreign language in Class III and continue with it to the end of basic education. If they have not taken a foreign language in elementary school, they begin in secondary school (Class VI), with one additional class per week to help them catch up. In Class VI, a second foreign language is offered on an elective basis. The first foreign language is taught for three and the second for two classes per week.

Currently, slightly fewer than 2% of pupils in basic education do not take a foreign language, usually because they live in remote rural areas and their school has merged classes or lacks qualified teachers. In 2003–2004 this figure was 11.2%. The marked improvement since then is due to the implementation of education policies that have consistently underscored the importance of making foreign languages available to all pupils, regardless of their geographical location and social conditions.

Foreign language teaching in **high schools** follows the plan and curricula for high schools, vocational schools, foreign languages schools and bilingual school sections. Subject syllabuses are based on the curricula, which in turn aim to be in harmony with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). Pupils take the same language(s) at high school as in basic education, and again a first foreign language is obligatory while a second is optional.

There are five **foreign languages high schools** that aim to provide students with a thorough formation in two or more foreign languages in addition to the general curriculum. These schools are located in Tirana, Shkodra, Elbasan, Korça and Gjirokastra, and they offer between two and six foreign languages. They have long served as resource schools for the foreign languages faculties, which is why they are located in the same areas as these faculties. A foreign language is one of the three mandatory subjects in the State Graduation Examination for this type of high school.

Bilingual school sections offer high school education in Albanian and a foreign language. Their functioning depends on bilateral agreements with foreign governments and a supply of native speaker teachers. Schools in this category require students to learn the foreign language in question intensively from an early age (currently from Class VI of basic education), so that they acquire the linguistic competence they need to study curriculum subjects through the foreign language. To date this arrangement has worked well. Students attending bilingual school sections take a dual State Graduation Examination in which the examination for subjects taught in the foreign language is prepared by the partner country's Ministry of Education, its school office in Albania or its diplomatic service. Students attending these school sections have access to the universities of the partner country, on an equal footing with that country's nationals.

The first bilingual school section (Albanian and French) was established in 1998 in Korça, where there had been a French lycée from 1917 to 1939. Subsequently bilingual sections have been established as follows: Albanian/French in Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, and Shkodra; Albanian/Italian in Tirana, Korça and Shkodra; and Albanian/German in Tirana. Each of these schools is supported by two or three basic schools at which the foreign language in question is taught intensively by native speaker teachers.

High schools specializing in **arts and sports** are divided into four types: applied visual arts (six education branches), music (three education profiles), ballet (two education profiles), and choreography (one education profile). The duration of studies in these high schools is either three or four years, depending on the artistic specialization and the age/stage at which individual pupils begin their high school studies. Pupils are admitted on the basis of specialized aptitude tests. Schools of this type give priority to foreign languages because of their special focus and the special activities they engage in at home and abroad.

In **vocational education** a first foreign language is obligatory and a second is optional. Two foreign languages are obligatory in the school for hotel management and tourism.

2.3.3.1 State examinations and other officially sanctioned language tests

Pupils take the Basic Education Examination (BEE) at the end of basic education and the State Graduation Examination (SGE) at the end of high school. Since its introduction in 2005, the SGE has undergone several changes aimed at improving its functioning. Currently pupils take the exam in three mandatory subjects (Albanian, mathematics and a foreign language) and two electives. Those who wish to pursue higher studies in the fields of Physical Education and Sports or Fine Arts must take a professional aptitude test conducted by the relevant higher education institutions and monitored by the Ministry of Education and Sport.

At the time of the Council of Europe experts' study visit, consideration was being given to the introduction of two internationally recognized English language examinations, APTIS for Teens in basic education (British Council) and TOEFL Junior Standard in high school. In the event, however, APTIS for Teens was not used, and TOEFL Junior Standard was implemented for one school only and will not be used in future.

2.3.4 Foreign languages in higher education

A foreign language is part of the curriculum for all students who graduate from public higher education institutions in Albania; priority is given to English, French and Italian. This language learning is intended to enhance students' general education, develop their ability to communicate and access scientific literature in their chosen language, and facilitate study abroad. Depending on curricular and institutional structures, a foreign language is usually studied for two or three years. English is currently the dominant language as a result of the project 'Anglophone Albania', but there has been a recent increase in demand for French, German and Italian.

Degree programmes are provided in the following languages: English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Russian, Turkish and Greek; Chinese has also been introduced as an elective. There are two Faculties of Foreign Languages, at the universities of Tirana and Shkodra. In the other five universities there are departments of English, French, German and Greek. At the end of their higher education, students of foreign languages are awarded a degree in one of three fields: language teaching; translating and interpreting; intercultural communication and tourism.

Foreign language curricula are drafted by the academic staff of the foreign language faculties or departments and approved by the appropriate body in each institution. When a new foreign language programme is introduced at bachelor's level, the curriculum is subject to approval by the Accreditation Council of Higher Education, the Ministry of Education and Sport, and the Council of Ministers.

2.3.5 Foreign language teacher education

Language teachers in the Albanian system of public education receive their **pre-service** education from university faculties and departments of foreign languages. The Department of Slavic-Balkan Languages at the University of Tirana and the Department of Greek Language, Literature and Civilization at the University of Gjirokastra are responsible for the formation of teachers who work with ethnic minority pupils.

The programmes of study in the three-year bachelor's cycle are designed to provide students with a general foreign language education in the following areas:

1. 'Linguistics, Literature and Citizenship' of the foreign language
2. 'Translating and Interpreting'
3. 'Linguistics and Communication'

Pedagogical subjects are taught in the two-year master's cycle, followed by internships in schools monitored by qualified teachers.

In addition to learning their 'B' language, in which they graduate, students can choose a second ('C') language (40 classes, 4 ECTS credits) and a third ('D') language (40 classes, 4 ECTS credits) each academic year with a view to achieving CEFR level B1 or B2.

Because teaching is a regulated profession, students must complete second-cycle studies in the field of teaching and a professional practicum of three to four months, and pass the state examination. They must then spend an academic year working as a language teacher under the guidance of a mentor and pass the Ministry of Education and Sport's licensing exam. They are also required to take **in-service** courses designed to support their continuing professional development. These are organized at national, regional and local levels, often with the support of foreign embassies and the agencies associated with them.

2.4 The Council of Europe and language education in Albania

In 1992 Albania ratified the European Cultural Convention, which opened the door to cooperation in specific Convention-related fields such as the teaching of history and foreign languages. In 1995 Albania became the 35th member state of the Council of Europe, and in 2000 it joined the European Centre for Modern Languages. Since an Albanian translation was published in 2006, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) has frequently been referred to in discussion of curricula, assessment and teacher education. And Albania has been strongly committed to the development and implementation of the CEFR's companion piece, the European Language Portfolio. Three Albanian versions, for pupils aged 11–14 and 15+ and for students aged 18+, were developed, validated and accredited between 2008 and 2011, and three further versions were registered in 2014. The Country Report provides details of the positive findings of a survey of ELP users.

