Language Education Policy Profile

ARMENIA

October 2009

CONTENTS

1. Introduction[1]

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

The Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe offers member states assistance in carrying out analyses of their language education policies. According to the *Guidelines and Procedures*,[2] "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."

This activity is known as the Language Education Policy Profile, and the process leads to an agreed report, the Profile, on the current position and possible future developments in language education of all kinds.

The view of the Council of Europe is that analysis and evaluation of language education cannot be compartmentalized, and that language teaching and learning in a country needs to be understood holistically, to include teaching of the national language(s)/language(s) of education, of regional and minority languages, of the languages of recent immigrant groups, of second and foreign languages.

The process of the Profile consists of three principal phases:
- the production of a Country Report, which describes the current position and raises issues that are under discussion or review (this report is presented by the authorities of the country in question);
- the production of an Experts' Report, which takes into account the Country Report as well as discussions held and observations made during a week's visit to the country by a small number of experts nominated by the Council of Europe from other member states;
- the production of a Language Education Policy Profile, which is developed from the Experts' Report and takes account of comments and feedback from those invited to a 'round table' discussion of the Experts' Report (the Profile is agreed in its final form by the experts and the country authorities, and published in English and French by the Council of Europe and in its national/official language(s) by the country in question).

Thus the experts act as catalysts in the process of self-analysis and provide an external view to stimulate reflection on problems and solutions.

The present Language Education Policy Profile for Armenia is the outcome of the following:
- a preparatory visit to Yerevan in April 2007;

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[1] Acknowledgements to previous Country Profiles for the content of this section.
[2] Document DGIV/EDU/LANG (2002) 1 Rev. 3 – www.coe.int (rubric 'Language Education Policy Profiles)

- the Country Report[3];
- a week-long study visit in April 2008, during which four Council of Europe experts and one member of the Council of Europe Secretariat (Language Policy Division) held discussions with Ministers, officials, language professionals and stakeholders and visited a variety of educational institutions;
- documentation provided before and during the study visit by the Armenian authorities and others;
- a round table discussion in Yerevan in April 2009 and further e-mail exchanges with the Armenian expert group

The members of the Council of Europe Expert Group were: Lid King (Rapporteur), UK; Jean-Claude Beacco, France; Dolors Sole-Vilanova, Spain; Maria Stoicheva, Bulgaria; Johanna Panthier, Council of Europe. The Armenian experts were Suren Zolyan, Melanya Astvatsatryan, Aida Topuzyan, Nerses Gevorgyan , Gayane Terzyan, Serob Khachatryan, Karen Melkonyan (expert of the "Centre for Educational Projects" PIU), Araik Jraghatspanyan (translator/interpreter) and Bella Ayunts (project assistant).

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, the fostering of the active involvement of citizens and civil society in democracy and governance are crucial conditions for success; so too are the promotion of a European identity and unity based on shared fundamental values and respect for a common heritage and cultural diversity. As stated in the Cultural Convention, this requires the study of languages, history and civilization in order to gain mutual understanding. It is only on the basis of such understanding that the need for political, inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue mentioned in the Warsaw Declaration can be met.

Language teaching and learning are 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 policies

The language education policy of the Council of Europe is founded on the key concept of the plurilingualism of the individual. This needs to be distinguished from the multilingualism of geographical regions.

According to Council of Europe principles
- 'multilingualism' refers to the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one 'variety of language', i.e. the mode of speaking of a social

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[3] Web reference: www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Profils1_EN.asp

group whether it is formally recognized as a language or not; in such an area individuals may be monolingual, speaking only their own variety

– 'plurilingualism' refers to the repertoire of varieties of language used by individuals, and is therefore the opposite of monolingualism; it includes the language variety referred to as 'mother tongue' or 'first language' and any number of other languages or varieties at whatever level of competence; in some multilingual areas some individuals are monolingual and some are 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.

Plurilingualism is defined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* in the following way:

[Plurilingualism is] 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. [4]

Thus plurilingualism refers to the full linguistic repertoire of the individual, including 'mother tongue' or 'first language', and in this report we are concerned by implication with all language education in Armenia, including education in Armenian and in regional and minority languages, as well as in those languages which are labelled 'foreign', including Russian which has a special position in Armenia.

This perspective places not languages but those who speak them at the centre of language policies. The emphasis is upon 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.

This Country 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 Europe and in normative 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*.[5] In this latter document it is made clear that plurilingualism is also a fundamental aspect of policies of social inclusion and education for democratic citizenship:

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[4] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, Council of Europe/Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.168. Also available online at www.coe.int/lang.

[5] *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. Available online at www.coe.int/lang.

In the Declaration and Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship of 7 May 1999, the Committee of Ministers stressed that the preservation of European linguistic diversity was not an end in itself, since it is placed on the same footing as the building of a more tolerant society based on solidarity: *"a freer, more tolerant and just society based on solidarity, common values and a cultural heritage enriched by its diversity"* (CM (99) 76). 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 ideal locus for intercultural contact, is a sector in which education for democratic life in its intercultural dimensions can be included in education systems.[6]

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

Implementation of policies for the development of plurilingualism can be approached in different ways, and it is not necessarily a matter of "all or nothing". The responses to the Country Profile in any particular country can thus be expected to vary according to that country's circumstances, history and priorities.

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[6] *Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe*, p.36.

2. Overview of the current situation

This is a very interesting and creative time in Armenia for education in general and for language education in particular. It is a period of change and of challenge, in which a country and a people with a long history are seeking to modernise their economy and institutions while maintaining and in some cases refining a complex national identity. Language has an important part to play in this process.

Since Independence there have been new and pressing linguistic needs and priorities for the country and its people, both in relation to the Armenian language itself (and the recognised minority languages) and in relation to the major languages of international communication. It is also clear that Armenia has a number of specific characteristics which are significant advantages in the development of such a policy and for plurilingualism. Both its history and its geographical position mean that the Armenian population includes significant numbers of speakers who have varied linguistic repertoires (in particular an operational Armenian/Russian bilingualism). There is also a palpable desire among the people to learn languages, combined with significant expertise in languages pedagogy. This collective experience of diversity is a major advantage for language education policy and one which is stressed by many stakeholders.

The development and publication of the Language Education Policy Profile of Armenia thus comes at an important stage of the formulation and development of a sustainable language policy and shows the commitment of the political and governmental institutions to develop such a policy in dialogue with the Council of Europe and in line with the main values promoted by its policy, while adhering to the specificities of the Armenian situation.

We therefore begin with some of those specificities before examining language needs and policies in greater detail.

2.1 Important historical and political influences

Armenia is a nation with a long, proud and unique history. We might mention here as representative of such uniqueness the early development of the Armenian alphabet and also Armenian traditions of literacy, religion and culture dating from the early first Millennium[7]. Such phenomena and their continued celebration in modern society undoubtedly contribute towards a strong sense of historical national identity among Armenians. Conversely, however, there have only been relatively brief periods of history when the Armenian people have exercised independent state power. The influence – sometimes oppressive – of other larger states must also be a significant factor in determining the nature of that identity.[8]

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[7] Country Report 8.2

[8] See for example Hyastani Hanrapetut'yun: " Arménie" in *L'aménagement linguistique dans le monde* Sections 3.1-3.3   http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/asie/armenie.htm

One very specific manifestation of this historical reality has been the existence of an important Diaspora. There are more Armenians living outside the national territory than in Armenia. This inevitably creates political and resource-related pressures and demands – for example the need to integrate citizens of the Diaspora – as well as opportunities for replenishing the national stock, developing links and enriching the country culturally. From a linguistic perspective such historical developments have meant the division of the Armenian language (East and West Armenian)[9]. This is almost certainly at the root of current preoccupations with the Armenian language and the desire to unify and in a sense maintain the "purity" of the official language, a question which is examined further in Chapter 3.

Another more recent influence of historical events on the development of language (and educational) policy has been the sometimes painful transition from the period of the Soviet Union to an independent sovereign Armenia. Such transition has been rapid, but it can never be immediate or total, and during the period 1990-1997 the education and training sector experienced major difficulties when on the one hand it was still under the legacy of the Soviet system and on the other it proved difficult to take any major efforts or initiatives for reform. After a challenging post-independence period, Armenia is now seeking to modernise its educational system, and since 1997 major reforms have been introduced relating in particular to management and financing, but more recently also addressing detailed questions concerning the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.[10] It must also be recognized that the Soviet period has also left some more positive educational legacies, not least a remarkable commitment to "hard" learning (also reflected in the importance of rote learning and performance) which it would be misleading to ignore.

Finally we should identify the specific influence of Europe – in particular the Council of Europe – on Armenian educational policy as Armenia increasingly takes a role on the world stage. Since the late 1990s Armenian policy makers and educational researchers have sought to reorganise the country's language policy and language teaching according to specifically European standards. Armenia has been a member of the Council of Europe since 2001. The Country Report lists the main legal and regulatory documents on languages (including the 2005 Constitution, showing how Armenia has developed a modern legal framework which meets its commitments to the Council of Europe[11]) .Indeed this commitment is manifested nowhere more clearly than in the wish of the Armenian authorities to take part in and make use of the Profile procedure as an underpinning for reform.

The Profile process only served to reinforce the view that the Armenian authorities are actively encouraging discussion in a period of innovation with a view to adopting European standards for education. This will involve major consideration of quality issues, cooperation with other Eastern European and neighbouring states and

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[9] Ibid section 2.1
[10] See Country Report 8.2.1. and below 2.2.
[11] See Country Report Chapter 4

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includes an aspiration to become a kind of educational centre of gravity for the region.

