Language Education Policy Profile

AUSTRIA

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1   Introduction

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

This activity is known as the Language Education Policy Profile (LEPP), 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 (not published), 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. (Each 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.

In providing comments, the Council of Europe Expert Group bears in mind both the priorities of the country in question and the policies and views of desirable practice presented in documents of the Council of Europe, in particular with respect to the promotion of plurilingualism.

The present Country Profile is the outcome of the following:
- a preparatory meeting held in Vienna in May 2006;
- a Country Report prepared under the editorship of Hans-Jürgen Krumm and Rudolf de Cillia;

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[1]   Document DGIV/EDU/LANG (2002) 1 Rev. 3

- a week-long study visit in May 2007, during which four Council of Europe experts and one member of the Council of Europe Secretariat (Language Policy Division) held discussions with officials, language professionals and stakeholders and visited a variety of educational institutions;[2]
- documentation provided before, during and after the study visit by the Austrian authorities and others;
- a meeting of the experts and representatives of the Austrian authorities in November 2007 to review the Experts' Report;
- a Round Table held in the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture in Vienna in March 2008, at which the Experts presented their report to the stakeholders they had met during their study visit and received their comments and feedback;
- written comments and feedback on the Experts' Report received subsequent to the Round Table.

The members of the Expert Group were: David Little (Rapporteur), Ireland; Jorunn Berntzen, Norway; Angelika Kubanek, Germany; Sera de Vriendt, Belgium; Philia Thalgott, Council of Europe. Dagmar Heindler acted as Austrian liaison person and adviser.

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 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

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[2] See Appendix 5.

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 2.

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. [3]

Thus plurilingualism refers to the full linguistic repertoire of the individual, including 'mother tongue' or 'first language', and in this Profile we are concerned by implication with all language education in Austria, including education in German and in regional and minority languages, as well as in those languages which are labelled 'foreign'.

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 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*.[4] 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:

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

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[3] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, Council of Europe/Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.168. Available online at www.coe.int/lang. See also Appendix 1.

[4] *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.

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.[5]

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 are thus likely to vary according to that country's circumstances, history and priorities.

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[5] *From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education. Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*, p.36.

2 The current situation

2.1 Introduction

Austria's linguistic situation is complex. The various autochthonous linguistic minorities are an ever-present reminder that the country's history is deeply rooted in multilingualism and multiculturalism. Recent immigration accounts for the presence of a large number of 'new' languages in Austrian society and the high percentage of pupils for whom German is a second language. In five of the eight countries with which Austria shares borders – Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic – German is neither a national nor a majority language. And the German language within Austria is itself (like all other languages) subject to regional variation.

This ecological complexity is matched by the complexity of Austrian educational structures. Responsibility for some areas of education lies with the federal government, while for other areas it lies with the *Länder*. The recent creation of two education ministries – Education, the Arts and Culture on the one hand, Science and Research on the other – has resulted in further complexity. As in other countries the universities are autonomous, though it is hoped that their involvement in the development of this Profile will encourage them to elaborate their own language policies in harmony with it.

In these circumstances developing and enacting a coherent and transparent language education policy is a challenging task that requires a sustained effort of understanding and commitment on the part of language professionals and all other stakeholders as well as the necessary political will. From the Council of Europe's perspective, however, Austria's complex linguistic situation offers unmatched opportunities for creative innovation, while its equally complex educational structures should be seen as a bracing challenge rather than an insuperable obstacle.

2.2 Recent changes and new challenges facing language education in Austria

Three events in recent history have created new linguistic challenges for Austria: the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, Austria's accession to the European Union in 1995, and the accession of neighbouring states to the European Union in 2004. Each of these events has brought an increase in inward and outward mobility, opened up new opportunities for trade, and raised new questions to which language education has still to find answers.

Since 1989 the economic situation of Burgenland, for example, has been transformed and language has played an important role in this – 50% of Austrian enterprises in Hungary come from Burgenland because they have staff who can speak Hungarian. Efforts have been made to promote the learning of Czech, Hungarian and Slovak, but although the Country Report documents an increase from 2001-02 to 2004-05, the numbers learning these languages remain very small.

As a member of the European Union, Austria is party to the Bologna process, which entails student mobility, and to the Lisbon process, which aims to create a knowledge-based society. Both processes have obvious implications for language education, in Austria as in other EU member states. The aspirations of the Bologna Declaration are predicated on the readiness of university students to pursue their studies in countries

where their first language is not native, which implies a capacity to study through a second or foreign language. The same kind of consideration applies to the creation of a knowledge-based European society. We use language to accumulate, store and access knowledge, and we shall make more progress, as individuals and as societies, if we can accumulate, store and access knowledge in more than one language. This explains why the Council of Europe and the European Union are committed to increasing but also improving the learning of languages in their respective member states. Yet the Country Report (4.4.4) records that at Austrian universities (though not at universities of applied sciences) subject areas that are not philological do not generally include a foreign language requirement in their programmes of study. Against this, awareness of the importance of languages not only as a focus of academic study but as communicative tools that students need to master has led to the recent establishment of language centres at Austria's four larger universities (Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck and Salzburg). This has resulted in a significant increase in the availability of optional foreign language modules for students of all disciplines. The need for language centres to be self-financing, however, means that it is difficult for them to engage in research and thus connect fully into the university mainstream.

In the course of the LEPP process the *Pädagogische Akademien* (PÄDAKs), *Pädagogische Institute* (PIs) and *Berufspädagogische Akademien* (BPAs) have become *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (PHs), which the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Science and Research see as an opportunity for significant innovation, especially as regards cooperation between the PHs and the universities and the greater social involvement of the third-level sector in general. There is a widespread perception that the PHs' curricula are overloaded and need to be revised to reflect a new understanding of language teacher professionalism and educational leadership. There is also concern that the energy needed to create new structures may leave little over for innovative curriculum development. Moreover, in their new status PHs will have autonomy to develop their own curricula, and there is no guarantee that they will choose to emphasize linguistic diversity, even though an increasing number of their students come from immigrant backgrounds.

It should be noted that there are university courses to prepare students to teach (*Lehramtstudium*) in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Czech, Hungarian and Slovene, and from the autumn of 2008 the University of Vienna will also offer courses in Polish and Slovak. For Albanian, Arabic, Turkish and other languages it is possible to obtain an MA degree (*Diplomstudium*) but not a teaching qualification. Courses in most of these languages are also offered at the four university language centres.

Another educational development that has important implications for language teaching and learning is the recent adoption of a standards-based approach. The Austrian authorities have already taken the opportunity to attach language learning outcomes (and thus language curricula) to the proficiency levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. The adoption of a standards-based approach implies the growth of an assessment culture that does not depend entirely on the individual teacher as has traditionally been the case.

To begin with, the LEPP process focused on the teaching and learning of second and foreign languages and did not include German as a first language or mother tongue. However, it quickly emerged that there are a number of reasons why the teaching of German should play a central role in the development of a coherent language education policy. The plurilingualism of the individual is inevitably rooted in his or

her first language(s). The results of the 2000 and 2003 PISA surveys of reading, which leave no room for complacency, inevitably implicate German as mother tongue/first language. The same may be said of the latest results of PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, which tests the reading achievements and reading behaviours and attitudes of fourth-grade pupils): Austria was ranked 12th out of 19 participating EU countries. And every discussion about the education of migrants involves reference to German as the language of mainstream education (Austria is already participating in the Council of Europe's project on Languages of School Education). These considerations explain the decision to write an addendum to the Country Report that addresses the teaching of German in the Austrian school system.