3 Some issues for consideration

3.1 The rationale for Albania's Language Education Policy Profile

The Albanian education system is currently undergoing thorough and complex reform, and language education is a priority area. According to the Country Report, Albania's principal objectives in requesting the Council of Europe's assistance in developing a Language Education Policy Profile were:

- to strengthen the plurilingual and multicultural profile of Albania;
- to prepare a document that will support the development of clear policies for language learning and teaching in Albania;
- to elaborate curricula in compliance with European standards and Albania's situation;
- to set priorities in the professional development of language teachers.

This chapter is written with these objectives in mind. It reflects the Expert Group's views on key issues identified in the Country Report and/or by the experts themselves during their study visit.

3.2 Language-related legislation and policy

Albania's legislative and administrative provisions generally comply with the Council of Europe's policies on inclusion and quality in education. However, although the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has been in force since 2000, Albania has not yet signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, although concrete and positive initiatives have been taken to support the teaching and learning of minority languages.¹⁷ Moreover, a minority law specifying rights and responsibilities on the basis of article 20 of the Albanian Constitution – also with a focus on language provision – has not yet passed the preparatory stage. But there is strong political evidence that these gaps will be closed in the near future.

Albania approaches, and in some respects has already reached, European standards as regards the structure of its educational system and its educational policies. Support agencies are in place for curriculum and quality development and national examinations; pupils graduating from high school have ready access to higher education; and significant reform is under way in the vocational domain and special needs education. During their study visit, the Council of Europe experts were able to visit schools in Tirana and Durrës and sit in on English, French, Italian and German classes. The pupils they met were keen to interact with them, and in doing so they displayed exceptionally high levels of oral proficiency.

¹⁷ Country Report, Chapter 2.2.5 (www.coe.int/lang → Language Education Policy Profiles → Albania)

It is important to recognise Albania's significant achievement in modernising its education system in general and language education in particular, in less than three decades. Russian as lingua franca of the Eastern bloc countries has been replaced by large-scale provision of English, French, Italian and German in elementary, secondary and high schools. This required a rapid, sustained and mostly top-down effort of reform, and notwithstanding the impressive achievements of some classrooms, a number of challenges, concerns and needs inevitably remain. These must be addressed if quality and efficiency in language education are to be developed at all levels of the system.

3.3 Languages of schooling

Albanian is the principal language of education in Albania, though as was noted in Chapter 2, there is legal provision for children of national minorities to be educated in their respective mother tongues, and Albanian Sign Language has been recognised as an appropriate medium of Deaf education. The Country Report insists on Albania's commitment to the implementation of the Council of Europe's policies in language education, in which plurilingualism plays a key role; and the inclusion of Albanian with foreign languages in the curricular field 'Languages and communication' points clearly in this direction. But the establishment of plurilingualism as a key competence would entail bringing Albanian and other languages of instruction into explicit interaction with foreign languages at the levels of policy, curriculum, teacher education and classroom practice. It would also entail introducing a new emphasis on the linguistic dimension of teaching across the curriculum in order to further raise academic achievement. As part of this process, consideration should be given to providing pupils from the Roma community with instruction in Romani.¹⁸ Work in these areas should be seen as an essential dimension of Albania's continuing 'Europeanisation'.

The resources developed by the Council of Europe's project *Languages in Education, Languages for Education* are designed to support the articulation of a language education policy that facilitates an integrated approach to language teaching and learning. According to such an approach, all teachers, whether of the language of schooling as subject, of second/foreign languages, or of other curriculum subjects, have a vested interest in and responsibility for the development of pupils' language competences.¹⁹

The Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on 'the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success'²⁰ recalls that 'the right to education can be fully exercised only if learners

¹⁸ The Council of Europe's *Curriculum Framework for Romani* (www.coe.int/lang → Romani) which is based on CEFR levels A1–B2, could be helpful in this regard, as could the ECML's QualiRom Training and Consultancy project

(<http://www.ecml.at/TrainingConsultancy/QualiRom/tabid/1693/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>)

¹⁹ www.coe.int/lang-platform → Languages of schooling

²⁰ [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2014\)5](http://www.coe.int/t/t09/Recommendation_CM/Rec(2014)5)

master the specific linguistic rules that are applied in schools and are necessary for access to knowledge'; and that 'such linguistic competences are one of the factors in educational success and that they are a prerequisite for undertaking further qualifying academic or vocational education and training, and therefore important for participation in society and sustainable inclusion'. This Recommendation provides a political basis for reviewing national language education policies, and its [Explanatory Memorandum](#) offers insights on principles and measures that can be taken.

3.3.1 Albanian as a second/foreign and heritage language

Learners of Albanian as a second/foreign and heritage language fall into four broad groups: the Albanian diaspora in Europe and beyond, some members of which are likely to return to Albania in the future; minorities living in Albania; immigrants to Albania; and learners of Albanian in other countries. It is important to develop a strategic plan to support the teaching and learning of Albanian in other countries and to prepare for the linguistic and educational integration of immigrants and children of Albanian families returning from abroad. The descriptors that define the proficiency levels of the CEFR are non-language-specific; Reference Level Descriptions add language-specific substance to the descriptors, for example, grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic and sociolinguistic information. As a medium-term project, a Reference Level Description of Albanian should be created to guide the development of curricula, teaching and learning materials, and assessment.²¹

3.3.2 The special challenge of Deaf education

It is clear from the Country Report²² that Deaf education presents Albania with a significant challenge. A recent survey of Deaf people over the age of 18 found that 61 per cent were illiterate, 37 per cent had difficulty in understanding written text in Albanian, and only 2 per cent had satisfactory reading skills. Asked to assess the communication skills of their teacher, 97 per cent of respondents reported that their teacher had poor communication skills, and 3 per cent that their teacher had average communication skills; none of the respondents assessed their teacher's skills positively. As noted in Chapter 2, on the basis of a Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Albanian National Association of the Deaf (ANAD), a working group is currently investigating the situation of Deaf people in Albania. When they met the Council of Europe experts, members of the Deaf community explained that their goal is to establish a scheme that trains Deaf speakers of Albanian Sign Language (ASL) to act not only as classroom assistants but as teachers of ASL to hearing teachers. This is a measure that deserves the full support of the Ministry of Education and Sport because it promises to transform the Deaf

²¹ www.coe.int/lang-CEFR → Levels → Reference Level Descriptions

²² Country Report, Chapter 2.2.4

community's access to mainstream education, which for the Council of Europe is a fundamental human right.²³

Achieving such a transformation will not be easy. Like spoken languages, sign languages are acquired interactively from other people; but most Deaf children are born to hearing parents, so they cannot easily acquire sign language in the home, and if they live in remote areas regular contact with other Deaf people may be difficult, even impossible. In some countries residential schools provide Deaf children with access to sign language via membership of a signing community, but no such schools exist in Albania. These factors will need to be taken into account when planning educational provision through ASL. Already essential foundations have been laid. Since 2000 the ANAD has been cooperating with the Finnish Association for the Deaf and Humak University of Applied Sciences (Finland). In 2003 ANAD began to research and document ASL; the first dictionary of the language was published in 2005 (a second edition appeared in 2016); and in 2007 a study of the grammar of ASL was launched with a view to establishing a standard variety.