2.2A propitious legal framework

Within the context of general educational reform since 1991, the Republic of Armenia has completely reorganised its language policy and its language teaching systems. This reorganisation has been supported by a number of legislative measures. Significantly the new Armenian Constitution (revised and adopted 2005) makes some key provisions relating to language. Article 12 declares that Armenian is the official language of the state, while in Articles 14 and 41 the rights of minorities (including linguistic minorities) are guaranteed. The Constitution also affirms Armenia's responsibilities for good relations with the Diaspora, responsibilities which include the maintenance of cultural values. In relation to foreign language learning the Constitution implies the need for good levels of international communication through its prioritisation of international law and good relations with all states (Article 9).

Other key measures include -

The Law on Language (1993)

> *This sets out "basic principles for languages, language education and language policy". It affirms that Armenian is the official language and that "literary" Armenian is the language of education.*

The Law on Education *(1999)*

This establishes important principles for educational policy, including
- *The humane nature of education, the priority of universal values, free and comprehensive development of an individual, civic perception, national dignity, patriotism*
- *Accessibility, continuity, succession and conformity of education with the level of learners' development*
- *Integration in the international educational system*
- *Supporting the educational process of preserving Armenians in Diaspora*
- *Secular education in educational institutions[12]*

The State Programme on Language Policy (2002)

> *This sets out a comprehensive orientation on Armenian, Minority Languages and on Foreign Language teaching and learning. It upholds the central role of Armenian as the official language and supports its widespread use while maintaining the rights of official minorities. It seeks to preserve and develop Armenian in the Diaspora. It promotes the learning of foreign languages while giving priority to Russian which has "a special role in Armenia's public life".*

State Standards for General Education (confirmed 2004)

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[12] Country Report 4.2.5.

These define the content of the curriculum and the standards to be achieved. Armenian is regarded as a separate field from Foreign Languages. However the broad educational content is conceived of as similar for all subjects –
A system of knowledge
Skills and abilities
A system of values.
An amendment to the State Standards dated January 2008 (RA Government Decree 19.01.2008 N111) has specified that three foreign languages should be taught, including Russian

In addition to these laws and standards, there are also a number of important official documents supporting education in general and language education in particular.

The *"RA State Program for Education Development"* is currently being reconsidered and revised. Among other important statements it supports improvements in the quality of language teaching and the development of multilingualism. A key concept is Armenia's position in the world, as a crossroads or "bridge" between civilisations and the consequent priority of international communication. According to the Country Report a major need will be the improvement of "abilities and skills to communicate in mother and foreign languages". The issue of state standards for general education was reinforced in 2004 by the approved National Curriculum for General Education, Procedures for Creation and Approval of Secondary Education State Standards and a law on Higher Education.

In broad terms therefore it can be said that in a relatively short period of time Armenia has acquired a modern legal framework and, since joining the Council of Europe in 2001 has committed itself to the Council's main principles in relation to Language and Culture. This, combined with the nation's bilingual heritage provides a very propitious terrain for the development of new language curricula and approaches to plurilingualism.

2.3 The search for structural coherence

As a result of these major legislative reforms the education and training system in the Republic of Armenia is currently moving towards the following structure:

Educational Phase	Educational Institutions	Age
Pre-school Education	Nurseries and kindergartens	3-5
General Education	Primary } BASIC Middle High School	6-9 10-15 16-18
Middle Professional Education	VET and secondary VET	16-20+
Higher Professional Education	Universities and Post Graduate	19+

This system is, however, still in transition and is being further developed through the latest reforms which have been introduced gradually since 2006 and which will eventually ensure 12 years of schooling for all in secondary education, from Grade 1

(age 6) until Grade 12. General Education is compulsory and free of charge, but there are also a small number of private providers at both secondary and higher education levels[13].

The situation is quite different outside the schools and higher education system, in the area of non-formal provision or Life Long Learning. More than 600 different organisations (for example public bodies, NGOs, companies, private providers) are involved in delivering training to adults. In fact such training and education is totally delegated to non-formal providers- whether private or based in companies but there is very little data available about their activities. Such providers are not obliged to register or be licensed, which means that their curricula do not have to be approved.

Finally there are two other major – and possibly restricting - factors which affect the reform processes in education and training. In the first place, the limited funding of the sector makes it in many cases dependent on donor-funded and driven projects. In general terms a range of organisations, in addition to the state institutions, are involved in supporting the education system (including language teaching)[14]. Secondly, there is an issue of continuity (or the lack of it) between the different levels of education and training, which is one of the major concerns of the decision-making bodies and of politicians. These are questions to which we will return in Chapter 3.

2.4 The Key role of Educational Reform

In common with other countries, the Republic of Armenia attaches a central importance to education in relation to the modernisation and economic prosperity of the country.   If the first priority has been to establish a modern legal framework for all educational levels, as outlined in section 2.2, this framework is now being given flesh through the development of strategic documents for the various levels, aiming at full implementation by 2012. The main priority now is to raise standards in education and training. To quote the Country Report the basic goals of educational reform are –

- Improving general education quality
- Ensuring the conformity of Armenia's education system with the present requirements of society and the economy and internationally accepted educational standards
- Guiding Armenia's education system...towards...conformity with the "knowledge economy" requirements

The second phase of the reform programme which began in 2002 has several important goals:

1. Introduction of a National Curriculum Framework, Subject Standards, syllabi and a new assessment system

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[13] 33 out of the 1472 schools and colleges are private and most of them are in Yerevan, *Education in Armenia,* p.54

[14] Universities, Foreign Institutions, Armenian and International NGOs, international organisations such as the World Bank and European Union, European cultural agencies (British Council, Goethe Institute, Institut Français)

2. Introduction of information and communication technologies in the public educational system
3. Training of teachers
4. Public educational system management and increased efficiency

Its main components, therefore, are Standards, curriculum & assessment; ICT (equipping schools); teacher development/head teacher development in order to implement the standards; financial aid to support teachers. In the compulsory sector of education the aim is to provide a coherent structure of formal education and also to provide for the transfer of credits from secondary to higher education. This is a reform of some scope which aims at a comprehensive reconceptualisation of the sector as a whole. The central instrument of reform is the introduction of new subject standards and syllabi which set out standards and also study plans and a time allocation for the different subjects and levels. They are described in terms of

- Content
- Learning objectives
- Teaching activities
- Set topics and test types

It is thus clear that the whole issue of quality and standards is now centre stage.

It is also worth noting that outside support is an important factor in the development of these standards and syllabuses – a major part of the work is being supported by the World Bank. In addition use is being made of EU-funded schemes for the transfer of know-how (Tempus, Tacis, Erasmus Mundus), to provide resources and funding of some major activities such as the development of the standards and the text-books, as well as for technical assistance.

Beyond the main school sector, greater attention is to be given to Vocational education and training through the further development of the National Qualifications Framework. In Higher Education, as part of the Bologna process, there is support for reform of the content and for the introduction of the credit system. Finally there is considerable development of teacher training at all levels.

2.4.1 Reinforcing the national language

The important role of the national language in underpinning a modern education system and state is clearly described in the Country report[15]. The role of Armenian as a national language and language of education has constitutional validity and is further reinforced by the legislative framework outlined above. All of this confirms the status of Armenian as the national language, the only state and official language of the RA. It is the native language for nearly 98% of the Armenian population.

The emphases in the Country Report also reflect major public interest in and debate about the national language. In this respect it is important to remember that there are two varieties of "literary" Armenian: Eastern Armenian, which has become the state language and Western Armenian which is the variety used mainly by the Armenian Diaspora. There is thus an interesting tendency to seek to maintain a single national language while at the same time supporting the usage of the

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[15] Country Report 4 and 6

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language of the Diaspora. In addition there are major concerns about the extent to which literary Armenian may be deformed in the press or in common usage in particular by young people. This has lead to a lively debate about the "purity" of the Armenian language and a perceived need to protect it against corruption, a debate which has echos of language debates in other countries, for example France and Greece.

There is also a significant issue about the use of Armenian in Higher Education – in particular in medicine and the natural sciences, where there is a tendency to replace its use with that of Russian or English. These too are questions to which we return in Chapter 3.

2.4.2 Modernising the foreign languages curriculum

In this context of reform, major changes are taking place in foreign languages education in relation to the teaching programme, to pedagogy, to training and materials.

The rationale for foreign language learning in Armenia is clearly summarised in the Country report quoting from the State Standard for General Education -

The foreign language is the basic means to contact with non-Armenian speakers, and it is an additional means to communicate with the civilization of other countries and peoples, to perceive their best values and to express them in Armenian, as well as to make Armenian-language culture available to other peoples

Knowledge of foreign languages contributes to the development of a person's communicative skills, intercultural mutual understanding, perception and evaluation of values of other cultures.

The goal of teaching a foreign language is to enhance the learner's communicative and interactive skills. This field of education also contributes to obtaining more comprehensive knowledge of the nature and the modern world, to perception, preservation and handing down the aesthetic, moral, social, universal and national values.[16]

To meet these aspirations the new secondary programme proposes the introduction of a 4-langua*ge* structure: 2 main languages and 2 further languages for communication. This it is anticipated will go some way towards countering the unplanned predominance of English – so all pupils will study Armenian and Russian plus 2 additional languages. As a central part of this process for the first time foreign language subject standards have been created and, based on them, new and innovative educational programmes have been developed which it is intended will modernise language education in Armenia.[17]. Significantly these have been defined in accordance with communicative approaches to learning languages as promoted by the Council of Europe"[18]

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[16] Country Report p. 51

[17] Astvatsatryan M.G. and others: "English Language: Subject standard and programme for comprehensive school", Yerevan, 2007; "German Language: Subject standard and programme for comprehensive school", Yerevan, 2007; "French Language: Subject standard and programme for comprehensive school", Yerevan, 2007. Tatkalo N. and others : "Russian Language: Subject standard and programme for comprehensive school", Yerevan, 2007

[18] Country Report 11 1 4

In line with the general educational standards Foreign Languages Standards include:

1. a system of knowledge,
2. a system of abilities and skills
   - cognitive, logical,
   - communicative,
   - co-operative,
   - creative,
   - individual activity,
3. a system of values.