In keeping with the plurilingual ideal and the promotion of linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue, Austria supports the teaching and learning of its national language and culture in other countries in many different ways. For example, it provides training programmes for teachers of German and, via the *Österreich Institute*, German language courses; offers the Austrian German Language Certificate (ÖSD); develops and distributes teaching materials; publishes the *Österreich Spiegel*; and maintains the online platform *Österreich Portal*. In addition it organizes programmes for lecturers and language assistants; coordinates meetings, conferences and projects; supports the exchange of experts; networks with organizations in other German-speaking countries and in Europe; and cooperates with the International German Language Teachers' Association. Chairs for German as a Foreign Language are well established at the universities of Vienna and Graz and are responsible for the training of teachers of German as a foreign language. Austria's international commitment in this field is reflected in publications, conferences, academic events and collaborative research projects.

2.3 Some key issues

Austria abounds in examples of successful innovation and good practice in language teaching and learning, at European, national, regional and local levels. Moreover, because it hosts the European Centre for Modern Languages (a Council of Europe Partial Agreement) and is centrally involved in its activities, Austria has ready access to innovative projects of many different kinds. It was one of the first Council of Europe member states to pay serious attention to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP),[6] and it has participated fully in European Union language teaching and exchange projects.

Austria's commitment to language education is further confirmed by the existence of
- the *Österreichisches Sprachenkomitee* (ÖSKO), a national committee for (foreign) language education that includes representatives of all stakeholders;
- the *Österreichisches Sprachenkompetenz-Zentrum* (ÖSZ), which was established to support the development and dissemination of innovation in language learning and teaching with particular reference to current issues in international language policy (the Council of Europe, including the European Centre for Modern Languages; the European Union);

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[6] See Appendix 3.

– the *Center für berufsbezogene Sprachen* (CEBS), which supports education for teachers in vocational education and training.

Austria does not have a strong recent tradition of research into language learning and teaching (*Sprachlehrforschung*), and there is a general recognition of the need to develop a research culture in the PHs. There is also a need for research that evaluates the effectiveness of different dimensions of language education. For example, it is often asserted that the 'integrated' approach to primary English (so-called mini-CLIL) is 'motivating', but there are no large-scale research findings to confirm or disconfirm this view.

As in most other Council of Europe member states, the teaching of English dominates to the extent of sometimes seeming to be synonymous with foreign language teaching. With the exception of arrangements that have been made for autochthonous minorities and migrants, whenever discussion focuses on early-start language learning it tends to focus exclusively on English. In Austria as elsewhere the importance that is attached to developing proficiency in English makes it difficult to get a hearing for diversification, and even more difficult to imagine how it might be implemented. But English is so pervasive in international media, especially the Internet, that there is good reason to suppose that young people will learn it not only as a result of the teaching they receive at school but also because it is an inescapable part of their cultural context. In this connection it is worth noting that in a report by the European Network of Policy Makers for the Evaluation of Education Systems,[7] the highest achieving Norwegian pupils at lower secondary level claimed they had learnt as much English outside the classroom as inside.

In the various consultations that have underpinned the development of this Profile there have been repeated expressions of concern at the lack of third-level education for kindergarten teachers. By way of response the PHs are to establish courses that will provide for the educational upgrading of kindergarten educators. As regards early language learning, all PHs have agreed to offer special courses for kindergarten educators, together with primary school teachers and teachers at BAKIPs (*Bildungsanstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik*).

General and vocationally oriented proficiency in foreign languages – the languages of Austria's neighbours as well as English – is important for the world of work, and it seems likely that larger companies would favour the development of a national languages strategy. A measure of the importance companies attach to languages is the amount of money they invest in language learning. Although 80% of companies say they need languages, only 50% provide in-house courses. Employees of companies that do not fund in-house provision must attend courses at adult education institutions. It is worth noting that the cost of providing language courses has not been compared in detail with alternatives such as paying for translation and interpreting services or resorting to a lingua franca. This may explain why export-oriented organizations are sometimes reluctant to invest in language training for their employees.

Partly because of the importance of languages in the world of work, language learning has a high profile in adult education: it accounts for 27% of all provision in the *Volkshochschule* sector. As in other countries, adult education stands somewhat apart from the rest of the educational sector. The universities of Vienna, Graz and

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7 *The assessment of pupils' skills in English in eight European Countries*, 2002. Available at http://cisad.adc.education.fr/reva/pdf/assessmentofenglish.pdf

Klagenfurt have a tradition of providing teacher education for adult education (German as a foreign language, English, less widely used languages).

2.4 The views of parents

The Council of Europe recognizes that the development and implementation of language education policy are matters of great complexity whose success depends on the active involvement and willing support of all stakeholders. In Austria as elsewhere, parents are among the most influential stakeholders when it comes to education. The Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture acknowledges that parents attach great importance to language learning. Although there is some awareness that English alone is not enough, it is nevertheless difficult to convince large numbers of parents that their children's first foreign language might be a language other than English.

At a meeting organized by the Ministry in the context of the LEPP process, representatives of parent groups made the following comments:[8]

– Migrant children should first be competent in their family language. There are sufficient teachers who are capable of teaching Croatian, Serbian or Turkish, for example.[9]
– The big number of private initiatives indicates that there is an additional demand for language teaching at schools.
– In rural areas it is difficult to find trained native speakers to teach English.
– More public funding should be allocated to language teaching, in particular to support CLIL, the provision of languages other than English, and the employment of native speaker teachers.
– There is a wish to have a wider spectrum of languages.
– There is a wish for more native speakers.
– The *Dienstrecht* is too rigid; teachers are not rewarded for good performance.

Representatives of the parents' associations have expressed the view that each section of the educational system works on its own, without reference to the other sections. They would like to see greater continuity in the system and more support for bottom-up initiatives that involve parents and teachers. They have also emphasized the importance of exposing pupils to native speakers of the languages they are learning.

2.5 Objectives of the Austrian authorities

Although languages are subject to financial constraints and pressure from other school subjects, the Austrian authorities have made considerable efforts to build on the success of the European Year of Languages (2001), organized jointly by the Council of Europe and the European Union. One objective of the LEPP process was to take stock of what has been achieved so far and to develop new perspectives. For example, more could be done to promote the growth of plurilingualism, though any new measures will require public support if they are to be effective. Another objective was to secure a stronger position for languages on the public agenda and contribute to the development of a climate in which investment in languages is seen as essential for the future of education and of the country. It was also expected that the LEPP process

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[8] From the minutes of a meeting held on 20 April 2007 in the *Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*.
[9] Although this is true of some areas, including Vienna, it is not true of the country as a whole.

would develop new synergies in language education by bringing together all stakeholders, strengthening networking and involving more people.

More than 30 organizations and 70 experts from many different areas of education contributed to the Country Report. The LEPP process included meetings with the Minister of Education, the Arts and Culture, the Minister of Science and Research, representatives of the two education ministries, members of the Austrian Language Committee (ÖSKO), representatives of political parties, representatives of school authorities, university experts, teacher educators and teachers, NGOs, language experts, and multipliers. Altogether about 100 people were involved in a week-long programme of meetings;[10] and about 70 of them attended a Round Table in March 2008, at which specific issues were discussed. Parents' associations have shown their commitment to the LEPP process by organizing discussions in every *Bundesland*.

2.6   The structure and content of the Profile

The Country Report, prepared by an authoring group under the joint leadership of Hans-Jürgen Krumm and Rudolf De Cillia, provides a comprehensive overview of language education in Austria, from kindergarten to university and adult education. It brings together statistical data not previously assembled in this way and thus constitutes an important new reference resource. The report also identifies three areas of particular concern:

– Early language learning
– Teacher education and research
– Continuity

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the Profile address these issues.

In the initial phase of the LEPP process Claudia Schmied, Minister of Education, the Arts and Culture, reaffirmed that language education policy and language learning are major issues for Austria, which must respond to the challenges that arise from the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, Austria's accession to the European Union in 1995, and the accession of neighbouring states to the European Union in 2005. In her speech she identified three further issues that she wished the Profile to address:

– Bilingual education
– Neighbouring languages (provision and uptake)
– Special support for pupils whose first language is not German

These issues are dealt with in Chapters 6 and 7.