The Council of Europe recognises sign languages as 'a complete and natural means of communication for deaf people' (Recommendation 1598 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly),²⁴ and they are addressed in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*²⁵ and in a Reference Study.²⁶ PROSIGN, a project of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) from 2012 to 2015, has developed a website containing: definitions of CEFR proficiency levels for sign languages; sign language videos and links to related projects and activities; an assessment cycle for language proficiency in sign languages; and ideas for making good use of the CEFR in relation to sign languages. The ECML's current four-year programme (2016–2019) includes a project on promoting excellence in sign language instruction. Although Albania is a member of the ECML, it has not participated in either of these projects, both of which could support current developments concerning ASL. The results of both projects can nevertheless be used by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the ANAD

3.3.3 Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)

Foreign languages are used as languages of instruction in bilingual high school sections, and at their meeting with the Council of Europe experts, representatives of parents' organisations expressed a strong interest in the expansion of CLIL in schools generally. One way forward might be to introduce a scheme of special teacher education that would exploit the fact that a foreign language is an obligatory part of the university curriculum for students in all faculties,

²³ European Convention on Human Rights, Protocol, Article 2.

²⁴ Recommendation 1598 (2003) on the protection of [Sign languages](#) in the member states of the Council of Europe

²⁵ See Appendix 2: From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe - Chapter. 4.1.1.1

²⁶ L. Leeson, [Signed Languages in Education in Europe – a preliminary exploration](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe – Language Policy, 2006.

creating a cohort of Albanian teachers capable of teaching certain school subjects in their chosen foreign language.

Albania's investment in bilingual high school sections and CLIL prompts the question: How effectively does higher education exploit and build on foreign language competences developed at school? In the private sector it is possible to take joint degrees, mostly in Albanian and Italian; perhaps public universities should be encouraged to offer bilingual programmes in Albanian/English, Albanian/French, Albanian/German and Albanian/Italian. The introduction of such programmes would enhance the quality of higher education provision while expanding the range of opportunities available to students.

3.4 Foreign language curriculum reform and textbooks

Foreign language education has been in a state of more or less continuous reform since the mid-1990s. In 2000 the Ministry of Education and Sport approved the introduction of a content-based national curriculum, which was replaced in 2005 by an objectives-based curriculum, which is currently being replaced by a competence-based curriculum. The parents' representatives who met the Expert Group were clearly suffering from reform-fatigue, and discussions with teachers failed to reveal clearly to what extent successive curricular reforms have led to changes in classroom practice. According to the Country Report, foreign language curriculum reform has been guided by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* since its translation into Albanian in 2007²⁷. This is clearly reflected in the general orientation of the reform in progress. However, further stages of the reform might benefit from a more in-depth reflection informed not only by the CEFR but by other instruments developed by the Language Policy Programme.²⁸ The recently published *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* (2016), for example, offers guidance and resources that could be particularly useful.

It is important to recognize that curricular reform has – or should have – significant consequences for pedagogical practice. It is, after all, a long way from traditional grammar-translation teaching and assessment to teaching, evaluation strategies and standards that focus on the development of the learner's competences. A competence-based approach is highly complex and presupposes a detailed understanding of social-constructivist language learning principles and their implications for the roles of teachers and learners. It raises important questions about the nature of the knowledge ('competence') language teaching should seek to develop, and its successful implementation depends on learners acquiring and exploiting language learning skills and strategies. In other words, the curriculum reform currently in train implies a critical reconsideration of language learning, teaching and assessment at all levels of the educational system. It also has important implications for language teacher education.

²⁷ [Kuadri i Përbashkët Evropian i Referencës për Gjuhët: Të mësuarit, të nxënë, vlerësimi](#)

²⁸ See Appendix 2 (section 5).

The adoption of a competence-based curriculum is evidently consistent with the desire to equip citizens with the skills they need if they are to succeed in an increasingly competitive multicultural Europe. The same desire may explain the decision to use textbooks produced for the international market by foreign publishers. Such textbooks have the undeniable advantage that they are written by native speakers of the language in question; but the principles of plurilingualism and interculturalism require that foreign language education takes account of the interests and expectations of learners in their own cultural context. Materials written by native speakers for the international market may provide native-speaker authenticity and enrich students' understanding of the cultures of the target language communities, but they cannot take account of the Albanian cultural context in relation to the target language. It is fundamental to the Council of Europe's principles that plurilingualism and multiculturalism include the learner's own language and culture.

The Albanian curricular system – its general framework, subject-specific programmes, directives for general implementation, and directives for particular subjects – does not reach down to the level of planning and evaluation (teaching units and lessons) in individual schools. One way of making good this shortfall would be to empower language teachers to set up school-specific competence-based curricula: working plans designed to enrich textbook-based activities by adding appropriate sociocultural content. Schools could be provided with a common grid for developing working plans and a handbook explaining what the grid is good for and how to use it. In time, teachers might be expected to base (say) 70% of their teaching on pre-fabricated textbook materials and the rest on material geared to the Albanian context. Such an arrangement would be fully harmonious with the structure of the education system: curricula are determined at national level, administrative issues are dealt with at regional level, and the quality of teaching is the responsibility of the individual school.

3.4.1 Early foreign language learning

In Albania the overwhelming majority of pupils start learning their first foreign language in Class III of elementary school. This is the result of a major reform effort that has been carried through in a relatively short period of time, for which the Albanian authorities deserve the highest praise.

Although the expert group did not visit foreign language classes in elementary schools or talk to teachers at that level, the following observations seem to be in order. During the past two decades many other European countries have introduced early foreign language learning, and experience has shown that pedagogical approaches suited to children aged between 6 and 10/11 differ in a number of ways from the approaches generally used in secondary education. This raises three questions for the Albanian authorities. First, what kinds of pre-service teacher education and subsequent task-based mentoring are needed in order to establish a specific professional profile for foreign language teachers at elementary level? (Minimally the profile should include a high level of proficiency in the chosen foreign language and detailed knowledge of the psycho-social development of young learners.) Second, should experts from other

European countries with long-standing experience in the field of early foreign language teaching be invited to support a programme of in-service courses for language teachers who have qualified to teach at lower secondary level? (It is worth noting in this connection that several recent projects of the ECML have developed instruments and resources to support early language learning.) And third, how can schools be provided with textbooks and other teaching materials geared to the specific needs of young learners?

3.4.2 Foreign languages in vocational education

In vocational high schools, foreign languages are taught with two objectives in mind: to prepare students for higher education in much the same way as other types of high school and to develop skills appropriate to the workplace as in the British Council's 'English for Skills (ICT)' programme, which is taught for four months shortly before the State Graduation Examination. One problem faced by foreign language teaching in this domain is the fact that responsibility is divided between the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Social Welfare; another is the reported tendency for language education to be given priority only in the ICT and hospitality domains. Other education systems in Europe have faced similar challenges to those Albania is currently experiencing. Their solution has been to develop robust and practical strategies to harmonise the requirements of general and vocational education by re-organising the curriculum framework and examination system under the aegis of one ministry and to involve other ministries and agencies (chambers of commerce, employers, trade unions) in the decision-making process and the development of syllabuses for individual subject areas. Examples can be found in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands.