The programmes for the different foreign languages were developed along common lines. It is not, however, entirely clear how these standards will relate to the proposed new assessment systems, as assessment until now has been predominantly grammatical and formal.

The introduction of such a radical new programme has also necessitated increased resources for teacher training. At Yerevan State Linguistic University, for example, new educational structures and programmes of initial training of bilingual teachers through specialised MA programmes at university level are being adopted. Among existing teachers an extensive national programme of In-service training for language teachers is being undertaken. In general, therefore, it may be concluded this is a period of considerable change, development and debate in languages education in Armenia.

3. Key Issues

This very schematic overview of language education in Armenia, which should be supplemented by the much more detailed exposition of the Country report, provides the basis for further reflection and the development of an action plan. In general terms the challenges for Armenian language policy revolve around the aspiration to create a high quality, flexible and relevant languages education system. Needless to say such challenges are not simple ones, nor are they unique to Armenia. Rather they can be seen as part of a general challenge for countries to modernise their education systems in the 21st century. The key issues can be classified under four broad headings –

- Context
- Identity
- Coherence
- Quality

3.1 Contextual issues

A number of these issues have already been mentioned at least by implication in section 2. Some of them are undoubtedly beyond the scope of a Language Education Policy Profile, including issues which may belong more properly to the political domain and whose solutions are therefore more dependent on economic and political factors, than on educational debate. They are mentioned here, however, because they do impact on educational provision

3.1.1 Long term Historical and Economic contexts

This is in particular the case in relation to the historical (and related economic) contexts influencing the development of the Republic of Armenia, and touched upon in Section 2.1. Education does not come cheap, and Armenia faces significant challenges in relation to resources. In such a context the commitment of the Authorities to reform and to raising educational standards is impressive, but clearly languages education has to compete with other social and political priorities for limited resources.

There is also a geo-political factor which has an effect on languages education. Not all of Armenia's borders are open, and there are in any case challenges of access to some of the main international language groups. At the most basic level it has been relatively difficult for both teachers and learners to have contact with speakers of target languages other than Russian

These are issues which we must take into account rather than seek to change with utopian proposals. Insofar as we have considered them it has been to make suggestions not for more but for more effective use of resources, not for different physical realities but for better use of existing international possibilities.

3.1.2 Medium term contextual challenges

There are also contextual issues where further internal debate may engineer change. These have been classified as follows –

- o The relationship with civil society and employers
- o The role of the Private sector
- o The role of International agencies

- Civil Society and Employers

It is perhaps to be expected in a society in transition such as Armenia that civil society's participation in educational life and management is still under development. It does not appear that civil society or parents or communities in general are very actively involved in education. There are active NGOs but many of these are either involved in the representation of minorities, working actively to preserve their languages and to provide teaching resources, or they are working in the area of special educational needs - supporting children with hearing difficulties, helping socially disadvantaged children, and providing teacher training. In many cases, indeed, these NGOs are branches of International organisations and foundations, with funding, and to some extent priorities established by those organisations.

There also appears to be a degree of disjuncture between the sphere of education and the world of employment, inconsistencies in what might be called the supply side (education) and the demands of the labour market. This is manifested on the one hand in a certain lack of confidence on the part of employers in the diplomas issued and on the other in an over-reliance on "traditional" degree level education. For example Customs Officers and Airport Officials are generally expected to have an academic degree, despite the existence of higher level vocational courses for such occupations[19].

It also appears that market needs are not taken into account when setting the enrolment numbers both at university and in vocational secondary education. There is little evidence of cooperation between the labour market and the education sector, and so it cannot be said with any confidence that there is much institutional analysis of employer needs or interest, including for Foreign Languages.

These apparent dissonances are not uncommon in other countries Indeed they represent one of the challenges facing all modern and modernising education systems. It should, however be observed that this lack of synergy can have important implications especially for vocationally-oriented language learning at secondary and university level and that the involvement of employers in the education process can be a source of motivation for teachers to undertake further training.

- The role of the Private Sector

The private sector in education is still small, although it is growing in response to demand (CR, 8.3). It can also make a positive contribution in terms of experimentation and development. On the other hand this relatively small coverage

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[19] A 3-4 Year course in "Translation and Customs Management" (English or French) for example

conceals a rather more nuanced position. There is for example a degree of competition between state and private schools which are able to offer better opportunities for their teachers, better premises and resources and a broader range of languages for their learners. Within the state system itself the new Law on Education allows for the provision of paid courses within the system. Thus there are state mandatory subjects (non-paying), school-elected (non-paying) and private elective (paying). In the latter case (personal choice component), it has to be a different subject from the mandatory (state component) ones, and the ones offered by the school (school component). Clarification of the relationship between public and private resources could perhaps be of benefit to the system as a whole

Of greater potential concern is the contribution of private tutorials within the state system. It seems that this practice is quite widespread and the result of on the one hand a perception that state education does not always provide the expected quality and on the other of the need for teachers to supplement their salaries. This recourse to private support alongside public provision corresponds to a widely held view that a university education is indispensible for future success, and something to which many parents aspire for their children, even if it means considerable hardship. Such a phenomenon is not uncommon in other countries. The concern is that this parallel system of education could in fact divert resources and in a sense compete with the public sector, in particular as there are no reliable statistics as to its extent or effect. The hope is that this situation will be regularised through the provisions of the new law on general education adopted in July 2009 after lasting discussions.

Indeed the new system of unified examinations (see below 3.4.3) has already had some effect and the number of learners making use of tutors has declined. There is an expectation that this tendency will increase further as streaming is introduced in the new High School system.

- International Influences

Reference has already be made to Armenia's conscious attempts to modernise its education system (including languages) on international – and specifically European – lines (2.1 and 2.4.2 in particular). The most obvious concrete examples of this policy are the new curricula in schools, the development of new textbooks and assessment systems, and the commitment to the Bologna process in Higher Education. Armenia has joined the European Higher Education Area, signing the Bologna Declaration in 1999, and the leading universities have introduced a credit system, which in practice allows them to participate in EU funded higher education projects.

There is also a potential for some tension given the important supporting role of International NGOs (in particular some with significant levels of funding voted by the US Congress), and the major role of the World Bank in providing resources for the current curricular reforms. The challenge for the Armenian authorities is to ensure that there is compatibility between national educational objectives and the priorities of international bodies. There is of course no necessary conflict of interest and in this respect the influence of the Diaspora could be a largely beneficial one.

In addition the role played by the Cultural Agencies of the main European countries is somewhat unclear. It has been suggested that more might be needed to ensure that they support the main orientations of the Armenian educational and languages plan. In general the activities and efforts of these international organisations are not being coordinated in any way. This is something which the proposals in Chapter 4 may address.

On the other hand the language policies of the Council of Europe are much clearer – and some would say beneficial. The Country Report explains in some detail how Armenia is seeking to make use of key Council of Europe policies and initiatives on languages[20], in relation particularly to the Common European Framework of Reference which has influenced the new curricula and to the European Language Portfolio (ELP), but also to the CoE discussions about the Languages of Schooling and the protection and promotion of Minority Languages (1991 ratification of the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages). There is no doubt that this provides a very positive framework for the language debate in Armenia. On the other hand, this debate may still be in its early stages in the country as a whole, as the use of the ELP, which receives no state support, remains quite limited and the pedagogic discussion over approaches to language teaching is only beginning at the current time.

Again there is nothing surprising about this and such phenomena are common in most if not all member states. What is important is that the discussion is under way. We will say more about this in particular in the section below on *Quality and Standards.*

3.2 Issues of Identity

In this section some of the key issues in relation firstly to the Armenian language and secondly to the other languages recognized in Armenia – the languages of the national minorities - are considered in greater detail. The legal and administrative position is explained above (2.2 and 2.4.1) and also in the Country Report.

3.2.1　Issues related to the Armenian Language

The context is determined by some specific characteristics of the Armenian language. Firstly there is the existence of two varieties - Eastern Armenian which is the state language and Western Armenian spoken in one part of the Armenian Diaspora. Secondly Armenian is the first language of some 98% of the population. Thirdly that population is for the most part functionally bilingual (Russian/Armenian). Lastly Russian (and to an increasing extent English) has an influence on the language of higher education and research, particularly in the scientific domain. Given these factors it is perhaps inevitable that there is a major debate about language and identity and the "purity" of the Armenian language.[21]

What are the main issues in this respect?

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[20] See for example CR Appendix 1 – Conferences and seminars organised by YSLU
[21] See for example CR 6.1

- A historic resolution of East and West?

The education and training sector in Armenia has historically been one of the main pillars to preserve national self-awareness and the desire for independence. This is not only the case for those Armenians living in the historical territory of Armenia where education and a common language, often maintained through religious institutions, were significant markers of identity, but also for the speakers of "Western" Armenian. For years Armenians of the Diaspora have considered their language and its preservation in the communities as an important means of preserving their Armenian identity. There are, however, differences between the two kinds of Armenian: in relation to pronunciation, vocabulary, register, grammar, spelling, and classical orthography, which make it unlikely that any kind of unification can be envisaged.[22] Although some key players suggest that this might be desirable, others are more open to a pragmatic solution of this historical separation. Indeed contemporary views on language – linked to developments in language teaching and testing - may obviate any perceived need to establish a single "standard" language and could accommodate varieties of accepted variants, including regional, local or social varieties of the language.