Each of these chapters offers a commentary based on the successive stages of the LEPP process, including contributions to discussion at the Round Table and written submissions made subsequently; and each chapter concludes with a summary of issues for consideration in the process of national policy development and implementation that will follow publication of the Profile.

Finally, Chapter 8 briefly considers some of the guiding principles of language education policy development and implementation and summarizes the priorities, actions and plans of the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Science and Research within the general context of the LEPP process.

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[10]   See Appendix 5.

3   Early language learning

3.1   Commentary

3.1.1   The challenge

Across Europe, early language learning (ELL) is currently one of the most active fields in language education policy, educational linguistics, and language teaching methodology. Especially since the publication of international reports on educational achievement (PISA, the OECD report, IGLU),[11] the importance of ELL has come to be accepted at all levels of educational policy making as well as by parents. A study undertaken for the European Commission by Peter Edelenbos, Richard Johnstone and Angelika Kubanek provides an overview of research, good practice, and pedagogical principles currently accepted in Europe (31 countries were covered)[12].

Programmes designed to give children of kindergarten age a good start in primary school by ensuring that they have a sufficient level of competence in the language of schooling are high on the agenda of ministries of education and local education authorities. At primary level there is a growing tendency to adopt more intensive approaches to language teaching (immersion, content-based instruction), to focus on the competences to be acquired, and to extend the scope of ELL to include a European dimension and the development of intercultural awareness. Interest is also growing in plurilingual didactics (*Mehrsprachigkeitsdidaktik*) as a means of developing links between foreign language learning and mother tongue/national language learning and literacy. Such links are designed to make learners aware of the languages they know, the learning and communication strategies they apply, and the different uses they make of their various languages.

Before the 1990s the youngest age at which pupils participated in school exchanges with foreign countries was 12; now exchanges are arranged at primary level as well, more commonly in border areas but also via Comenius school partnerships. Where previously ELL was seen as a matter of playful language exploration, increasingly quality and accountability at system level are key concerns, as is indicated by the growing number of country profiles and national language plans and the development of testing materials. These developments reflect changes in the image of childhood and of what a child is or should be able to grasp.

3.1.2   Some reflections on issues raised in the Country Report

Setting priorities

The plurilingual and reflective intercultural personality is the ideal of European language education. The development of such a personality is seen as a civic virtue, but also as a means of facilitating later job mobility, and it is a key principle of European curricula that the process of development should begin as early as possible. In the Country Report this topic features prominently, as in the question: 'How can one

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[11]   *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy*, OECD Directorate for Education, 2 March 2006; *Internationale Schulleistungsstudie PISA, Lernen für die Welt von morgen*, OECD, Paris, 2003; W. Bos, E.-M. Lankes & M. Prenzel, *IGLU* [Internationale Grundschul-Leseuntersuchung], Münster: Waxmann, 2004.

[12]   P. Edelenbos, R. Johnstone & A. Kubanek, *The main pedagogical principles underlying the teaching of languages to very young learners*. Final report of the EAC 89/04, Lot 1 study, March 2007. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/young_en.pdf.

come to terms with existing plurilingualism in primary schooling?' (11.2.1). This implies a need for practical measures, but also for changes in teacher education. Practical measures concern the provision of high-quality German language support and mother tongue teaching for children of migrant workers. As in other countries, steps have been taken to address this issue.[13]

The Country Report makes clear that plurilingualism is much in focus as a concept and an educational goal. But it seems likely that in Austria as in the rest of Europe, there is still a long way to go before the plurilingual personality is firmly embedded in the general public's mind-set. By contrast, there seems to be universal agreement that the teaching of English should begin in primary school or kindergarten.[14]

Shifting the didactic approach in ELL

Austria was one of the first countries in Europe to introduce a foreign language at primary level: in grade 3 in 1983 and as an obligatory subject in grade 1 in 2003–2004. For many years the favoured approach to ELL has been 'integrative'. According to one source, however, whereas the curriculum defines the 'integrative approach' as *content* integration, in practice it is widely misinterpreted as meaning *time* integration, a way of quickly fitting in a few minutes of English at the end of a lesson.[15]

In several European countries there is a trend towards a competence-based approach supported by the assessment of learning outcomes. Without necessarily advocating formal tests, questions might be asked about 'return on investment': How can the achievements at the end of grade 4 be described? How many pupils achieve a stable knowledge/competence at level A1 of the CEFR? Recent research concludes that after four years of language learning, 50% of primary pupils are not capable of communicating orally at a basic level. The researcher attributes this to the fact that older teachers received no training in language pedagogy, while the education received by younger teachers has paid insufficient attention to language learning and teaching.[16] Child-friendly standardized assessment procedures, including portfolio elements, might help to diagnose, individualize and give the teacher and child feedback on his or her progress and on the adequacy of teaching.[17]

A more systematic and competence-oriented approach to early language learning would make it possible to link the pre-primary and primary teaching of English and other languages, providing a framework for kindergarten programmes within which diagnostic tools could be developed to assess pupils' prior knowledge when they enter primary school. It should be noted, however, that the adoption of a competence-oriented approach would require more time to be devoted to language teaching both at school and in teacher education.

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[13] Eurydice National Summary Sheet, Austria, January 2007, p.9. media.education.gouv.fr/file/41/3/6413.pdf

[14] European Commission, *Europeans and their languages*. Special Eurobarometer 243. Brussels, February 2006.

[15] B. Buchholz, *Facts & Figures im Grundschulenglisch – Eine Untersuching des verbindlichen Fremdsprachenunterrichts ab der ersten Klasse an österreichischen Volksschulen, Münster, Berlin, Wien: LIT Verlag*, 2007.

[16] B. Buchholz, op. cit.

[17] See, for example, P. Edenlebos & A. Kubanek, *Wortschatztest. Englisch in der Grundschule. Teil 1: Klasse 3*. Munich: Langenscheidt, 2007.

The German language competence of children from a migrant background

There have been many initiatives to provide German-language support programmes in the kindergarten sector. The European Commission's document *Follow up des Aktionsplans zum Sprachenlernen und zur Sprachenvielfalt. Vorlage des Nationalen Berichts. Land: Austria (2006)* mentions the so-called *Sprachtickets*, the recommended number of hours (120), and the special tuition (up to 11 hours) provided for children in kindergarten who do not yet have the competence in German that is necessary for educational success. The first cohort of children to benefit from this scheme, introduced in 2005–2006, is already in primary school, so in 2007–2008 the first informal assessments of the impact of the programme should be available.

Meanwhile the scheme has been modified in a number of ways. In particular, measures have been developed to promote the learning of the language of schooling during kindergarten so that every pupil is able to follow lessons when he/she starts school. The measures include:

- A standardized language development screening test for all kindergarten children aged 4–5 in order to identify those who need German language support (the first screenings took place in May 2008). It should be noted, however, that the test is based on a linguistic model designed for monolingual children whose first language is German and does not take account of the language development of plurilingual children. The Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture is carrying out an evaluation of the test.
- An all-Austrian curriculum framework in the area of Enhancing Early Language Development (*Frühe sprachliche Förderung*) developed by the PHs to serve as a basis for in-service courses for kindergarten, primary and BAKIP teachers.
- The development of standards for German as language of instruction for children entering school.
- The development of an all-Austrian framework curriculum for children aged 3–6 in the area of early language learning.

Support is also provided for children whose mother tongue is German but who are from a disadvantaged background. German tuition for migrant or ethnic-minority children can be given by a teacher who is a fluent bilingual speaker of German and a language in that spectrum might be possible occasionally in big cities or as a result of private factors. (See Chapter 4 below, on teacher education, for further discussion.)