3.5 Foreign language assessment

The Basic Education Examination (BEE) is taken at the end of compulsory education (Class IX) and the State Graduation Examination (SGE) at the end of high school. For all subjects both exams comprise 13 multiple-choice and 12 open-ended questions; they last for two and two and a half hours respectively. The BEE is a low-stakes exam because its results have no influence on the next level of education, whereas the SGE is high-stakes because its results have a direct impact on subsequent education and career options. In foreign languages, both exams focus exclusively on reading and writing. This means that they cannot adequately evaluate the learning that a competence-based curriculum is designed to promote. This is a major challenge for the Albanian system. The CEFR brings curriculum, teaching/learning and assessment into a closer relation of interdependence than has traditionally been the case. In order to do justice to the ambition of the competence-based curriculum, Albania needs to engage in long-term capacity building in language testing and assessment.

According to the Country Report, the Ministry of Education and Sport and the National Examinations Agency have decided to offer foreign tests of language proficiency as part of BEE and SGE. When they are developed in Europe such tests are usually aligned with the CEFR, and an argument in their favour is that they would support certification in accordance with the standards required for admission to foreign universities. The French, Italian and German

bilingual school sections already use tests from France, Italy and Germany, but this is a special case. Success in French, Italian and German tests allows Albanian students to compete for university places in France, Italy and Germany on an equal footing with nationals of those countries. As regards the Albanian education system generally, however, the same argument applies to foreign tests as was applied in section 3.4 to foreign textbooks. Essentially, an Albanian curriculum requires Albanian assessment, and school-leavers should be able to take an achievement test that is demonstrably rooted in the curriculum they have followed.

3.6 Foreign language teacher education

According to the Country Report, approximately 700 students are admitted to the Faculty of Foreign Languages each year (this number is proposed by the faculty and approved by the Ministry of Education and Sport). Until the school year 2016–2017 the faculty did not set the criteria for student admissions, and students could register even if they did not know the language they intended to study. This gave rise to serious concerns about the quality of entrants and contributed to the high failure rate at the end of the first year (almost 33 per cent). Now, however, the faculty sets its own entrance criteria. When academic staff of the faculty met the Council of Europe experts, they argued that students should be admitted to bachelor's level only if they have a certified B1 proficiency level in their chosen language. The Expert Group believes that it would also be appropriate to require a higher proficiency level for admission to postgraduate (master's cycle) studies in foreign language teaching.

University education is generally academic rather than professional in nature. This explains why in many countries teacher education is the responsibility of specialised units, often located in universities. In Albania, pre-service teacher education is embedded in an educational trajectory determined by the Bologna process. Consideration might be given to developing a specialised postgraduate teacher training programme run by academics with prior experience of school teaching and/or ongoing involvement in school-based research and professional development. Within such a programme, it would be necessary to make separate provision for the different levels of pre-university education. As noted in section 3.4.1, using teachers trained in the pedagogies of secondary education to teach young learners ignores the specific needs of children and could easily work against the success of early foreign language learning. Other context-specific factors to consider in designing a teacher education curriculum include procedures for teaching large and/or mixed-level classes, reflective practice, and the promotion of different forms of teacher research.

3.6.1 Selection, assessment and retention of foreign language teachers

The need for high quality language teachers at all levels of the system is an argument for requiring minimum proficiency levels for admission to first and second-cycle programmes in the Faculty of Foreign Languages. After three years of undergraduate and two years of postgraduate

studies, would-be teachers are required to spend an extra year as mentees in a school. Opportunities for mentoring are limited and it seems that some graduates are unable to find a school to work in. Those who do, and pass the licensing and accreditation examination at the end of their mentoring period, are ranked for purposes of employment. This measure was recently introduced in the interest of transparency and to discourage corruption.

As regards assessment for accreditation, the Expert Group believes that consideration might usefully be given to introducing a reflective portfolio which could include the views of learners and mentors as well as the mentee's own account of and critical engagement with his or her pedagogical experience during the mentoring period.

3.6.2 Teacher development and the role of the teachers' associations

The Country Report provides a detailed overview of the different forms of in-service education available to foreign language teachers in Albania, but the extent to which current provision is driven by the pedagogical implications of curricular reform was unclear to the Expert Group. It is important to recognise that teachers can commit themselves to professional development in a variety of ways – by attending courses in Albania or abroad, for example, or taking the lead in school-based developments, or playing an active role in professional associations. This prompts the question: How can such very different activities be taken into account in developing teachers' certified career profiles? A reflective portfolio in which teachers record and engage critically with their classroom experience and professional development might again provide part of an answer.

Albania is fortunate in having very active and successful teacher associations that support the development of foreign language education in two ways: directly by organizing conferences, seminars and training sessions, and indirectly through the international links they establish by inviting foreign experts to contribute to their activities. In 2014, for example, the English Language Teachers' Association won the IATEFL²⁹ and International House Training Award. This included funding to bring an English language teacher trainer from the UK to train Albanian teacher trainers (members of the ELTA) in the different regions of the country. The training was based on the specific needs of the ELTA membership and the content was developed collaboratively by the ELTA and International House London. As an associate of IATEFL, the ELTA has access to information and ideas from around the world as well as to other scholarship opportunities to support the professional development of its members. The Ministry of Education and Sport might wish to consider establishing its collaboration with the teachers' associations on a more formal footing, perhaps in the form of a memorandum of understanding.

It is worth noting that the ECML in Graz³⁰ and the Language Policy Programme in Strasbourg³¹ have developed resources that could support a review and reform of language teacher education.

²⁹ International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language

³⁰ www.ecml.at

3.7 Quality development

In Albania as in many other European education systems, responsibility for quality development is shared vertically and horizontally: vertically from the Ministry of Education and Sport through the Regional Education Directorates and Education Offices to the directorate of the individual school; and horizontally across the various support agencies for pre-university education that operate under the aegis of the Ministry and lay the groundwork for external and internal evaluation. This structural complexity requires that transparent quality criteria and reliable procedures are shared by agencies at all levels.

As regards foreign language education, the following quality-related questions are offered for consideration by the Ministry of Education and Sport and other language education stakeholders:

- To what extent are the test formats and achievement levels of the state examinations (BEE and SGE) likely to correspond to the new competence-based curricular standards for foreign languages?
- To what extent and in what way are the descriptive scheme and proficiency levels of the CEFR (A2/B1, B2/C1) used to guide the construction, administration and grading of national examinations? It should be noted in this regard that in order to encourage coherence and transparency at European level, the Council of Europe provides a wide range of tools to help assessment agencies to link their tests and examinations to the CEFR's proficiency levels.³²
- How could the psychometric expertise of the National Examinations Agency be used to help the language experts of the Institute for the Development of Education and the providers of pre-service language teacher education to develop data-based strategies to improve language teaching and to design and deliver national and regional support programmes?
- Are teachers provided with the necessary training and support to take responsibility for improving the quality of teaching at the level of the school or network of schools? Could the reflective portfolio referred to in section 3.6.1 play a role in improving the quality of teaching?
- The accreditation examination taken by would-be teachers at the end of the mentoring process tests the knowledge and competences acquired during the first and second cycles of university study. Should consideration be given to replacing this duplication by an assessment process that focuses on language teaching skills and professional aptitude?