- Armenian as a "foreign" or "second" language

Such a resolution would not of course remove the need for returning Armenians from the Diaspora, many of whom may have only partial competence in the Armenian language, to have access to language learning as a bridge to education and civil society. The "Western" Armenians are not a homogeneous language group and there are for example significant differences between the Armenians from the US, France, Lebanon and Iran. In some communities the issue is the loss of the language rather than its "correctness" and some 40% of the young people in the Diaspora do not speak the Armenian language. In Russia they speak Russian, in France – French, and they learn Armenian only to the extent that parents may choose to preserve the national language in the family or through education. In Georgia for example families of Armenian descent very often choose to send their children to local schools and only on Sunday to an Armenian school. This means that they may come to Armenia with an Armenian identity but without a good command of the language. The preservation of the Armenian language in the Diaspora is thus becoming a major political issue, closely linked with the issue of national identity, and it is likely to need political action – such as the establishment of a Ministry of the Diaspora to work together with the Inspectorate – if significant progress is to be made.

- The "purity" of Armenian

The legal emphasis on the preservation and purity of the Armenian language is a matter of much discussion. There is deep public concern about the state of the language and its perceived misuse in particular by the media, but it is not always entirely clear whether this is actually a question of repertoire (lack of specific vocabulary in some domains) or a question of standardization, or a question of register used. It is probably all three of these. Whatever the case, concerns about

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[22] See for example Zolyan   *Sociolinguistics and Language Policy Principles (case study of Armenia) p.5*

the correctness (purity) of the Armenian language being used by the media, in advertising and even by officials and in Parliament are recurrent. There is in this context consideration of the establishment of a "Supreme Language Council" but its precise functions are as yet unclear.

This "purity" debate is not concerned with creating barriers against the use of other language varieties or with the introduction of inflexible, fixed standards, but rather seeks to promote an "acceptable" use of the language in the public sphere (administration, public speeches, media, newspaper language and the education sector, where learning the written forms as well as writing and reading are a major focus of early schooling). It aims at promoting the significance of the Armenian language in society and enhancing, stabilizing and broadening the domains in which Armenian is used, thus gaining territory from other languages. The state Language Inspectorate was established under the Law of Language and its role is to support this promotion of the Armenian language.

- The continuing presence of Russian

Discussion and reflection about the influence of Russian is based in part on the realities of the Soviet period – the years when Armenian was confined in the scope of its use, although with an official status. For more than a century Russian was the medium for disseminating information about technology, industry, medicine, construction, transportation, science and higher education. This was conditioned not only by government policy, generally aiming at achieving Russian monolingualism throughout the country, but also by the availability of specialized vocabulary (language for specific purposes). The corresponding professional subsystems of many other languages of the USSR were not sufficiently developed and unified, despite constant work during the Soviet period elaborating terminological systems in the national languages.

In Armenia there are, nonetheless, substantial and lasting traditions of Armenian as a state language. In Soviet times Armenian was widely used for science and textbooks within the educational system. It is evident, however, that the application of the original terminological systems to professional communication was not fully developed in practice and that these have not developed as quickly as might have been imagined in the years after independence. The clearest examples of this can be found in domains such as medicine, law and the military where Russian is still very widely used. Doctors, for example, write prescriptions in Russian, and there are still subjects taught in Russian at the Medical University; furthermore a substantial part of the reference literature in technical and medical universities (some have said as much as 95%) is in Russian.

Today this does not only concern the use of Russian loanwords but of other languages as well, most obviously English. So there is a continuing need for a controlled process of transfer of technical and scientific terminology into Armenian. This is not, however, the case in the humanities where all the teaching and studies are in Armenian.

- Armenian as the language of schooling

An in-depth knowledge of the Armenian language at school is considered a prerequisite for acquiring other important skills. This determines the policy of introducing studies in and of Armenian throughout primary, basic, secondary and also in higher education. It should be noted that this policy is accompanied by clear objectives for promoting further study of other languages. In this context competence in the mother tongue (the language of schooling) becomes of even greater importance and is far from being a battle with the dominance of Russian (or any other language). Rather it is a policy to preserve and strengthen Armenian in the context of the goal of studying 2 and now 3 foreign languages. This can be related to one of our initial observations– that multilingualism, and in the case of the individual plurilingualism, is part of the fibre of Armenian society, and this has potentially beneficial consequences for language policy. In the case of school education it means that the preservation of the national language is not seen as being threatened by the learning of other languages. On the contrary multilingualism and national identity co-exist and support each other.

3.2.2 Languages of the National Minorities

The country report gives very thorough information about the position of minority languages in Armenia[23].

Number of people speaking minority languages in Armenia[24]

Language	Number of people, considering it as a mother tongue
Assyrian	3150 people (90% of Assyrians living in Armenia)
Yezidi	32400 people (80% of Yezidis living in Armenia)
Greek	750 people (58% of Greeks living in Armenia)
Kurdish	1250 people (nearly 78% of Kurds living in Armenia)

In addition, as indicated in the Country report 98% of Russians (14 500 people) living in Armenia consider Russian as their mother tongue.

Given the relatively small number of people involved (some 3% of the total population) the legislative support for minority languages is strong. According to Article 1 of RA Law on Language, "the Republic of Armenia guarantees the free usage of national minority languages in its territory". The next article of the same law defines that teaching and education in the communities of national minorities can be implemented in their mother tongue, with state programmes and protection and mandatory teaching of Armenian.

As the report also states however there are a number of concrete problems in terms of these minority language rights which are "conditioned by Armenia's social and economic condition (e.g. physical condition of schools, human resources)". This

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[23] Chapter 10

[24] RA 1st Report According to Par. 1 of Article 15 of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages Yerevan, (2003)

general analysis is supported by the Committee of Experts of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages –

"The Committee of Experts recognises and welcomes the fact that the Armenian authorities are favouring the development of education in regional or minority languages especially in primary education. The situation for Russian and Greek is by and large satisfactory. However, for Assyrian, Yezidi and Kurdish, there is a lack of teachers and teaching materials. Teacher training and development of research and studies on theses languages are also insufficient, and much remains to be done in pre-school and secondary school education."[25]

Such an overview must doubtless be modified in particular cases and for particular languages. During the course of the Language Education Policy Profile exercise visits took place to a bilingual Russian school as well as to schools in Yezidi and Assyrian villages, which gave more concrete expression to the thorough explanation in the Country report. The bilingual Russian school (in the suburbs of Yerevan) was adequately equipped (although not with technology)[26] , standards of teaching and learning were high and pupil engagement total.

CASE STUDY   Visit to Verin Dvin village Assyrian school (18.04.08)

A very good example of multilingual school and multilingualism put to practice. The school has 330 students, mainly Assyrians but 85 of them are Armenian. The school offers 5 different languages: Assyrian, Armenian, Russian (three different alphabets), English and German (4 different alphabets altogether).

The school offers Assyrian from 1 to 11th grade according to National legislation. There are 112 schools in the region; only two schools offer Assyrian, one of them in Verin Dvin and the other one in Dimitrov.

The State University of Yerevan offers a teacher degree in Assyrian. In-service T.T. held at the National Institute of Education with specialists from Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

Availability of textbooks in Assyrian: In primary from grade 1 to grade 4 but none available from grade 5 to grade 9. The State has already taken action and has started publishing learning material for Assyrian.

The perception of the head teacher and her colleagues is that there is no danger of Assyrian disappearing in Armenia. From pre-school education the language is used, spoken and taught. They are happy with the treatment of their language and culture.

The head teacher is Assyrian herself. Armenians and Assyrians have the same problems, they say, and they share the solutions. Many Assyrians are returning back from Russia and Ukraine. Many students from this school have and take the opportunity to go to Russia to study Russian and Assyrian further, and some also enter State University in Yerevan (about 10 to 12 per year).Teaching of Assyrian in Armenia started in the 70s with books sent from the Soviet Union. There are 180 Assyrian communities established in Armenia, and there are many as well in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Israel.

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[25] Application of the Charter in Armenia, Initial monitoring cycle. Report of the Committee of Experts on the Charter (ECRLM (2006) 2), 14 June 2006, chapter 3, 161 C. In its 2009 follow up report – published as the Language Education Policy Profile was going to print, the Committee recognized that progress had been made in relation to the development of teaching materials in Assyrian, Kurdish and Yezidi, as well as regarding teacher training, through scholarships to students but commented that there were still some issues to address "as regards teacher training and with producing a sufficient number of updated textbooks." (Application of the Charter in Armenia Second Monitoring Cycle, September 2009 p. 34)

[26] See 3.5, page 31

At the Assyrian school of *Verin Dvin* (see insert) there were qualified teachers, up to date text books (primary only) and pupils of both Assyrian and Armenian origin learning together in an Assyrian language. The impression given was one of great commitment and understanding from the community and of a school which was confident in its linguistic diversity.

In *Ferik* – a Yezidi school in a Yezidi village - on the other hand, while there was no doubting the commitment and humanity of the staff, resources were severely limited. In addition to the resource issues facing many country schools – premises, equipment, heating in winter – there are Yezidi text books only for the 1st-3rd grade pupils. There was just one trained assistant for the teaching of Yezidi, who himself expressed a sense of professional isolation. According to the Head Teacher there were also problems about attendance and a high dropout rate in particular among girls and young women.

What, however, is striking and indeed moving about this school is the attitude of the pupils, all dressed in their best clothes, struggling to learn in difficult circumstances and supported by caring teachers. According to the school authorities historically very few of them go on to further or higher education. Most will become agricultural workers (sheep farming). Yet their ambitions are the ambitions of children everywhere. When asked what they hoped to be or do a class of 9/10 year old boys and girls all replied not shepherd or weaver but – doctor, lawyer and teacher.