The extent to which a sound knowledge of the written forms of the minority child's family language is necessary for success at school is still a matter of debate. It seems, however, that in the discussion of educational policy, priority is given to improving such children's competence in the national language. In this connection it is worth noting that there are moves to consider the role of language across the curriculum and the different ways in which, for example, explanations are given in different school subjects. The Council of Europe is supporting these moves in its project on Language(s) of School Education,[18] in which Austria is involved.

It is important to stress that migrants' educational and social success is not just a matter for educational linguistics. A meta-analysis by Janet Ward Schofield[19] shows

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[18] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Schoollang_EN.asp
[19] Janet Ward Schofield et al., *Migrationshintergrund, Minderheitenzugehörigkeit und Bildungserfolg*. AKI Forschungsbilanz 5. Kurzfassung Oktober 2006. Berlin

that already at the age of 5 migrant children sense when they are victims of negative stereotyping, and the fear that their performance may be judged negatively or insufficient because they belong to a certain ethnic group can affect their long-term educational achievement. The same holds true when teachers expect the achievement of migrant learners to be lower than average, and for this reason groups composed mostly of slow learners have a negative impact on educational performance.

These considerations prompt the question whether, as far as minority children are concerned, measures to promote plurilingualism in the early stages of education can be effectively developed exclusively from within the language teaching and language policy professions. Is the issue of minority children not one that must be addressed by the education system as a whole, and thus by teachers of all subjects? An affirmative answer to this question is implied by two suggestions that Ward Schofield makes: (i) to begin in pre- and in-service teacher education by demonstrating the *Erwartungseffekt*, and (ii) to expose migrant children to demanding teaching material, showing teachers how to work with it and how to reformulate questions and give positive feedback.

In Austrian primary and secondary schools intercultural education has been introduced as an educational principle (*Unterrichtsprinzip*): not a subject in its own right but a cross-curricular theme and focus (other educational principles include sex education and education for democratic citizenship). Intercultural education aims to promote mutual understanding between pupils of different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and to make them aware of similarities and differences in order to combat Eurocentrism and racism. It seeks to nurture the values of tolerance, understanding of others and respect for difference. Problems arise because educational principles are not compulsory and teachers are not trained to deal with them. Teachers who have never questioned their own cultural values and preconceived ideas are unlikely to live up to the principle of intercultural education. All too often, they feel insecure when confronted with cultural diversity.

The need for more statistical and empirical research

More in-depth statistical and empirical information may be needed about the day-to-day realities of ELL in Austria. Even though it is not strictly speaking true that there is a lack of research into language learning and teaching, there is a lack of large-scale system-focused research of the kind that is necessary if the effectiveness of current practice is to be reliably evaluated. Given that ELL is a stated priority, there is an urgent need for research that describes in detail different programmes, different teaching approaches, and the results achieved by each; for without such research future planning will rest on very insecure foundations.

3.2   Issues for consideration

- Two of the recommendations in the European Commission report *The main pedagogical principles underlying the teaching of languages to very young learners*, referred to above,[20] are relevant to ELL in Austria and merit consideration:

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[20]   P. Edelenbos, R. Johnstone & A. Kubanek, *The main pedagogical principles underlying the teaching of languages to very young learners.* Final report of the EAC 89/04, Lot 1 study, March 2007. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/young_en.pdf.

- *Recommendation 4*: It should be ascertained what the main models of early languages learning are and what outcomes these are delivering.
- *Recommendation 5*: Children's progression in ELL and the development of their motivation should be explored more. This should include a search for ideas on how to collect and analyse data. Teachers and teacher trainers should consider how best they might track the progression in language development of particular individuals and groups with whom they are in contact.

Both of these recommendations imply a need for large-scale research, which has obvious funding implications.

- In any review of ELL consideration needs to be given to the possibility of adopting a competence-based approach, which would presuppose the definition of basic competences (*Grundkompetenzen*) but would also have important implications for the target language proficiency of teachers and the amount of class time devoted to language teaching.

- As noted in section 2.5, an all-Austrian framework for ELL is currently being introduced. This prompts the following questions (posed in the Country Report):
  - What framework conditions should be spelled out (e.g., size of groups, costs, criteria and conditions for the provision of specific languages, etc.)?
  - How can the idea of plurilingual education be made better known to a wider public, so that a broader recognition will ensue of the meaningfulness and the uses of this educational opportunity?
  - What common standards should be written into a nationwide Austrian framework curriculum regarding objectives and pedagogical implementation as well as quality criteria? Should this include, e.g., the ratio of teachers to children, or the initial and in-service training of staff?
  - How can kindergarten teachers be assisted to be better able to deal with linguistically heterogeneous groups? This concerns not only German, but (in many cases) minority languages.

- Bearing in mind the growing importance that is attached to the development of a holistic approach to language education in Austria, consideration should be given to ways of familiarizing pupils and teachers with the concept of plurilingualism (this applies to all levels of schooling, not just ELL). In considering language provision at primary level, the following questions (raised in the Country Report) need to be addressed:
  - What might an overall concept of language learning look like that focuses on plurilingualism (to school leaving exam standard, across languages horizontally, including minority languages)?
  - How can one best come to terms with existing plurilingualism in primary schooling?
  - How could an integrated, dynamic concept of language learning be initiated and implemented across Austria?
  - Are there examples in other countries of functioning and successfully integrated, dynamic concepts of language learning?
  - How can a more diverse range of languages be made available?

Five practical possibilities might be considered:

- Introducing 'intensive experiences', which have been shown to have sustainable effects in other contexts.[21]
- Inviting successful plurilingual personalities to visit schools, and even kindergartens, telling their life stories in German, in a mix of languages and/or through interpreters, as appropriate.
- Using parents with first languages other than German as helpers or inviting them into schools as story-tellers or in some other voluntary capacity.
- Extending the good practice initiatives in border areas (cf. Burgenland).
- Creating material in several languages, like the *Kiesel* materials published by ÖSZ[22] and the magazine *TRIO (Drei Sprachen – eine Schule)*.[23]

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[21] P. Edelenbos, R. Johnstone & A. Kubanek, *Languages for the children of Europe. Published Research, Good Practice and Main Principles.* Final Report of the EAC 89/04, Lot 1 study. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/young_en.pdf.

[22] http://www.oesz.at/ske

[23] Financed by the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture and the Ministry for Interior Affairs and supported by the Stadtschulrat of Vienna. http://www.trio.co.at/pdf/Trio01.pdf

4 Teacher education and research into language teaching and learning

4.1 Commentary

4.1.1 Context

Austria has a system of teacher education in which, leaving aside the adult education sector, teachers are educated in sector-specific institutions. Kindergarten teachers attend a vocational college (BAKIP) for five years or a two-year *Kolleg*. The education of teachers for *Volksschule*, *Hauptschule* and part-time vocational schools (*Berufsschule*) is the responsibility of *Pädagogische Hochschulen*. Prospective academic secondary school teachers study at university for nine semesters, followed by a year as trainee teachers, after which they are fully qualified. Depending on the subjects they intend to teach, vocational school teachers are educated at PHs or universities.

In the autumn of 2007 *Pädagogische Akademien* (PÄDAKs), *Pädagogische Institute* (PIs) and *Berufspädagogische Akademien* (BPAs) became *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (PHs). This change, a consequence of the Austrian *Hochschulgesetz* of 2005, has large implications for Austrian educational structures and relationships. In particular it is clear that university status brings with it an obligation to develop a research culture appropriate to teacher education, which in turn will have implications for PHs' approaches to teaching and learning and thus their curricula.