³¹ See, for example, *Teacher education: Language issues in multilingual educational contexts – Sensitising subject student teachers for language issues and cultural perspectives*; (Platform of Resources... www.coe.int/lang-platform → Languages of schooling)

³² www.coe.int/lang-CEFR → Evaluation

3.8 Bilateral partnerships

Much support for foreign language education in Albania derives from bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding with embassies and various other agencies and cultural institutions. Individual projects – for example, bilingual sections, foreign languages high schools, and schools in remote areas – are the beneficiaries of substantial foreign investment that takes a variety of forms: seconded teachers, volunteer teaching assistants, visiting experts, equipment and media. Decisions concerning bilingual sections are taken jointly by representatives of the countries concerned and the MoES.

4 Looking forward

This chapter contains some proposals for reflection and possible action in response to the issues raised by the Council of Europe experts and summarized in Chapter 3. It rests on the assumption that in its follow-up to the process reported in this Profile, Albania will seek to draw maximum benefit from Council of Europe policy instruments and ECML projects.

4.1 Language-related legislation and policy

Consideration might be given to Albania signing the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.³³ This would help to consolidate the legal basis for developing and implementing a social policy that supports multilingualism and an educational policy that promotes plurilingualism (see especially Article 8 of the Charter). Drafting and ratifying a law on the linguistic rights of minorities at national level would support this process. At the same time, measures could usefully be taken to make all interest groups aware of Council of Europe documents on language education policy and their relation to the relevant documents issued by the Ministry of Education and Sport.

4.2 Languages of schooling

4.2.1 Albanian

The Council of Europe's project *Languages in Education, Languages for Education* has emphasized that plurilingual education presupposes strong links between the second and foreign languages of the curriculum and the language dimension of other subjects (see Appendix 2 for a complete list of Council of Europe instruments and resources). A first step in developing such links might be to engage all stakeholders in an investigation of how to create a fruitful interaction among all languages present in the school: Albanian as language of schooling, second and foreign languages of the curriculum (including minority languages), and languages spoken by students outside school but not included in the curriculum.

The Ministry of Education and Sport has already developed materials to support the learning of Albanian as language of schooling by members of the Albanian diaspora, and in-service teacher training is provided in an annual national seminar of 3–4 days. Support is also provided for speakers of Albanian in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Switzerland (books are supplied to students free of charge). The further development of this support could make use of Council of Europe instruments and resources. For example, it would be possible to draw on the CEFR to produce a document to guide the development of specific

³³ www.coe.int/minlang

programmes of teaching and learning, the development of teaching/learning materials, and the design of assessment instruments. Such a document might follow the example of the *Curriculum Framework for Romani*³⁴ in drawing on the communicative language activities described in Chapter 4 of the CEFR, but complement these by adding language-specific elements as specified in Chapter 5.

4.2.2 Romani

As reported in section 2.3.2, significant steps have been taken to improve the educational situation of the Roma population. Efforts have been made to encourage regular school attendance, and Roma students receive school books free of charge. The next step is to address the linguistic issue, and to this end the Ministry of Education and Sport might begin by undertaking an investigation of the range of challenges involved. Support could be provided by the ECML's QualiRom Training and Consultancy offer, which seeks to promote quality education in Romani within a human rights perspective.³⁵ Use could also be made of the *Curriculum Framework for Romani*, the European Language Portfolio models developed for learners of Romani aged 6–11 and 11–16,³⁶ and the teaching/learning materials produced by the EU/ECML QualiRom project.³⁷

4.2.3 Albanian Sign Language

Section 3.3.2 refers to the substantial progress that has been made in this area, which includes the decision to redevelop the Institute for Deaf Children as a resource centre. The Ministry of Education and Sport will continue to encourage the development of curricula, teaching materials and programmes for Deaf students in schools (including high school) and universities. Training opportunities will also be created for classroom assistants and interpreters to facilitate communication between Deaf students and hearing teachers and between the Deaf and hearing communities. These developments could usefully draw on the materials developed by the ECML's PROSIGN project,³⁸ and Albania will seek to become actively involved in the ECML's current and future work in this area.

4.2.4 CLIL

As noted in section 3.3.3, although some schools have bilingual sections, CLIL is not provided in public higher education (it is, however, available in some private universities). This means that students' investment in their plurilingual development is interrupted unless they choose and have the resources to study abroad. The Ministry of Education and Sport will encourage universities to

³⁴ <http://rm.coe.int/a-curriculum-framework-for-romani-developed-in-co-operation-with-the-e/16805a2ab9>.

³⁵ <http://www.ecml.at/TrainingConsultancy/QualiRom/tabid/1693/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

³⁶ These documents are available at www.coe.int/lang → Romani

³⁷ qualirom.uni-graz.at

³⁸ <http://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2012-2015/ProSign/tabid/1752/Default.aspx>

develop programmes that enable students to pursue their academic studies partly through a foreign language. Such programmes might entail collaboration with foreign universities and practical arrangements similar to those that obtain in bilingual school sections.

4.3 Foreign language curriculum reform and textbooks

The current curriculum reform involves a shift from an objectives-based to a competence-based philosophy. This is especially important for language education and comes to meet the underlying assumptions of the CEFR and the ELP. Successful implementation will depend on making the reform clear to all relevant stakeholders – teachers, parents, employers, etc. To this end consideration might be given to producing practical subject-specific guides for teachers.

Section 3.4 noted that the parents’ representatives who met the Council of Europe experts showed signs of reform-fatigue. In this regard, it is important to make clear to all stakeholders that it takes time for reform to work its way down through the system to classroom level and still more time before it has a measurable impact.

Widespread dissatisfaction with Albanian textbooks led to the introduction of foreign textbooks in 2005; this marked an important step forward in terms of quality improvement. At the same time, as pointed out in section 3.4, it is fundamental to the Council of Europe’s principles that plurilingualism includes the learner’s own language and culture. By definition, materials written for the international market cannot accommodate this dimension. It might therefore be worth developing guidelines to help teachers exploit and supplement their textbooks in ways that bring out the Albanian dimension in foreign language learning.

4.3.1 Early language learning

For the reasons set out in section 3.4.1, the needs of learners at this level should be a priority. In order to meet those needs it is suggested that pedagogical universities should train teachers who have a profile that includes foreign languages, and that students in the foreign language faculties of universities should be provided with the pedagogical and psychological knowledge and skills needed to teach in elementary schools. In following up on these suggestions consideration might be given to the questions raised in 3.4.1 and the possibility of seeking the support of foreign experts might be appropriate.

4.3.2 Vocational education

Priority should be given to the teaching of languages for relevant vocational purposes. The Ministry of Education and Sport has already conducted projects in this domain: English for Skills (hotels and tourism) and English for the World of Work (ICT and economics). Further developments might usefully include other languages and draw on the experience of other countries referred to in section 3.4.2.