Perhaps this anecdote illustrates better than any statistic the challenge of providing education for the national minorities which can lead to real opportunities for all.

3.3 Issues of Coherence

Establishing a coherent language policy throughout all sectors is a key objective in many countries, and one which it is easier to describe than to implement. Armenia's case is no exception. Before commenting in detail on some of the relevant factors, we make two preliminary observations intended to describe the parameters of the problem.

Firstly there is currently not a single language policy, despite some legislative intent in that direction. Rather there is a separation into different policies for different languages. There is an obvious distinction between the teaching and learning of on the one hand the mother tongue (Armenian and to a lesser extent the minority languages) and on the other hand foreign languages[27]. But even within the domain of foreign language learning there are important differences: most obviously the Russian language has a particular and not entirely "foreign" role, but also English is fast developing a *de facto* special position as a perceived world language of communication. The point here is not to deny these differences but to examine how a common policy may take account of them.

Secondly – and again to an extent despite the aspirations of the system – there is a lack of continuity between the sectors of education. Indeed this issue (lack of

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[27] CR 8.2.4 – "In the state standard on secondary education, the languages are introduced in two separate subjects: Armenian language and literature and Foreign Language"

continuity) is one major impetus behind the current reforms. It also has considerable implications for language education policy and for language teaching and learning.

3.3.1 Language policy or Languages Policies

The current separation of policy and practice for Armenian (Mother tongue), Russian and other languages, may in itself inform future policy, but we will first consider them separately.

- Armenian and other mother tongues

This Country Profile does not include any detailed consideration of the important synergies and distinctions between first and second language acquisition and the possible implications of these for educational policy. We can only note, therefore, that this may be a question for further study, in particular given what we have described as the propitious situation in Armenia of functional bilingualism. There is clear evidence – for example the case of the "Russian" school no 176 – that pupils in Armenia have great potential for learning a wide repertoire of language, building on their prior skills and knowledge. In one class for example primary age pupils were observed learning (and discussing) Mathematics in both Armenian and Russian (with a single teacher) and had impressive operational levels in English and French. Some of these learners were children of the Diaspora who had come to Yerevan as first language Russian speakers.

This example perhaps illustrates the potential for fruitful collaboration between different strands of language learning and teaching - Mother Tongue, Armenian as a Second Language, Foreign Language learning. Such synergy was taking place almost spontaneously in this particular school, and other examples could be quoted involving English and French, but there is little evidence that a rationale has been elaborated which could benefit language learning or teachers more widely. Ironically the Law on Language which has been so important for the strengthening of the national language, can be impediment in such cases, as technically a school would be in breach of legislation by permitting Russian to be the language of schooling (albeit in a bilingual context). This is something which is also mentioned in the Country Report. [28]

- The particularity of Russian as a foreign language

Russian's predominance as a foreign language derives from the Soviet period when it was a compulsory subject at all levels of education. Russian was the language that provided access to professional activity and success in the job market, and this was one of the main reasons for the high level of command of Russian as a second language in some former republics of the USSR, even where ethnic Russians were not numerous, as is the case of Armenia. Russian still preserves this functional power, as evidenced in the Country report which states for example that: 'Russian is the second language of nearly 85% of the RA population'. It also appears to be the case that some of the minority populations prefer Russian as the language of instruction in schools and are fluent in using the language. [29]

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[28] CR 7.2

[29] See also Zolyan *Sociolinguistics and Language Policy Principles* pp10/11

In the current process of developing new standards and curricula – discussed in more detail in Section 3.4 - it should be noted that special attention is paid to Russian and that the Standard and Curriculum for Russian differs in some respects from the equivalent documents for English, French and German. As the Country Report and official documentation confirms[30] Russian is treated as a foreign language but with a special position, which is reflected in various aspects of the curriculum, mostly in the inclusion of literary works.

While it is true to say that for all languages the prescribed objectives and tasks can be defined as a unity in teaching language, literature and culture, the emphasis on culture and literary texts is greater in the teaching of Russian than in the teaching of English, French or German. This may be for historical reasons, and also because more time is made available for Russian than for other languages (3 hours rather than 2). Although "authentic" - meaning largely "journalistic" - texts are included in the programme for Russian, and the achievement of high levels of communicative competence is a key objective, there is a continued concentration on literary texts and what is called in broad terms "culture". Interestingly this decision received a degree of support from students in a recent informal survey conducted by the authors of the Russian curriculum. They have also had to adapt literary texts for the lower levels, with the objective of preserving the literary and stylistic values of the texts used. These are chosen in gradation with the aim of constructing a 'spiritual language space' and situating the learner as part of this space. In simple terms, to a greater extent than in the other languages, the teaching of Russian is about cultural/intercultural understanding and identification in addition to achieving functional communicative abilities, important as that might be for employment and Higher Education.

- The position of English

In the school sector three main foreign languages are taught in addition to Russian – English, French or German. In Higher Education a much wider offer of languages is available, but these three languages (and Russian with its special status) still predominate. In relation both to the regulatory system and the curriculum (programmes, assessment, textbooks etc), the three main European languages have exactly the same status. There is little doubt however that, both in relation to demand and take-up and in relation to public attitudes, English occupies a predominant position. According to the Country Report nearly 68% of school pupils study English as their second foreign language, compared with 18% who study French and 14% German.[31]

In Higher Education the demand for English is if anything greater and in most cases it is growing, even at the expense of Russian – according to the Country Report, quoting MES data, at Yerevan State Linguistics University and Yerevan State University both applications and places for English considerably outnumber all other

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[30] CR 5.3-5.5 and 8.2.4. and see also *Minutes of the session of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, 16.9.1999 – "The Russian Language in the System of Education and Socio-Cultural Life of the Republic of Armenia"*

[31] Country Report 8 2 4

languages, including Armenian and Russian [32]. Similar tendencies can be observed at the Armenian State University of Economics where it is reported that 90% of the 2300 students take English compared with 5% for French and 5% for German (1 foreign language is compulsory), and at the State Engineering University of Armenia whose Vice-Rector has reported a shift over the past 10 years from Russian to English (Case Study)

This preference for English is widespread in society, and it finds an echo in the adage that "every Armenian mother's" aspiration for her children is that they should have access - to computer skills, to a University Education and to English.   Such popular wisdom clearly has an objective basis given the importance of English as a language of international communication and the effect of this on the employment market. At the same time it may over-simplify the real linguistic needs both of the country and of its citizens.   In terms used in current European debates "English may be essential, but it is not sufficient"[33].

- Language Diversification

The reaction of the Armenian authorities to this new "English question" has therefore been a positive and creative one. Rather than promoting a policy of English only or a contrasting one of seeking to stem the tide of English by legislation, the authorities have chosen to promote other languages alongside English.

Case study from the University Sector

State Engineering University of Armenia (Polytechnic)

10.000 students with a campus in Yerevan and 3 regional campuses, 4 more campuses planned.
400 staff members.

Languages Taught and Staffing

Armenian	7
Russian	13
English	39
French	5
German	3

Not only is languages teaching mandatory, the University also attaches a lot of importance to languages and any specialist leaving the university must know one foreign language (English, French or German) apart from Armenian and Russian. In the case of Armenian and Russian, which they already know and master from high school they are taught special purposes Armenian and Russian linked to their future profession. They are taught the language of the profession, not only specialized vocabulary but also the different text types they will encounter in their profession.

There has been a shift in the last 10 years from very high levels of mastery of Russian towards greater ambitions in relation to English. This has created a need to reinforce standards of Russian as the Russian language has always been the main source of information for their professions and besides most of the books they use are in Russian.

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[32] Country Report 9.2.1. – In 2007 there were 745 places for English (1143 first applications) compared to 99 (98 applications) for German and some 100 for French. The figures for Armenian were 120 places (290 applications) and Russian was just over 200 for both places and applications
[33] Paraphrase of A. Maalouf.   Ministerial Conference on Multilingualism Brussels 15/2/2008

> University requirements for Russian: they must be able to handle the corresponding professional literature with ease, that's why they will never call the chair of Russian a foreign language chair.
>
> English has become the first foreign language in an unplanned way. It is the result of globalisation and the pressure of society that perceives English as necessary for being competitive in a global economy.

In the words of the Country Report –

"During the recent years, in the result of Armenia's liberalization and increasing international contacts, the English language, obviously expanding its functional geography, has had great public demand, very often at the expense of other foreign languages in the system of education. Thus it is necessary to provide equal distribution of all foreign languages in the system of education". (CR 4.8.).

From September 2007 therefore it was proposed that a 3rd foreign language could be offered from the 5th Grade – a proposal that it is intended to implement in all schools by 2012. This is combined with considerable curricular flexibility, for example allowing schools to provide additional support for the 2nd language[34] and also to organize supplementary activities outside normal hours which could be devoted to additional language learning. Such flexibility corresponds admirably to the kind of curriculum scenarios suggested in the CEFR (chapter 8) and the strategies set out in the Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe (part 3). At the same time this new policy of 3 foreign languages – in fact Russian plus 2 – raises a number of important challenges which may need further consideration

- The time made available for language learning overall is now considerable and could have effects on other aspects of the curriculum and also on the attitudes of teachers of other subjects.   This underlines the importance of further reflection and of the development of a rationale for language learning which supports learning across the curriculum.
- The second and third languages in particular have only a limited number of available hours. It would therefore be desirable to define language competence profiles for the end of each educational cycle (Primary, Middle and High). Preferably this should be done not only by level but by competence rather than globally. It would thus be both possible and reasonable to develop a variegated profile for different languages.
- Both from the view of teacher expertise and classroom delivery it could be essential to conceptualise foreign language teaching as a single discipline – rather than separating it into different subjects (Russian, English, French, German). This could support the development of dual linguist teachers and also make better use of the available curricular time – in theory someone who has (say) reached a certain standard of English should be a better and more efficient learner of German or French. This could be specifically reflected in the curriculum and in teaching approaches. It could also support a wider range of delivery modes – not simply the traditional language lesson, but cultural activities and group work (possibly involving more than one foreign language) to achieve defined objectives

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[34] Yerevan School no 6 for German and no 119 for French

- It may also be anticipated that increasing exposure to language learning may affect the motivation of some learners, whether because of the "plateau effect" which tends to reduce the rate of acquisition over time, or simply because some learners' are not convinced of the need for so many languages in the curriculum, a phenomenon which is common in many European countries, not least in the countries where English is the mother tongue of the majority of the population.