On 18 September 2007 Dr Claudia Schmied, Minister of Education, the Arts and Culture, gave a speech at the inauguration of the 14 new Pädagogische Hochschulen.[24] The four key concepts she focused on – *integration*, *quality assurance*, *individual support*, *education for democratic citizenship* – are general in their implication and will therefore also shape language teacher education. In the field of teacher training the Ministry is concerned to strengthen cooperation between the PHs and the universities with a view to establishing a common training for *all* teachers.

A further innovation, starting in 2008–2009 with a pilot phase, is the project to introduce *Neue Mittelschulen* for learners aged 10–14. If implemented longterm, this will remove the distinction between *Hauptschule* (70% of Austrian pupils) and the lower level of academic secondary schools (30%), and class size will be limited to 25.[25] This far-reaching educational change will also affect language subjects.

For many years the Federal Institute for Adult Education has offered training and further education for language teachers. Research is currently being carried out in cooperation with the Austrian Adult Education Centres with a view to designing new models of teacher education. The Country Report (2.5.4) notes that a unified teacher education system may soon be introduced for adult education, with internationally recognized, standardized courses.

At the Round Table in March 2008 three concerns were raised that are relevant to all educational sectors:

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[24] Cf website of the *Bundesministerium* (www.bmukk.gv.at), with the full text of the speech, accessed 20 September 2007.

[25] Cf. website of the *Bundesministerium,* with various documents, accessed 20 September 2007.

- Language teacher education generally involves insufficient cooperation with specialists from related domains such as language acquisition, language disorders and sociolinguistics.
- Language teacher education is typically conducted in 'closed premises', with hardly any links to the outside world. Thus – to take one example – graduate language teachers who are employed to perform increasingly common language-related management tasks in vocational environments are likely to feel unprepared for the challenges that await them.
- Language teacher education tends to focus on teaching a language as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. This helps to explain why many teachers feel unable to teach language for specific purposes, to apply CLIL methods, or to foster the development of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural competences.

4.1.2 Kindergarten

Investment in kindergarten education has risen in countries that were ranked low in the OECD report *Starting Strong*.[26] The Country Report (10.3) stresses the need for Austria to catch up and identifies the following goals: an all-Austrian legal framework; a paradigm shift in the underlying philosophy of kindergarten education; an improvement in the quality of pre- and in-service training; higher salaries for teachers; greater awareness of the value of plurilingualism and linguistic diversity; cooperation with parents; research. An all-Austrian legal framework for kindergarten, including ELL, is currently being introduced.

The long-running one-year SWING[27] in-service training programme for kindergarten teachers prepares them to offer English, and there is an initiative to design a linguistics course appropriate to kindergarten teachers.[28]

When minority languages are taught in kindergartens or schools (e.g. bilingual schools), the following provisions exist:
- Prospective kindergarten teachers who intend to work in a German–Slovene kindergarten can receive an optional training of 10 weekly units in the bilingual approach (in the course of an education that lasts 5 years). Before being accepted at a German–Slovene kindergarten, applicants must demonstrate their language skills. In addition there used to be 6-semester further qualification courses of a type that is now being discontinued due to the restructuring of the (former) PÄDAKs.
- Courses for future teachers of Croatian and Hungarian are offered in the regions where speakers of those languages live.

Considering the kindergarten sector as a whole from the perspective of teacher education, the situation appears to be very varied:
- There are successful regional initiatives which involve the autochthonous minorities in setting up and running bilingual kindergartens, e.g. in Burgen-

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[26] *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy, Country Note for Austria*, OECD Directorate for Education, 2 March 2006, p.40. Quoted in Country report, 10.1.1.

[27] wien.kinderfreunde.at/index.php?action=Lesen&Article_ID=12_705

[28] Comenius Project 'Enhancing early multilingualism. A course in linguistics for kindergarten teachers'. 226496 – CP – AT 2005 (October 2005–October 2008).

land. There are also cross-border initiatives, e.g. with Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which have been accepted by parents and staff.[29]

- There are training initiatives for English, and as in other European countries there is commercial provision of early English and voluntary work by parents.
- In multicultural kindergartens children's linguistic background must be respected and valued at the same time as they are taught Austrian German.
- There is the general problem that the complex and interrelated topics of second, neighbouring and foreign language acquisition and plurilingualism require a focus in training. If the assessment of children's progress in language(s) is to be handled sensitively, teachers need to develop awareness and training needs to be offered.

4.1.3 Primary

Primary teachers in Austria are generalists. English is an obligatory subject at all PHs, and Burgenland Croatian and Slovene are offered at PHs in Burgenland and Carinthia respectively. Optional courses are available in Bosnian, Croatian, Hungarian and Turkish, also French and Italian, though the numbers taking these languages are not very large. The recent modularization of curricula has led to a reduction in the number of contact hours for languages and the disappearance of lectures on intercultural education and teaching multilingual and culturally heterogeneous classes. There is also concern that modularization may impede continuity in language learning and teaching. In most PHs foreign language teaching practice is not an obligatory part of primary teacher education.

To date, additional qualification courses have been offered for CLIL methodology, German as a second language, intercultural education, Austrian sign language, and the minority languages of Carinthia and Burgenland. It remains to be seen what types of course will supersede these at the new PHs.

Immigrant children need to be taught German as a second language. The Country Report notes that no formal teacher training is provided in this subject, although Vienna offers one module, and Graz offers an additional course in German as a foreign language. Given the strong emphasis that international policy places on giving children a good start by developing their competence in the language of schooling from a very young age, it is surprising that primary teachers are not required take courses in *Deutsch als Zweitsprache*. This is an area to which the Ministry and the PHs are currently giving attention.

4.1.4 Secondary

General secondary (Hauptschule) teachers are educated at the PHs. Those with English as one of their majors study the language for 33–40 weekly hours during 6 semesters (cf. Country Report, 4.4.4). Students who are training to become language teachers in academic or vocational secondary schools can choose German, English, French or Italian as well as a wide range of other languages, including B/K/S (Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian), Czech, Hungarian, Polish (from the autumn of 2008), Russian, Slovene, Slovak (from the autumn of 2008), and Spanish. However,

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[29] B. Löger, E. Wappelshammer & A. Fiala, *Interkulturelle Bildung für Kinder – spielerisches Erlernen von Slowakisch und Tschechisch in den Kindergärten der Grenzregionen. Evaluation des Projekts Interreg III A Österreich – Slowakei*, St. Pölten: Niederösterreichische Landesakademie – Soziales und Gesundheit, 2005.

only German, English, French and Italian are available at all universities. Turkish cannot be studied as part of a teaching diploma. As the Country Report notes, further diversification is under consideration.

As regards the language teacher education provided by the universities (for teachers at academic secondary schools), the following issues were raised at the Round Table in March 2008:

- The teacher training component of university foreign language teacher education is divided into language didactics (*Fachdidaktik*) and general education (*Schulpädagogik*), and cooperation between these two areas is often inadequate.
- Insufficient time is devoted to language didactics.
- Although language teaching research provides an essential underpinning for language didactics, it is not well established in Austrian universities (the exception is German as a Foreign Language).
- Universities do not prepare their graduates to teach in non-school environments like university language centres and private language schools.

4.1.5   Adult education

Teacher training for the adult education sector is not currently a central topic of discussion. The Austrian Adult Education Centres provide teacher training in cooperation with the Federal Institute for Adult Education and Austrian universities. About 3,000 language teachers work for the Austrian Adult Education Centres; research is currently under way to profile the needs and interests of this group as a preliminary to designing a new curriculum. Institutions like the Berufsförderungsinstitut BFI (CELTA English Language Teaching to Speakers of Other Languages) and certain companies run their own in-service training programmes. In border areas, where economic development gives rise to new demands, ad hoc solutions seem to be adopted. The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* is often referred to in relation to course levels and examinations, so language teachers in adult education come to terms with recent European developments via their daily work and the exams they administer.