4.4 Foreign language assessment

As noted in section 3.5, the competence-based curriculum implies an assessment regime that includes listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. Consideration needs to be given to adjusting the public exams to reflect the broader goals of the new curriculum. Within the framework of plurilingual education, this applies to Albanian as well as to foreign languages. One way of addressing this challenge, at least in the short term, might be to give schools responsibility for assessing listening and speaking (this happens already in bilingual schools). But in the longer term, Europeanization requires a new form of public exam. Developments in this area could draw on the various tools and resources that the Council of Europe has provided to support the alignment of language assessment with the proficiency levels of the CEFR.

Section 3.5 refers to the need to establish a pool of Albanian experts in language testing and assessment. One way of building capacity in this area would be to arrange for appropriately qualified Albanian graduates to receive training in language testing agencies in other countries.

4.5 Foreign language teacher education

4.5.1 Pre-service

It was suggested in section 4.3.1 that universities should introduce modules that prepare students to teach foreign languages at elementary level. Another development worth considering concerns methodology modules. At present these are taught in Albanian by lecturers from the Faculty of Education. If they were taught partly through the foreign languages of the faculty this would bring a significant quality enhancement because it would prepare students to benefit more effectively from in-service seminars provided by foreign experts in their own language.

Consideration should be given to introducing the use of reflective portfolios in pre-service language teacher education. The structure of such portfolios is sometimes determined by the individual student teacher following general guidelines and sometimes by the faculty in question. It would also be possible to use the ECML's EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages), which can be adapted to the needs of specific programmes of language teacher education. It should be noted that EPOSTL has already been introduced at the University of Elbasan.

4.5.2 In-service

The criteria for the professional development of teachers include the requirement that they undertake 18 hours of in-service each year for three credits, following a programme based on an analysis of teachers' needs. This structure does not, however, provide a very clear developmental path. One possible innovation might be to add a reflective dimension to the existing teacher's portfolio, which currently has three parts: (i) a biography or *curriculum vitae*, (ii) certificates awarded, and (iii) a record of courses taught (aims, materials used, etc.). The addition of a

reflective section would allow teachers to engage critically with their pedagogical experience over an extended period of time.

Every few years the Institute of Educational Development undertakes a needs analysis to determine priorities in in-service teacher education. The result of the analysis is offered to all possible agencies so that they can prepare modules that are submitted for validation by the Ministry of Education and Sport's committee for professional development. In the future, the Ministry would like the universities to accept sole responsibility for developing the in-service modules. Consideration might also be given to including the views of students in the needs analysis.

Teachers need regular and well-designed in-service training if the current curricular reform is to be successful; such training, provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Institute of Educational development, offers the means of introducing teachers to practical guidelines of the kind mentioned in section 4.3. Alternatively, guidelines might be mediated to teachers via the networks of advisors recently established to work at school level.

4.5.3 Licensing of teachers

Chapter 3 refers to the fact that the licensing exam covers the same ground as the student teachers' final exams. There are, however, anti-corruption reasons for this duplication. In this context too it might be worth using a reflective portfolio as a supplementary assessment instrument in the licensing of teachers and a means of distinguishing between the two exams. In their portfolio students would be required to make explicit links between their practical classroom experience and the more theoretical elements of the licensing exam and their university education.

4.5.4 Teacher Associations

Consideration should be given to establishing collaboration between the language teachers' associations and the Ministry of Education and Sport on a more formal footing via a memorandum of agreement, as suggested in section 3.6.2. Such a memorandum might usefully include provision for greater collaboration between the different associations. It might also encourage the associations to look for ways of benefiting from ECML projects, materials and publications, and to assume a leadership role in promoting use of the ELP in basic and high school education.

4.6 Quality development

The Ministry of Education and Sport is committed to quality development in Albania's education system generally and has made significant efforts in this direction. Section 3.7 gave some examples of quality issues that could usefully be explored further. It would be worth inviting the universities and language teacher associations to launch projects that engage with these issues and promote stakeholder involvement in quality improvement.

4.7 Summary conclusion

Albania is fully aware of the importance of languages for its future development and is strongly committed to expanding national capacity. Significant progress has been made since the beginning of the democratic process in Albania in 1991, and over the past twenty years the progressive Europeanization of language education has been informed and in part shaped by the Council of Europe's language education policy and the various instruments that have been developed to support that policy.

The current reform of the curriculum marks an important further step and offers vital points of contact with the Council of Europe's concept of plurilingual education. As in most other countries, however, more work remains to be done, especially as regards bringing all languages present in a given educational institution into fruitful interaction with one another: Albanian as language of schooling and curriculum subject; minority and foreign languages of the curriculum; minority languages that are not part of the curriculum. The Council of Europe manuals listed in Appendix 2 and various projects of the European Centre for Modern Languages provide a wide range of support for countries responding to this challenge.

Language education in Albania is fortunate in being able to depend on a cohort of well-trained and committed teachers, language teacher associations that have developed strong international links, and international partners who contribute generously to the teaching and learning of their languages in Albanian schools. With the strong support of these and other stakeholders, Albania can face the future with confidence and optimism.

Appendix 1 Documents formulating the position of the Council of Europe on language education policy

CONVENTIONS:

- [European Cultural Convention](#) (1954)
- [European Charter](#) for Regional or Minority Languages [www.coe.int/minlang]
- [Framework Convention](#) for the Protection of National Minorities [www.coe.int/minorities]

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

- *Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe* - www.coe.int/T/CM
 - o Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5 to member States on the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success
 - o Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13E to member States on ensuring quality education
 - o [Recommendation R \(2008\)7](#) on *The use of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the promotion of plurilingualism*
 - o [Recommendation R \(98\) 6](#) based on the results of the CDCC Project 'Language Learning for European Citizenship' (1989 – 1996)
 - o [Recommendation R \(82\)18](#) based on the results of the CDCC Project N° 4 ('Modern Languages 1971-1981')
- *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* www.assembly.coe.int
(Recommendations are addressed to the Committee of Ministers)
 - o [Recommendation 2034 \(2014\)](#) on Integration tests: helping or hindering integration?
 - o Recommendation 1740 (2006) on [The place of the mother tongue in school education](#)
 - o Recommendation 1598 (2003) on the protection of [Sign languages](#) in the member states of the Council of Europe
 - o Recommendation 1539 (2001) on the [European Year of Languages 2001](#)
 - o Recommendation 1383 (1998) on [Linguistic Diversification](#) (CM(99)97)
- *Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education*
 - o [Resolution](#) on the *European Language Portfolio* adopted at the 20th Session of the Standing Conference (Krakow, Poland, October 2000)

These instruments and recommendations provide the legal and political basis for language education policies at all levels which not only facilitate the acquisition of a repertoire of language varieties – linguistic diversity for the plurilingual individual – but also ensure that attention is paid to diversification of the options for language learning. The latter refers to the need to encourage and enable the learning of a wide range of languages, not only those which have been dominant in language teaching traditions, and not only the contemporary demand for English.