All of this tends to underline the view that some important work is taking place in Armenia in relation to language policy and provision, but that it will soon be a priority to develop further the rationale and to carry out additional research based changes to the processes of teaching and learning.

It was also felt that in the new educational "market place" Head Teachers should be equipped to explain to parents and pupils the importance of languages and of a repertoire of languages and language competences.

In this context it may be of interest to ask the question also about national needs in languages (in addition to the needs of individuals) which might suggest the desirability of more provision for the languages of Armenia's geopolitical neighbours such as Georgian , Farsi and for other major world languages.

3.3.2   Continuity and the role of Higher Education

The challenge of coherence is also experienced not just *across* the system of education (and therefore language learning) but vertically. The lack of connectivity between the different levels of education and training appears to be developing as a major concern to decision makers. Currently MES is responsible for school education up to the university enrolment exams, which are the basis for measuring students' achievements, based on 'pass' and 'fail'. This in turn puts pressure on families and encourages recourse to private providers (see above). Beyond the system of school education, however, Universities are in general autonomous, while adult education is largely unregulated.

Overall therefore each level of education and training has its own system of internal organisation and rationale. For example the Universities' entrance examinations are not clearly linked to school level objectives. This creates the risk of creating more fences than bridges between the established educational levels.

This dissonance between levels, or rather the desire to create coherence in its place surely underlies the introduction of a unified state exam. The transfer of credits between high school education and university level is also an action in this direction. This can result in a clear identification of educational paths; can lead to synchronization between the levels in content, subjects taught, levels achieved and allow institutions to build on these levels at the next stage. This is an area and a task that requires the concerted efforts of many stakeholders, which is not automatically achieved by adopting a common strategy for development of education. In addition to the resource issues outlined in Section 3.1 and the new Law on Education which is intended to address them, links between the levels of education are of major importance.

In this respect Higher Education has a key role to play in the reform of the educational system, for it sets the ultimate standards at the end of the educational cycle and impacts significantly and profoundly on standards at secondary level, and indeed in vocational institutions. It should be noted in this respect that the University sector is broadening its position on the international stage through contacts with many non-traditional university partnerships, while also retaining its traditional affiliations. There has also been an opening of competition between universities with the establishment of private universities in the country and also with new branches of the state universities, which is likely to have a significant effect on the vitality and impact of the sector.

3.4 Issues of Quality

If the desire for coherence is a major objective of Education in Armenia, the centre piece – the Grail – is surely the drive for greater quality and raised standards.

3.4.1   The new curriculum

In this respect the new State Standard for General Education and specifically the Subject Standards and Syllabi (see above 2.4 and 2.4.2) are seen as critical change agents. They constitute a new development for the teaching of foreign languages in the educational system and set a completely new set of requirements.   In line with the general standards the languages standards include systems of knowledge, systems of skills/competences and systems of values and they are described in terms of Content, Learning objectives, Teaching activities and Topics and Text types to be covered.

This is a major initiative - the first time that Armenia has had a National curriculum framework with strategies for implementation, standards to be reached based on the framework, and subject specific standards including standards for special education needs.   The standards are the same for all foreign languages but the detailed syllabuses differ. They are also used to inform families as well as teachers and students, and constitute a major attempt at transparency in setting educational objectives and involving the different stakeholders. This also raises an issue of communication. These documents are very impressive theoretically, but they are also complex. Clearly they will be mediated in practice – through in service training for example - but there could also be value in the production of summary versions and support material for teachers and other interested parties such as parents.

One of the major implications of the new curriculum is that teaching should become much more student centred. The approach to be adopted in language teaching and learning is broadly communicative. This marks a significant change from the previous approach and methodology which was largely grammatical and knowledge oriented. Now a more action-oriented approach is being adopted. This means that the teaching should not only transmit knowledge but also competences. This clearly shows the influence of some of the basic documents of the Council of Europe as the curriculum deals with communicative activities, skills and competences and is considered as an important instrument through which students can reflect on their own learning.   In developing the implementation stage of the new curriculum the

educational authorities might also consider identifying the objectives even more clearly in relation to the CEFR descriptors, organising them by competence and making use of existing Council of Europe instruments and initiatives relating to language specific level descriptors and intercultural activities and opportunities.[35]

Such radical change is unlikely to take place overnight and it has significant implications for courses and text books, for assessment and for teacher training.

3.4.2 Textbooks

The standards provide the basis for developing new textbooks, which in practice are likely to determine much of the actual practice in school. Textbooks are prescribed by the Ministry of Education (1 book per language and per year group, except in Russian and English where there are two set books and schools can choose). Authors of Foreign languages textbooks tend to be University teachers and also experienced secondary teachers. Two specific issues relating to textbook development are worthy of further attention –

- In some cases textbooks are Russian books with rubrics translated into Armenian. It has been observed that this can be linguistically distorting as the specific needs of Russian speakers are not the same as the needs of Armenian speakers (an example given was the use of the article). Against this it should also be said that although some of the older Russian textbooks for English appear rather culturally dated, modern texts from 2006 provide a range of stimulating and appropriate learning activities.

- There is a general complaint that the tender period for authors to submit content for new textbooks is too short

3.4.3 Evaluation and Assessment

The new curriculum is based on 3 stages corresponding to primary, secondary (middle) and higher secondary (high) and the standards will be set at three levels:
- Basic, covering basic skills that all students have to have acquired/developed at the end of each education stage
- Medium, above basic skills
- High, higher level of competence in the different skills

The nature of these levels is still under discussion, and there is a wish to stream students in upper secondary schools according to such levels, but this issue is not yet entirely resolved. There is also some opaqueness over what the definition of such skills at the three levels is to be and how it will be decided whether students have attained them or not. Certainly a portfolio approach might provide a helpful bridge between the new curriculum and the need for appropriate reporting functions which involve learners in a range of competences.

School leaving examinations that qualify for University entry, are designed and coordinated by the Centre for Evaluation and Testing, created in 2006, and the examinations are administered by school teachers. This examination is unified, and

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[35] For example the Level Descriptors of the CEFR by language (Profile Deutsch etc)

administered only in written form because of logistics and cost constraints and therefore tests only written skills. The examination has two different options, A and B according to two different requirements:

Option A → reflecting the requirements of compulsory education.

Option B → reflecting requirements for University entrance and with a strong component of metalinguistic knowledge.

In general further development would be desirable (and is indeed planned) in relation to assessment procedures, and the instruments and experience of the Council of Europe could be helpful in this respect. We have already referred to the desirability of differentiated outcomes (by both level and skill) for different languages, depending on the time available for study. There could also be a need to find ways for assessment to correspond more closely to the laudable aims of the curriculum. Otherwise experience suggests that there will be a strong tendency for the assessment outcomes to drive the curriculum and teaching approaches. This is particularly the case when assessment is of such high stakes – University entrance for example.

3.4.4   Teacher training and Professional Development

It goes without saying that no education policy can be successful without the support and involvement of the teaching force. In the last analysis therefore the training and professional development of teachers – whether initial or in-service – is of critical importance for the success of curricular reform

- *In-service Training*

This is well understood in Armenia where, under the aegis of the National Institute for Education, In-service teacher training is compulsory for all teachers. In order to facilitate the introduction of the new language standards, in 2007 the National Institute organised training sessions of 30 hours (5 half days) for all language teachers. The model is a cascade model, following public announcements to select practising teachers to become teacher trainers. In 2008 there were about such 250 trainers, who carry out training at the 52 school centres chosen as premises.

Case study - Visit to an English language training seminar (Yerevan school 20)
April 2008

The teachers were presenting and then reviewing work that had taken place earlier – developing a range of techniques and activities for pupil centred work. They had made considerable use of resources – paper, illustrations and card – but no more advanced technology. Enthusiasm and interest was of a high level as was the level of discussion. Impressively the whole session was conducted in English.

These teachers were clearly committed to the process of reform, but a number of them also made a strong case for maintaining some more traditional approaches to teaching and learning – described as the "Soviet" method. This was interpreted to mean a concentration on learning text, particularly of a cultural nature (and associated recital/performance).

Some concerns have been expressed about the permanence of this process – although there was a follow up on assessment issues in the summer of 2009, it is not clear whether and how this good initiative will continue and become an established part of educational development. The Ministry is currently considering a number of possibilities, including entitlement to a longer period of professional development (3 months every 3 years). It is also the case that existing state provision is supplemented by « foreign » organisations such as the British Council and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy who provide support for teachers of the relevant languages.