4.1.6   Research focused on language teaching and learning

As noted in section 3.1.2 above, Austria lacks a tradition of large-scale research calculated to gauge the effectiveness of language education at different levels of the system. There is also less small-scale research into language learning and teaching than there might be. In the course of the LEPP process university and PÄDAK staff explained this in terms of the PÄDAKs' orientation to practical knowledge and the universities' orientation to literature and linguistics. University education is – or should be – research-led. Now that Austrian primary, general secondary and academic secondary teachers are all to be educated at university level, ways must be found to promote the growth of a research culture that focuses appropriately on each of these domains. Ways must also be found to ensure that research findings are paid the attention they deserve.

4.2 Issues for consideration

4.2.1 General

- Consideration should be given to the following questions, all raised in the Country Report:
  - How can a general concept of language and cultural awareness be integrated in basic teacher training?
  - What might a concept of plurilingual didactics look like, for all types of initial training? How could support be guaranteed from all relevant training institutions?
  - What might a module for plurilingual didactics look like that includes in classroom teaching all first and second languages 'brought to school' by pupils?
  - How could a common (initial) foundation training for all language teachers be realized? And what implications would such a training have for the language-specific tradition of language teacher education?
  - How can pedagogic innovations laid down in legal provisions (e.g., new curricula, educational standards) be reliably communicated to all teachers, through relevant in-service training?
  - How could primary teachers now in service be made more sensitive to the linguistic diversity in their schools, and how could they be motivated to accept relevant in-service training?
  - Are there positive examples of, and appropriate measures leading to, the qualification and appointment of language specialists at all schools ('ombuds-persons')?
  - Within the framework of post-secondary or tertiary teacher training, how can a diversity of languages be provided that (more or less fairly) reflects conditions in Austrian society?

- Consideration should also be given to the implications of a holistic approach to language education for the education of teachers of German as mother tongue/language of education. Such consideration should focus on the relation between the teaching of German and the teaching of other languages, and it should take account of the renewed international interest in 'language across the curriculum' (cf. the Council of Europe's project on Languages of School Education).

4.2.2 Kindergarten

- Consideration should be given to
  - providing third-level education for kindergarten teachers;
  - developing a new type of teacher training as a joint effort by researchers and kindergartens (for bilingual kindergartens and border initiatives, top-down might be complemented by bottom-up approaches in order to accommodate linguistic and intercultural documentation provided by local situations and of direct relevance to the various languages taught in such kindergartens).

- The Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture aims to foster the appreciation of cultural diversity and the individual plurilingualism of refugee or immigrant children by making more efficient use of existing plurilingual resources, providing 'conversion training' for bilinguals who already have a teaching qualification. It

may be appropriate to consider how best to achieve these goals. It may also be appropriate to facilitate the process of 'nostrification' so that kindergarten staff with a minority language background can be hired more easily.

- Consideration should be given to
  - increasing the number of hours allocated to language learning in the training of kindergarten teachers;
  - arranging for future kindergarten teachers to spend a period of placement in a kindergarten that offers a foreign or neighbouring language.

4.2.3 Primary

- Consideration should be given to including in programmes of primary teacher education
  - an introduction to the implications of a competence-based approach that relates methods and content to expected outcomes;
  - more training in the foundations of language acquisition;
  - obligatory training in German as a second language, together with modules on how to manage the multilingual, multi-ethnic classroom;
  - the development of teachers' 'diagnostic competence'[30] so that they are able to (i) assess first-graders who had English at kindergarten and (ii) assess and document their learners' progress in general;
  - the possibility of undertaking a project across school types, including multi-cultural and bilingual kindergartens;
  - obligatory foreign language teaching practice.

- Consideration should also be given to
  - increasing the number of hours allocated to language learning and teaching in primary teacher education.
  - arranging for at least some future primary teachers to take a *Praktikum* abroad, in a neighbouring or English-speaking country.

4.2.4 Secondary

- The universities should be invited to consider
  - how best to address problems of communication and cooperation between specialists in language didactics and specialists in general pedagogy;
  - how to diversify their curricula so that graduates are better equipped to respond to the challenges of new language-related management tasks;
  - how to foster the development of research into language learning and teaching so that the education of language teachers is research-led.

4.2.5 Research focused on language teaching and learning

- The universities and PHs should be invited to consider forming regional networks with a view to developing a collaborative and regionally appropriate research culture. As in other countries, funding to support large-scale research might be awarded on the basis of competition. Research focuses could include

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[30] Cf. P. Edenlebos and A. Kubanek-German, Teacher assessment: the concept of 'diagnostic competence', *Language Testing* 21.3 (2004), pp.259–283.

- programme evaluation;
- linguistic and language acquisition studies;
- studies of the foundations and assessment of intercultural learning;
- studies of the effectiveness of specific teaching approaches;
- studies of language teaching in the vocational education sector.

There needs to be a variety of research programmes, from excellence research to small-scale studies designed to meet ad hoc regional needs.

- The universities should also be invited to consider
  - developing a project-based approach to research into a long-term stable research structure;
  - establishing one or more PhD programmes in language education research.

5   Continuity

5.1   Commentary

5.1.1   The problem

Lack of continuity between successive educational levels is one of the key issues raised in the Country Report. It was also one of the most frequently mentioned concerns during the LEPP process, captured in a deceptively simple question:

- How can later language teaching be designed so that it is continuous with what went before and builds on 'the most various different previous levels of knowledge'?

The continuity problem is by no means unique to Austria; in September 2007, for example, it was the chief focus of the annual convention of the Japan Association for College English Teachers.[31] The problem is multi-dimensional, embracing curricula, pre- and in-service teacher education, textbooks and other teaching materials, teaching methods and assessment. It is not difficult to see how the problem arises. Different educational sectors are responsible for their own curricula, which usually have very different emphases. Pre- and in-service teacher training is separate for each sector and shaped by the emphases of the relevant curriculum. Thus language teachers in different sectors come to have different beliefs about the goals of language teaching and the classroom methods apt to achieve those goals. Working to different curricula and using different classroom methods, they may well use different focuses and different techniques to assess the progress of their pupils. As a result, teachers who receive new pupils at the beginning of each successive phase of education may believe that those pupils bring nothing useful with them, and thus language learning becomes a matter of repeated new beginnings – with much effort wasted. Austria's version of this problem is summarized in the Country Report (12.2.4); the lack of alignment between primary and secondary language curricula is a source of major concern.

5.1.2   *Bildungsstandards* and the CEFR

As performance indicators or descriptions of learning outcomes, *Bildungsstandards* seek to achieve the transparency and coherence that are also underlying goals of the CEFR. It thus seems obvious to link *Bildungsstandards* for second and foreign languages to the CEFR, which defines the language learner-user's communicative proficiency in terms of what he/she can *do* in the target language. This is already happening in Austria. The ÖSZ has completed a project that links the development of standards for English (Year 8/age 14) to the CEFR, creates a pool of exercises to make the standards more concrete, and uses measures of quality assurance for the creation of exercises and examples.[32] Similarly, in vocational education and training *Bildungsstandards* for English are being developed that are also compatible with the CEFR. They are based on the level of the *Bildungsstandards* of the *Unterstufe* and provide examples and exercises. *Bildungsstandards* have been developed for German and Maths (grade 4) and for German, Maths, Natural Sciences and English (grade 8).

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[31]   'In search of a consistent curriculum from elementary school through university', JACET 46th Annual Convention, Hiroshima, 6–8 September 2007.

[32]   www.oesz.at/index_mula.php?language=en

Developing standards for English grade 4 might also help to establish continuity between curricula.

5.1.3 Standardized school leaving exam (*standardisierte Reifeprüfung*)

A standardized school leaving examination that focuses on the skills of listening and speaking, reading and writing is currently being developed and piloted at some academic secondary schools. It is based on the new curriculum for the upper level of academic secondary schools, according to which pupils should achieve B2 for all four skills in their first foreign language. The introduction of this new examination will be another step towards a more competence-based approach and will help to make learning outcomes transparent and comparable.