Attention is drawn to the Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5 on languages of schooling as so far, most documents have mainly considered modern/foreign languages. There is, however, a need to include national/official languages in language education policies because they are part of the linguistic repertoire of individuals when these languages are the language(s) of schooling / instruction. In the third part of the [Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe](#), options for the implementation of policies include the teaching and learning of national/official languages, which for many, but not all individuals, are their mother tongue/first language.

Appendix 2 Council of Europe instruments

SECTION CONTENTS

Foreign/Modern Languages

1. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)*
 - The CEFR and language examinations: a toolkit
 - Manual for relating Language Examinations to the CEFR
2. European Language Portfolio (ELP)

Languages in Education, Languages for Education

- A website:
 3. Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education
- Main publications:
 4. *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe and related Reference Studies*
 5. *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education, 2016*
 6. *A Handbook for Curriculum Development and Teacher Training. The Language Dimension in All Subjects. 2016*

These documents and further resources are available on the Language Policy Programme websites: www.coe.int/lang and dedicated websites

FOREIGN / MODERN LANGUAGES

1. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)* www.coe.int/lang-CEFR

Developed through a process of scientific research and wide consultation, this document provides a practical tool for setting clear standards to be attained at successive stages of learning and for evaluating outcomes in an internationally comparable manner. The CEFR provides a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications, thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility. It is increasingly used in the reform of national curricula and by international consortia for the comparison of language certificates. The CEFR is a document which describes in a comprehensive manner

- the competences necessary for communication

- the related knowledge and skills
- the situations and domains of communication

The CEFR facilitates the clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods. It provides the necessary tools for assessment of proficiency. The CEFR is of particular interest to course designers, textbook writers, testers, teachers and teacher trainers – in fact to all who are directly involved in language teaching and testing. It is the result of extensive research and ongoing work on communicative objectives, as exemplified by the popular 'Threshold level' concept. The success of this standard-setting document has led to its widespread use at all levels in Europe and across the world.

The CEFR exists to date in 40 language versions:

- English version of the [CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment](#), 2001, Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 0521005310
- Albanian version: [Kuadri i Përbashkët Evropian i Referencës për Gjuhët: Të mësuarit, të nxënës, vlerësimi](#), 2007, Ministria e Arsimit dhe e Shkencës, Tiranë.

A new exhaustive website dedicated to the CEFR has been produced in 2017 which provides extended material and resources.

→ The CEFR and language examinations

The CEFR is accompanied by a number of supporting publications which are available on the CEFR website (section [Resources](#)).

In relation to the CEFR's particular influence on language assessment, a number of tools were developed and made available to assessment providers and other practitioners with an interest in language testing. See section [Tests and Examinations](#)

The section [Levels](#) includes tools such as material illustrating the levels of the CEFR, for example compendia of case studies on the use of the CEFR, the CEFR descriptors and a bank of supplementary descriptors.

The section [Learning, Teaching, Assessment](#) provides tools for curricula but also resources for the use of the CEFR in the classroom and assessment.

→ Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR

The [Manual for relating language examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#) (CEFR) has been produced by the Language Policy Unit in order to assist member states and national/international providers of examinations in relating their certificates and diplomas to the CEFR.

The primary aim of the Manual is to help providers of examinations to develop, apply and report transparent, practical procedures in a cumulative process of continuing improvement in order to situate their examination(s) in relation to the CEFR.

The Manual is supported by illustrative material (video/DVD and CD-ROM) for the levels in a number of languages.

In addition, it is complemented by a *Reference Supplement* which provides users of the Manual with additional information that will help them in their efforts to relate their certificates and diplomas to the CEFR, and by [Further Material](#) on *Maintaining Standards across Languages, Contexts and Administrations by exploiting Teacher Judgment and IRT Scaling*.

In addition, a number of content analysis grids for speaking, writing, listening and reading materials are also available [online](#).

2. European Language Portfolio (ELP) - www.coe.int/portfolio

The European Language Portfolio was developed as a tool to support the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in parallel to the CEFR. An accreditation system by a Council of Europe Validation Committee was set up, later followed up by a Registration system: over 130 models were validated by December 2014. The development of further Portfolio models is being supported by guidelines and templates available from the ELP website.

What is a European Language Portfolio?

The ELP is a document in which those who are learning or have learned a language – whether at school or outside school – can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. The Portfolio contains three parts: i) a *Language Passport* which its owner regularly updates; ii) a detailed *Language Biography* which describes the owner's experiences in each language and iii) a *Dossier* where examples of personal work can be kept to illustrate one's language competences.

Aims

The ELP seeks to promote the aims of the Council of Europe. These include the development of democratic citizenship in Europe, i.a. through the protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity; the promotion of lifelong language and intercultural learning for plurilingualism; the clear and transparent description of competences and qualifications to facilitate coherence in language provision and mobility in Europe.

Principles

All competence is valued, whether it is gained inside or outside formal education. The European Language Portfolio is the property of the learner and it is linked to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

A set of common *Principles and Guidelines* have been agreed for all Portfolios (see web site) and a number of documents have been published to assist developers.

The dedicated website is structured in two parts, respectively developed by the two Council of Europe instances responsible for language policy and practice:

- [DEVELOPING AN ELP](#) ► Language Policy Programme – Strasbourg
This part offers an exhaustive range of guidelines and templates to help developing an ELP mode; a [historical](#) overview; the [full list](#) of accredited or registered models; the official translations of the [global scale](#) and of the [assessment grid](#) (34 scales of listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing activities); a [bank of descriptors](#); and other resources including [reports](#) of ELP seminars.
- [USING THE ELP](#) ► ECML – Graz
This part offers a range of extended resources for using the ELP as well as the [results](#) of a series of projects

LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION, LANGUAGES FOR EDUCATION

► [A website](#)

3. Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education - www.coe.int/lang-platform

After producing reference documents such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* taught as "foreign" languages (see previous section), a new instrument is proposed, in the form of a *Platform*, enabling member states to benefit from the experience and expertise of other member states in formulating their programmes relating to languages of schooling and all language teaching.

The *Platform* offers an open and dynamic resource, with a system of definitions, points of reference, descriptions and descriptors, studies and good practices which member states are invited to consult and use in support of their policy to promote equal access to quality education according to their needs, resources and educational culture. The *Platform* contains several boxes and most of them (e.g. 'Language(s) of schooling' or 'Language(s) in other subjects') are of particular relevance for reviewing language education policies and may offer instrumental support to policymakers and practitioners.

The ideas and proposals put forward in the Guide described in the section below form part of the Council of Europe Language Policy Unit's project, "Languages in education – languages for education", contributions to which are published on the *Platform*.

➤ Main publications

4. *From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe*

The aim of the *Guide* is to offer an analytical instrument which can serve as a reference document for the formulation or reorganisation of language teaching in member states. Its purpose is to provide a response to the need to formulate language policies to promote plurilingualism and diversification in a planned manner so that decisions are coherently linked. It deals, for example, with the specification of guiding principles and aims, analysis of the particular situation and resources, expectations, needs, implementation and evaluation. Accordingly, the *Guide* does not promote any particular language education policy but attempts to identify the challenges and possible responses in the light of common principles.