This last point further illustrates an earlier observation that – as in many countries – languages education and training are conceptualised as language- specific. In the longer term, therefore it would be beneficial to emphasize the convergences between languages, organising joint training and reflection for generalist primary teachers and primary language teachers, for teachers of different languages, and for teachers of languages and teachers of Armenian. This would be a powerful support for the development of a coherent language education policy in Armenia

- *Universities and Initial teacher training*

In Armenia the teaching profession is entirely graduate (primary and secondary, public and private). The requirements are a Bachelor's degree for the teaching profession and generally speaking a Master's degree to become a teacher trainer. Primary teachers are generalists who in most cases follow a 4-year University course, while all teachers of languages (and Physical Education) are specialists, including in the primary sector. There is a clear commitment to the importance of pedagogic and methodological training for future teachers, notably at the YSLU after Brusov.

Student teachers have a 6-week practice during their last year. This takes place at schools contracted to the University based on their capacity to offer relevant examples of good teaching methods. During the practice the student teachers have a mentor from the school and a mentor from the University who is a pedagogy expert. There are no explicit set criteria for observing and evaluating student teachers. They are assessed on the basis of observation of some model lessons carried out for their final assessment. At YSLU assessment is based on lesson observation and the production of a language portfolio.

There is thus both a tradition and a sound basis for initial teacher education in Armenia. Further consideration may need to be given to the number of hours devoted to teaching methodology and didactics and also whether 6 weeks in 4 years is sufficient time for teaching practice.

One major initiative which could have a highly beneficial effect on the new Four Languages Policy – in particular in the marzes where there are many small institutions and a shortage of teachers – would be the development of university courses for dual linguist teachers, or even for teachers of Armenian and a Foreign Language. Such a development would also have a major impact on the reconceptualisation of Languages Education referred to in a number of sections of the Profile.

3.5 Post-script – some particularities of Armenia

This outline analysis of some major changes in Armenian language education may disguise the specificity of what is happening in this country. To conclude then we wish to emphasize some of the particular challenges and possibilities which are not necessarily shared in most member states of the Council of Europe.

We began this Chapter (3.1) by referring to the key challenges for Armenia of resources and accessibility.   Both of these have important consequences for language learning and underline the progress that is being made thanks in large part to a committed teaching force. We refer in this context to two factors which for most Western European countries are a "given" of language learning – international contacts and the use of technology (Information and Communication Technologies – ICT) .

For the vast majority of students in Armenia their only contact with the target foreign language takes place at school and during classes and school activities. Only for Russian is the situation different as the Russian language is present in Armenian society and the media and in many cases, Russian is also the language spoken at home or with relatives, to the extent that it is a second language for Armenian population. All Russian TV channels are also available through free satellite channels. For other languages contact is much more difficult.   Even the BBC and CNN which are very popular and much used are usually only accessible in Yerevan. Until recently opportunities to travel were limited and even now cost is a big dissuader.   Only a small number of teachers (and even fewer pupils) have actually visited the countries whose languages they speak, often so fluently and indeed colloquially.

Similarly there is very little evidence of the use of new technologies in schools, colleges or universities, and nor is ICT mentioned to any great extent in the Country Report.   Such use is not of course a panacea or replacement for the teacher, but there are undoubtedly important applications for language learning – interactive learning, and significantly perhaps for Armenia, opportunities for virtual contact through the Web, opportunities which are already taken up enthusiastically by University students.

Given these apparent deficiencies the standards and motivations evident in Armenian language education are remarkable. Tentatively this may be understood as a reflection of a thirst for education in Armenian society.   It may also be related to the experience reported in the In-service training course (Case Study above). The so-called "soviet" methodology of rote learning and recital does not seem to prevent the involvement of pupils of various ages and levels of achievement. It is widespread and well understood by teachers and seems to permit some quite spectacular levels of attainment (for example the level of Modern Greek achieved after 2 years in the Greek Armenian Vocational College).

In the context of the current revision of the curriculum on communicative lines, there could well be benefit in further investigation of the effectiveness of these more traditional methods, perhaps with a view to a synthesis of what is best about the old with the undoubted benefits of communication « for real ».

4. Looking to the future

What follows is not intended as a blueprint. Rather it represents some conclusions for further development based on reflection and exchange between Armenian and Council of Europe "experts", discussion with a large number of stakeholders and some –hopefully representative - investigation of realities on the ground.

4.1 Building on the positive

As the report repeatedly emphasises, there is much that is positive on which to build. In particular –

- Effective operational bilingualism in large parts of the population
  This provides an openness to languages and to cultural diversity which is part of the fabric of Armenian society and propitious soil therefore for plurilingualism to flourish.

- A generally supportive legal framework
  The laws and regulations introduced since independence have provided a sound basis for a modern, international education system in which languages and interculturality are allotted an important role. There is also significant support for regional or minority languages

- High levels of language learning in all phases
  There is a commitment from the teaching force and motivation among learners of all ages which leads to impressive levels of both language performance and intercultural understanding.

- A population which supports educational progress in general and greater language capability in particular.
  Popular desire and support for education is strong: "every mother's" wish for example that her children should have a University education. In this context linguistic competence is a major component –.

- A languages teaching reform programme supported by teacher training
  The legislative framework has been made concrete through an ambitious programme of curricular reform and this is being supported by resources (textbooks), the introduction of a European Language Portfolio, and – critically – teacher training.

These are major benefits for any future language education policy developments

4.2 Addressing the challenges

Some other factors may tend to undermine the coherence and quality of the languages offer. Some of these are objective challenges – resources, geography (and therefore access) – which lie beyond the scope of this Policy Profile. Even so some tentative suggestions are offered on how some such constraints may be alleviated, for example through more systematic use of European support.

The profile activity also draws attention to a number of dissonances which it may be possible to address through specific policy initiatives which have been summarised in

terms of a lack of coherence – a "dislocation" – in certain areas.   In contextual terms the following kinds of dislocation are noted–

- Between town and country.
  There is little information in the Country Report about teaching outside Yerevan, and contacts during the Profile process were limited to the National Minority areas and some discussion with NGOs. Despite these limitations in our evidence base however it does appear that there are some challenges in the regions in relation to language teaching and indeed teaching in general. One major such concern is the difficulty of finding teachers, in particular for a range of languages.

- Between educational policy and the views of civil society/employers
  This is referred to in more detail in Section 3.1.2. As currently functioning it does not appear that the education system sufficiently involves civil society or the voice of employers and this could have some negative effects, in particular on assessment and qualifications.

- Between public and private provision
  This is also referred to in 3.1.2. The effect could distort both provision and public finances through the existence of a significant unofficial (and unquantified) educational sector in languages

There are also (3.3) two important "dislocations" in the educational system itself

- Separation of educational phases and spheres
  This – not uncommon – distinction between levels, can lead to not only a lack of coherence but also duplication of effort and uncertainty as to outcome, particularly where education is such high stakes. The existence of such a dislocation underlines the potential lead role of the Universities, which are in a position to set an agenda for the whole educational system.

- Separation of language teaching communities
  Finally throughout the system – from primary to Higher Education and in training languages are considered separately – not only in terms of mother tongue and "foreign" languages but also in relation to the various "foreign" languages.   This again is commonly found in many countries and it is something which it could be important to address.

On the basis of these key points in particular, possible areas are suggested for further development in Armenia's language education policy, some of which are already under consideration by the authorities.

4.3   Fifteen proposals for further action

Following discussion between the main stakeholders the following ideas are offered for further development and implementation. They are linked to the main "Issues for Discussion" set out in Chapter 3.

Contextual

1. Greater engagement with employers and civil society, perhaps through the instigation of a national debate and report on Armenia's national needs for languages and reflection of this in provision?
2. More information about practice and provision in language teaching and learning, in particular across the country and in relation to the extent and impact of private provision, would be a helpful basis for future policy (see also 15).

Concerning issues of identity

3. Public discussion and clarification of the role of Armenian in civil society, in education, in the family (including support for the Diaspora).
4. Further analysis of the language needs of the rural population and of the national minorities.

Concerning coherence

5. Conceptualising the idea of "languages education" - and so the "languages teacher" (rather than the Russian/ English/French teacher). This could be reflected in professional dialogue and training, and could have a major impact on the coherence of the curriculum, and on diversification, as well as being cost effective.
6. The development of dual linguist capabilities at University (which could include Armenian as a second language).
7. Development of simplified versions of the new programmes linked to the Council of Europe Standards in order to help teachers (and parents) and strengthen current reforms.

Concerning quality

8. Development and expansion of current programmes for in-service training of teachers and also the development of a Master's Degree programme.
9. Efforts to standardise Initial Teacher Training Courses, including clarification of the required levels (using the CEFR).
10. Development of clear standards – outcomes – with different and differentiated expectations of language competence at various levels for each language, including specification of some partial competences or "jagged" profiles.
11. More targeted support for languages in vocational training and in lifelong learning – including the development and promotion of certification/assessment which is of real practical value and accepted by employers.
12. Support by the Ministry for the concept of "experimental" or specialised schools with access to additional resources for whom, for example, some aspects of the Law on Language were suspended; this could provide more possibilities for educational innovation (for example in CLIL or ICT)
13. Development of the use of new technologies in language learning, perhaps through such specialised schools acting as developmental hubs so

providing the basis for further investigation into the potential of ICT and the practical possibilities for low cost implementation of technology.

14. A more concerted effort to harness the resources offered by the Cultural Agencies and the European Institutions to support contact with learners and teachers in other countries.

And a central thought.....

Key to implementing such ideas will be found in the final suggestion for consideration, a suggestion which has provoked considerable interest among stakeholders-

15 If the strategy that is unfolding is to be successful, this will be greatly aided through the development of an implementation arm. This means finding a way to coordinate language policy on a national scale (through a commission, a centre, agency, NGO or some other recognized and credible national process). Such a body could address many of the specific issues raised in this report, developing its activity through close cooperation with NGOs and international organisations as a basis for a new language education policy.