5.1.4 Using the ELP to address the problem of discontinuities

As noted in Chapter 2, Austrian language educators were among the first to embrace the European Language Portfolio and Austria has been prolific in developing ELP models. To date the following Austrian ELPs have been validated and accredited by the Council of Europe:

24.2001 – model for learners in upper secondary education

58.2004 – model for learners aged 10–15 (ÖSZ)

63.2004 – model for learners aged 10–15 (Cernet)

68.2005 – model for learners aged 14–18 (Pädagogisches Institut Wien)

88.2007 – model for learners aged 15–19 (ÖSZ and CEBS)

91.2007 – model for adult learners (Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen)

94.2007 – regional model for primary learners aged 6–10 (Vienna Board of Education)

Austria has also been also involved in two transnational ELP projects, EuroIntegrELP (Equal Chances to European Integration through the European Language Portfolio, 2005–2007) and CROMO (Cross-border ELP Project Italy–Slovenia–Austria). The first of these, an EU-Socrates project, aims to encourage language learning using the ELP as an instrument of quality assurance; the latter, a tri-lateral project arising from an Italian initiative, developed an international intercultural supplement to the ELP as part of the second medium-term programme of the ECML (2004–2007). The ÖSZ website offers good support for ELP implementation.

Despite the obvious commitment of 'fans', the ELP remains unused by the majority of language learners in Austrian schools. This state of affairs is not unique to Austria: it also exists in many other Council of Europe member states. According to the 2006 interim report of the Rapporteur General for the ELP project,[33] the Austrian authorities expected the various ELP models to be in the hands of no more than 13,500 learners in the school year 2007–2008. This prompts the question: 'How can European Language Portfolios be made available and put at the disposal of all children/pupils?' Working in cooperation with the ÖSZ and CEBS, the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture has plans to support the development of ELP implementation strategies.

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[33] www.coe.int/portfolio – section on documentation

The ELP might be part of a solution to the problem of discontinuity in school-based language learning. On the other hand, scepticism has been expressed regarding its large-scale adoption. The introduction of *Bildungsstandards* that are wholly compatible with the CEFR may, however, provide the basis for a solution. The ELP is designed to promote the development of learner autonomy, intercultural awareness and plurilingualism; because it embraces all the second/foreign languages the owner knows, it explicitly supports a holistic approach to language education. The reflective processes of identifying learning targets, monitoring learning progress and evaluating learning outcomes are driven by checklists of 'I can' descriptors divided into five communicative activities (listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, writing) and arranged according to the proficiency levels of the CEFR. If the language curricula for the different sectors were *all* expressed in terms of *Bildungsstandards*, within a national curriculum framework, and if the *Bildungsstandards* were in turn elaborated as communicative repertoires comprising inventories of 'can do' descriptors, these descriptors could yield goal-setting and self-assessment checklists (inventories of 'I can' statements) for use in the various ELP models. In this way the ELP would be completely embedded in the curriculum and would become the primary tool for mediating the curriculum to pupils. Its checklists would also provide teachers with a ready means to plot their pupils' progress towards curriculum goals. This approach has been adopted in Ireland for the teaching of English as a second language to immigrant pupils in primary schools. The curriculum is a simple adaptation of the first three proficiency levels of the CEFR, with descriptors that are age-appropriate and focused exclusively on the domain of schooling, especially participation in classroom discourse. The main implementation tool for the curriculum is a version of the ELP that includes checklists for 13 recurrent themes of primary learning. In all there are more than 200 'I can' descriptors that between them constitute the communicative repertoire that ESL pupils must progressively develop if they are to participate fully in the mainstream classroom.

In conclusion it is worth drawing attention to the potential value of the ELP as a planning tool for developing whole-school language teaching policy and tracking its implementation. When used in this way the ELP also presents itself as a means of addressing the issue of plurilingualism, allowing pupils to record proficiency in the languages they learn at school but also in languages they know but are not learning at school, and thus giving minority and migrant languages status beside English and other 'big' languages.

5.2 Issues for consideration

- Consideration should be given to
  - undertaking a thorough review of language curricula, focusing in particular on the discontinuities between educational sectors and identifying the necessary preconditions for the development of a national curriculum framework for languages;
  - elaborating *Bildungsstandards* for all foreign languages taught in Austrian schools and providing examples and other support materials along the lines already adopted by ÖSZ and CEBS;
  - assigning the ELP a central role in language curriculum implementation;

- providing teachers with detailed guidance on assessment procedures appropriate to the understanding of language learning and language use promoted by the CEFR and reflected in the *Bildungsstandards*;
- establishing more effective communication between the different educational levels, not only in curriculum development and teacher education but also among teachers working in schools.

6 Language(s) of education, including support for German L1 and L2 learners and migrant L1s

6.1 Commentary

6.1.1 Language(s) of education

Social cohesion is a priority for the Council of Europe and for the governments of its member states. Access to education is necessary for full participation in society, which means that the language of schooling plays a key role in determining the individual's inclusion in or exclusion from society. The language of schooling and the pupil's mother tongue (if this is different) also lay the foundation for the successful lifelong development of plurilingualism. To think about language education in this way, as a broad, all-embracing notion rooted in the concept of plurilingualism, is to depart from the traditional approach that treats different languages in isolation from one another.

Chapter 1 emphasized that the concept of plurilingualism is central to the Council of Europe's language policy, whose purpose is to promote mutual understanding and cultural exchange while maintaining linguistic diversity. Plurilingual competence is generally uneven:[34] we typically attain greater proficiency in one language than in the others we know, and our profile of competences is likely to vary from language to language. What is more, plurilingual competence embraces the individual's whole linguistic repertoire, including his or her mother tongue(s)/first language(s) and languages learnt outside formal education.

Many people assume that the LEPP process is concerned only with foreign language education and the languages of minorities. Although section 3.1.1 of the Country Report refers to the fact that German is the official language of Austria, the teaching of German was not described in the original version of the report and is not among the issues of special concern discussed in the third part of the report. However, the final version of the Country Report contains an addendum that addresses the situation of German in the Austrian school system. Clearly, a national policy aimed at developing a holistic language curriculum would require the development of an integrated approach to the teaching of all languages, including German as the principal language of schooling. In this connection it should be noted that Austria has only one professor for the didactics of German as mother tongue, at the University of Klagenfurt, and there is thus a lack of research in this area.

One of the needs identified at the Language Policy Forum organized by the Council of Europe in February 2007 was for a detailed exploration of the implications of the plurilingual approach for curriculum design and content. Accordingly, the drafting of a guide to the development and implementation of plurilingual curricula is among the follow-up activities to which the Language Policy Division has committed itself.[35] It is also worth noting here that the Council of Europe's Languages of School Education project aims to develop tools for describing and assessing competence in the language(s) of school education and to bring forward proposals for increasing conver-

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[34] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, Council of Europe/Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.133. See also Appendix 1.

[35] A report on the Language Policy Forum and details of proposed follow-up activities are available at www.coe.int/lang – section *Events – 2007*.

gences and coherence between different languages in the school curriculum.[36] As mentioned earlier, Austria is involved in this project.

It is widely recognized in educational research that the successful learning of other subjects in the school curriculum, from mathematics and science to the arts and history, depends in large part on the language used as a medium of teaching and learning. Countries where bilingual education is the norm are particularly aware of this, and it is an important issue in the various versions of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), which is a familiar concept in Austria.