To this end the *Guide* is organised in three parts:

- Analysis of current language education policies in Europe (common characteristics of the policies of member states and presentation of Council of Europe principles)
- Information required for the formulation of language education policies (methodologies for policy design, aspects/factors to be taken into account in decision making)
- Implementation of language education policies (guiding principles and policy options for deciders in providing diversification in choice of languages learned and in promoting the development of plurilingual competence; inventory of technical means and description of each 'solution' with indicators of cost, lead-in time, means, teacher training implications, administration, etc.)

In order for the proposals made here to be accessible to readers with different needs, the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* is available in two versions to suit the needs of specific groups of readers:

- the *Main Version* (reference version), which discusses, argues and exemplifies all the principles, analyses and approaches for organising European language education policies, as they are conceived in the framework of the Council of Europe. This version is designed for readers interested in all aspects of these issues, including their technical dimensions. It provides the means of answering the question: *How can language education policies geared towards plurilingualism actually be introduced?* This version is itself extended by a series of 21 [Reference Studies](#) which have been produced specifically for the *Guide* by specialists in the relevant fields. They are published separately and provide a synthesis of the issues dealt with in this version or take them up in more detail.
- an *Executive Version*, which has been written for those who influence, formulate and implement language education policies at any level, e.g. individual institution, local government, national education system or international public or private institution. It is a

document not for language specialists but for policy makers who may have no specific specialist knowledge of technical matters in language education.

5. *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education. 2016*

This [Guide](#) is intended to facilitate improved implementation of the values and principles of plurilingual and intercultural education in the teaching of all languages - foreign, regional or minority, classical, and languages of schooling.

The text comprises three chapters. The first provides a general picture of the issues and principles involved in designing and/or improving curricula, and of pedagogical and didactic approaches which open the way to fuller realisation of the general aim of plurilingual and intercultural education. The next two chapters look more closely at two basic questions raised in the first: How can the specific content and aims of plurilingual and intercultural education be identified and integrated within the curriculum, while also respecting the specific content and aims of teaching individual languages? How can curriculum scenarios be used to project the spacing-out in time of this content and these objectives? Finally, several appendices provide tools and reference lists. All of this can also be supplemented by consulting the ancillary documents available on the above-mentioned platform.

ISBN. 978-92-871-8234-0. Available [online](#) in English, French and Italian.

6. *A Handbook for Curriculum Development and Teacher Training. The Language Dimension in All Subjects. 2016*

Mastering the language of schooling is essential for learners to develop the skills necessary for school success and for critical thinking. It is fundamental for participation in democratic societies, and for social inclusion and cohesion.

This handbook is a policy and working document which promotes convergence and coherence between the linguistic dimensions of various school subjects. It proposes measures to make explicit – in curricula, pedagogic material and teacher training – the specific linguistic norms and competences which learners must master in each school subject. It also presents the learning modalities that should allow all learners, and in particular the most vulnerable among them, to benefit from diversified language-learning situations in order to develop their cognitive and linguistic capacities.

ISBN 978-92-871-8456-6. Available [online](#) in English and in French.

Appendix 3 Programme of the Group's study visit

8 May 2016	Arrival of Council of Europe experts		
Monday 9 May 2016	09.00–10:15	CoE experts' meeting	Hotel / CoE office Tirana
	10.30–11:00	Meeting the Minister of Education and Sports	Ministry Premises <i>This meeting did not take place</i>
	11:00–11.30	Meeting the Deputy Minister Ms. Nora Malaj	Ministry Premises
	11.45–13:30	Discussions with Director of Pre-university Education Department, Ms Zamira Gjini Head of the Curricula, Textbook and Assessment unit, Ms Altea Tahiraj Head of Pre-school and Primary Education Unit, Ms Rozalba Merdani Head of High School Unit, Mr Dritan Sallaku Head of Minority and Diaspora Unit, Ms Anila Ferizaj	Ministry Premises
	13.30–14.30	LUNCH	
	14:45–16:30	Director of Institute for Development of Education, Mr Gerti Janaqi Head of Curricula, Institute for Development of Education, Mr Astrit Dautaj Head of Teacher Development Unit, Institute for Development of Education, Ms Dorina Rapti	IDE Premises
	16.30–17: 30	Head of International Relations Unit, Ms Iliriana Topulli Expert of Sector of European Integration, Ms Klodiana Tane	IDE Premises

Tuesday 10 May 2016	09.00–09.45	Dean of Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Tirana	Faculty of Foreign languages
	10.00–12.00	Classes at the Faculty of Foreign Languages	Faculty of Foreign languages
	12.30–13.00	Meeting with heads of departments	Faculty of Foreign languages
	13.00–14.30	LUNCH	
	15.00–16.00	Director of the National Agency for Exams, Ms Rezana Vrap Director of Licensing of Teachers, Ms Heliona Mico	Council of Europe office
	16.30–17:30	Representatives of Foreign Language Teachers' Associations English Teachers' Association, Mr Ymer Leksi & Ms Ogerta Stroka French Teachers' Association, Ms Lindita Trashani & Ms Elida Reci Italian Teachers' Association, Ms Entela Macka German Teachers' Association, Ms Mariza Janku	Council of Europe office
	17.30–18.00	Meeting with parents' representatives on school boards Mr Tomi Treska, President of Parents' Council; Mr. Hysni Elezi, head of Parents' Association	Council of Europe office
Wednesday 11 May 2016	08.30–12.00	School visits Compulsory 9-year school 'Fan Noli', Tiranë High school 'Sami Frasheri', Tiranë,	
	12:30–13.30	Meeting with regional directors of education of Tirana Ms. Arjola Byzyka Korca Mr. Kristaq Grabocka and Pustec high school principal Gjirokaster Ms. Lindita Rova and Dervican High school principal	MoES Premises <i>This meeting took place in Durres on Thursday 12 May immediately after the school visits</i>

	13.30–14.30	LUNCH	
Wednesday 11 May 2016	15.00–16.30	Representatives of Director of British Council Albania Ms. Aida Berxholi Head of Education Office of Italian Embassy Ms. Lucia Cuciarelli Linguistic Atashe of French Embassy Mr. Alain Beaussier Representative of German embassy Mr. Cristiane Walters and Mr. Tomas Fraber ZFA	Council of Europe Office
	16.30–17.30	Meeting with representatives of National Council of Minorities	Council of Europe office
Thursday 12 May 2016	08.15	Departure to Durres	
	09.00–10.30	Compulsory school 'Kushtrimi I Lirise'	
	11.00–12.30	High School 'Gjergj Kastrioti'	
	12.30–13.15	Meeting the Head of Department of Durres.	Gjergj Kastrioti school
	13.00–14.00	LUNCH – back to Tirana	
	16.00–16.30	Meeting with Mr. Florian Rojba representative of sign language association	Council of Europe office
	16.30–18.00	Meeting with the business and representatives from vocational education. Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, Head of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and tow high school directors	Council of Europe office
	20.00	Official dinner	
Friday 13 May 2016	09.00–10.00	Meeting the Chairman of the parliamentary committee for education	Parliament premises
	10.00–11.00	CoE experts and Albanian experts meeting	MoES premises
	12.00	Departure of experts	