5. Conclusion and "envoi"

At this stage there is no neat conclusion. It would indeed be artificial as the discussion is still continuing, and work is still in hand. The profile is in this sense more process than outcome. For all involved it has been a rich and enriching experience. It has involved hard study, serious debate, agreement and where necessary compromise, all leavened by the pleasures and fascinations of a particular time and place – the conversations, the many toasts around many tables, the (differentiated) music of various kinds, and of course the opportunity to see the sun go down on Mount Ararat and to experience together something of the meaning of an old and new civilisation which

Through long centuries kept on burning
..... a fiery flame..never put out by foreign winds.

Paruyr Sevak (To My People)

APPENDICES

1 Participants and stakeholders

2 Programme of study visit

3 List of key Council of Europe documents

4 Council of Europe instruments

Appendix 1: Participants and Stakeholders

The Council of Europe Expert Group
Lid King,	National Director for Languages, Department for Children, Schools and Families, London
Jean-Claude Beacco	Professor, Université de la Sorbonne nouvelle, Paris
Dolors Solé Vilanova	Head of Resource Center for Foreign Languages, Catalunya,
Maria Stoicheva	Associate Professor, Department of European Studies, Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridiski"
Johanna Panthier	Administrator, Language Policy Division, Council of Europe

Armenian Expert Group
Suren Zolyan	Rector, Yerevan Brusov State Linguistic University (YSLU),
Melanya Astvatsatryan	Head of the Chair of Pedagogy and Language Teaching Methodology, YSLU
Aida Topuzyan	Chair of Pedagogy and Foreign Language Methodology, YSLU
Nerses Gevorgyan	Ministry of Education and Science, Head of the UNESCO Chair of Education Management and Planning, YSLU
Gayane Terzyan	Chair of Pedagogy and Language Teaching Methodology, YSLU
Serob Khachatryan	National Institute for Education
Karen Melkonyan,	Centre for Education Projects, Project Expert , Head of Curricula, Standards and assessment Project, Project expert, MES
Araik Jraghatspanyan	Chair of English Communication, YSLU Project translator
Bella Ayunts	Chair of Pedagogy and Language Teaching Methodology, YSLU

Ministers and Officials
Levon Mkrtchyan,	Minister of Education and Science
Bagrat Yesayan	Deputy Minister of RA Ministry of Education and Science
Ara Avetissyan	Deputy Minister of RA Ministry of Education and Science
Narine Hovhannisyan	Head of the Public Education Division MES
Lilia Balasanyan	Principal specialist (Russian) Public Education Division, MES Armine
Ohanyan	Principal Specialist (French) Public Education Division MES
Anahit Mkrtchyan	Supervisor of Teacher training programmes MES
Ruben Gasparyan	Head of the Higher Education Division at MES
Lavrenty Mirzoyan	Head of State Inspection of Language

Academic Staff and students
Mkrtich Avaqyan	Vice-rector for Innovation YSLU
Zara Soghomonyan,	Head of Education Department
Yuri Suvaryan	Rector Armenian State University of Economics
Ruben Aghgashyan	Vice-Rector State Engineering University of Armenia (Polytechnic)

Professors and experts on the Armenian Language
Foreign language subject standard developers
Experts from national Institute of education
Directors of Humanities College, French College Greek College

Head Teachers and staff of Schools 114,119,176
Head Teachers, staff and pupils of   FERIK and VERIN DVIN schools
English Teachers in training
Students from YSLU

Journalists

Khachanush Grigoryan,	Public TV1
Nune Aleksanyan,	Public TV2
Ruzanna Stepanyan,	News Agency "Armenpress"
Gagik Minasyan,	Newspaper "Krtutiun"
Lusine Barseghyan,	newspaper "Haykakan Jamanak"
Anna Margaryan,	Newspaper "Aravot"
Artur Baghdasaryan,	Head of PR section, MES
Narine Mnatsakanyan, `	PR specialist, General education Department, MES

Civil Society and NGOs

American Councils for International Education
Armenian Association for the Study of English
Association of English Language Teachers of Armenia
Association of Francophone Universities of Armenua
British Council
IREX
Institut Français
Open Society Institute
Project Harmony
Save the Children
United Nations Development Programme
World Vision

Charitable organisations supporting children with Special Needs
Youth organisations
Organisations supporting National Minorities

Day 1, 13.04.08, Sunday	11.00 - 14.00	Excursion
	15.00 – 17.00	Business-lunch at a Restaurant , Discussion of the CoE Expert visit programme with the Armenian team
Day 2 14.04.08, Monday	09.30 – 10.30	Opening of the conference titled "Awareness Raising on Intercultural Education"
	10.30 – 12.30	Meeting with Mr. Mkrtich Avaqyan vice-rector and Ms. Zara Soghomonyan, head of Education Department , YSLU after Brusov , and Heads of Departments
	13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
	15.00 – 17.00	Meeting with the Armenian team to discuss Country Report
	19.00	Cultural programme
Day 3 15.04.08, Tuesday	9.30 – 12.00 12.30 – 13.30 14.00 – 16.00	Visits to schools - "Russian" school 176; "French" school 119 "English" school 114 , private school (2 groups) Lunch Current trends in course book production (teachers and foreign language textbook authors, foreign language subject standard developers and experts from National Institute of Education)
Day 4 16.04.08, Wednesday	10.00 – 12.00 12.00 – 13.00 13.00 – 14.00 14.30 – 15.30 16.00 – 18.00	Discussion on Current Armenian language development and support for the Diaspora (participants – Armenian language specialists, Heads of Departments from the Ministry of Education and Science, State Language Inspectorate) Meeting with journalists and NGOs Lunch Visit to a foreign language teacher training seminar, discussion (Yerevan School 20) Discussion with Team and Country experts
Day 5 17.04.08, Thursday	9.30 – 14.00 14.30-15.30 16.00-17.30	Visits to Non-language universities – Armenian State University of Economics. State Engineering University of Armenia (Polytechnic) Visits to Vocational educational institutions (Humanities College, French college, Greek catering college) Contribution to Seminar on European language policy Meeting with INGOs

Day 6
18.04.08
Friday
	9.00 – 15.00
	
	18.00
		Visits to minority schools and discussion with key players
		  FERIK (Yezidi)
		  VERIN DVIN (Assyrian)
		Debrief and meeting with Country Team
		Dinner

Day 7 19.04.08 Saturday	10.00-11.00	Meeting and debrief with Mr. Levon Mkrtchyan, Minister of Education and Science and Deputy Ministers Free time. Drafting and Visit to Garni and Geghard Monastery

Appendix 3: 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
  - 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*
  - Recommendation R (98) 6 based on the results of the CDCC Project 'Language Learning for European Citizenship' (1989 – 1996)
  - 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
  - Recommendation 1598 (2003) on the protection of Sign languages in the member states of the Council of Europe
  - Recommendation 1539 (2001) on the European Year of Languages 2001
  - Recommendation 1383 (1998) on Linguistic Diversification and (CM(99)97)

- *Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education*
  - 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.

The documents in question focus primarily on languages which are defined as 'minority languages' or 'modern languages'/'langues vivantes'. These terms usually exclude the languages considered to be the national and/or official languages of a state and education policies dealing with the teaching of these. There is, however, a need to include such languages in language education policies because they are part of the linguistic repertoire of individuals. 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 4: Council of Europe instruments: an overview

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1. *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe*
2. *European Language Portfolio (ELP)*
3. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)*
4. *Manual for relating Language Examinations to the CEFR*

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1. From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (www.coe.int/lang)

The aim of the *Guide* is to offer an analytical instrument which can serve as a reference document for the formulation or reorganization 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 organized in three parts:

1. Analysis of current language education policies in Europe (common characteristics of the policies of member states and presentation of Council of Europe principles)
2. Information required for the formulation of language education policies (methodologies for policy design, aspects/factors to be taken into account in decision making)
3. 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 organizing 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 Reference Studies (see website) 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.

The *Guide* and the Reference Studies are available on the website.

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

The European Language Portfolio was developed and piloted by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, from 1998 until 2000. It was launched on a pan-European level during the European Year of Languages (2001) as a tool to support the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism.

What is a European Language Portfolio?

It 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:
- a **Language Passport** which its owner regularly updates. A grid is provided where his/her language competences can be described according to common criteria accepted throughout Europe and which can serve as a complement to customary certificates.
- a detailed **Language Biography** which describes the owner's experiences in each language and which is designed to guide the learner in planning and assessing progress.
- a **Dossier** where examples of personal work can be kept to illustrate one's language competences.

Aims

The European Language Portfolio seeks to promote the aims of the Council of Europe. These include the development of democratic citizenship in Europe through

1. the deepening of mutual understanding and tolerance among citizens in Europe;
2. the protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;
3. the promotion of lifelong language and intercultural learning for plurilingualism through the development of learner responsibility and learner autonomy;
4. 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.
- 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).

Accreditation of ELP models: see detailed information on the website.

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

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 and its translation into over thirty languages (see website).

Guides and Case Studies are available on the Council of Europe website.

English version of the CEFR: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment,* 2001, Cambridge University Press.
ISBN: Hardback 0521803136 Paperback: 0521005310.

4.　　Manual for Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR
www.coe.int/lang

A *Manual* for relating language examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has been produced by the Language Policy Division in order to assist member states and national/international providers of examinations in relating their certificates and diplomas to the CEFR. The final version was published in 2009.

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 aims to:
- − contribute to competence building in the area of linking assessments to the CEFR;
- − encourage increased transparency on the part of examination providers;
- − encourage the development of both formal and informal national and international networks of institutions and experts.

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 (see also *Linking to the CEFR levels: Research perspectives*)

The Manual is accompanied by *Further Material on Maintaining Standards across Languages, Contexts and Administrations by exploiting Teacher Judgment and IRT Scaling.*