6.1.2   L2 and L1 support for immigrant children and adolescents

Providing quality instruction in the language of the host community is one of the major challenges facing countries that receive and integrate substantial numbers of immigrants. The urgency of providing immigrants with access to mainstream educational opportunities is self-evident, since failure to do so will bring social problems whose seriousness cannot be overestimated. During the LEPP process the teaching of German as a key prerequisite for success in education and employment was repeatedly emphasized. At the same time it is worth pointing out that the various languages spoken by immigrants as mother tongues constitute a valuable resource that could be more fully exploited. In this regard it may be useful to distinguish between providing mother tongue instruction for immigrants with a view to supporting instruction in German (L2) and providing mother tongue instruction as an end in itself. The latter approach sees the intrinsic value of immigrants' L1 skills as a national resource. International research indicates that rather than being a burden, as is often argued, instruction in L1 may contribute to better learning outcomes provided that it is offered over several years and in a language-friendly environment. The provision of L1 instruction from kindergarten through primary school could be central to the implementation of a plurilingual language education policy. It is worth noting that in Sweden the development of teaching materials and resources in immigrant languages has received national funding, and an award-winning website has been developed.[37]

Both ministries have identified the German language proficiency of migrant pupils as an issue of major importance. Factors to be taken into account include the following:

- Some third-generation immigrants begin school with no German.
- There are schools in some regions that have more than 90% migrant pupils.
- Although migrants began to arrive in the 1970s, German language support was first put in place only in the 1990s, following pilot projects in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Migrant pupils have no legal right to German language support.[38]
- Regional authorities are free to decide what kind and level of support they provide.
- Vienna apart, German language support is usually offered outside the normal school timetable.

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[36]   For details, see http://www.coe.int/lang – section *Languages of Education.*
[37]   http://modersmal.skolutveckling.se/projekt/index.php
[38]   An individual does not have the right to claim German language support for his/her child. German language support is based on curriculum needs and the Schulorganisationsgesetz (http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/6416/info1_2007.pdf)

- A decline in German language support is one of the effects of a process of decentralization begun in 2001.
- Schools are reluctant to admit that they provide German language support in case Austrian parents send their children to another school.
- The curricula of PHs do not include obligatory modules on how to handle multilingual classes.

German language support can be provided for a limited number of lessons per school week at various stages; and in the new generation of curricula for technical vocational schools German as a second language is offered on an optional basis. PISA statistics for Austria show dramatically lower scores among immigrants. This prompts the question whether the provision of German language support should be linked to a specific number of lessons or to the achievement of a minimum level of proficiency. In Norway, for example, a subject curriculum in basic Norwegian has recently been introduced that defines standards at three levels, roughly corresponding to A1, A2 and B1/B2. Pupils have the right to language support until they have reached the third level, after which they enter mainstream education.

Assessment of migrants' proficiency in German is a local responsibility, and there are no national minimum standards or descriptions of the minimum level of proficiency needed at the different levels of the educational system (*Bildungsstandards* for German are concerned with German as L1). However, as noted in 2.5 above, the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture has already undertaken an initiative to develop standards in German for children aged 4–5 and tests to assess their proficiency in German.

6.1.3   CLIL: using a foreign language as the medium of teaching/learning

Various forms of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) have been successfully implemented in Austria. One of them is mini-CLIL, the 'integrative' approach used to teach English in primary school, which entails the integrated use of English every day for interaction with and between pupils. In schools that use this approach English is taught exclusively via mini-CLIL in Years 1 and 2 (equivalent to one hour per week), while in Years 3 and 4 an additional hour of English instruction may also be provided. From the beginning the main emphasis is on the development of listening and speaking skills; in Years 3 and 4 reading and writing are introduced, but more to support the further development of listening and speaking than for their own sake. However, additional in-service teacher training is required to support the wider dissemination of mini-CLIL. As noted in 3.1.2 above, however, recent research has cast doubt on the effectiveness of mini-CLIL.

CLIL is also to be found in lower and upper secondary schools and plays an especially important role in vocational education. In Austria as elsewhere there is a need for research and development in CLIL curricula and teaching/learning materials.[39] As was noted in 2.2 above, Austria is committed to implementing the Bologna Declaration, which promotes the mobility of university students on the assumption that they will be capable of pursuing third-level study through a language other than their mother tongue. In that connection it is worth mentioning a version of CLIL developed at the

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[39]   C. Mewald, A comparison of oral foreign language performance of learners in CLIL and in mainstream classes at lower secondary level in Lower Austria. In C. Dalton-Puffer & U. Smit (eds), *Empirical perspectives on CLIL classroom discourse*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007, pp.139–178.

University of Salzburg that uses course materials in two languages (English and German) as a way of helping foreign students to overcome their difficulties in German. This is an approach that could usefully be adopted by other universities, in Austria and elsewhere.

Any language education policy that seeks to base itself on the ideal of plurilingualism must find ways of introducing more language learning into the system without seeming to deny the obvious and continuing importance of English. CLIL is one way of responding to this challenge because it merges the development of proficiency in a foreign language with the learning of another subject and thus leaves more time for the teaching of other languages.

It is worth pointing out that 'general' language learning – what might be called language learning for its own sake – can only be taken to a certain point, after which proficiency necessarily develops in relation to more specialized themes and domains of language use. This is clearly reflected in the common reference levels of the CEFR: A1, A2 and B1 describe progressive stages in the development of the learner's capacity to 'survive' in the target language, whereas B2 is the level at which the learner can begin to use the language to achieve more obviously academic or vocational goals. This is illustrated, for example, by the summary descriptions for B1 and B2 writing:[40]

> **B1** – *I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experience and impressions.*
>
> **B2** – *I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.*

It is difficult to imagine an effective foreign language curriculum that goes beyond B1 but does not make the transition to some form of CLIL. This consideration will need to be taken into account in any overarching review of Austrian language education policy and provision; for it carries the clear implication that increasing the time spent on language learning for its own sake is unlikely to lead to dramatically improved out-comes.

6.2 Issues for consideration

- Consideration should be given to
    - including all languages involved in schooling in any future national strategy or action plan for language education;
    - promoting research that explicitly focuses on the role played by *all* languages in the educational process.

- Consideration should also be given to the following question, posed in the Country Report:
    - Regarding educational institutions that are pre-school establishments or schools, how can children and pupils whose mother tongue is not German continue to develop their mother tongue(s) in a continuous way, while at the

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[40] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, Council of Europe/Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp.26–27.

same time learning German as the language of their country of choice, with no interruptions?

- Consideration should be given to
  - devising ways of developing immigrant pupils' proficiency both in German and in their mother tongue in order to promote personal development and at the same time enhance Austria's linguistic capital;
  - providing immigrant pupils with German language support according to their needs instead of limiting it to a fixed number of hours.

- Consideration should be given to
  - commissioning work on the development of CLIL curricula and teaching/learning materials;
  - promoting the extension of CLIL to languages other than English.

7 Minority languages and bilingual education

7.1 Commentary

Various models of bilingual education have been developed in Austria, from elite programmes focused on German and English, through programmes that involve autochthonous minority languages, to provision for migrant languages. In the latter two cases the question arises whether it is the purpose of bilingual education to preserve or further expand societal bilingualism.

There is a growing interest in bilingual education at primary level, which apparently arises from a desire to exercise minority educational and parental rights. Children from the autochthonous minorities have variable levels of proficiency in the language of their minority; some are fluent speakers, some are able to understand speech, and some begin to learn the language only at school. One academic secondary school offers four languages – German, Slovene, Italian, and English – and makes full use of portfolios, language assistants, language projects, and partner schools in other countries. The fact that some pupils from monolingual families also attend the school shows that the provision of educational support for a minority language can add to society's linguistic capital and at the same time begin to erode the boundaries that easily separate minority from majority communities. Finally, it should be noted that vocational bilingual schools offer various languages and that compulsory practical training can be done abroad.

7.1.1 Autochthonous minorities, including Roma

Austria is one of the countries that have ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.[41] Among other objectives, the Charter is intended to secure, as far as is reasonably possible, that regional or minority languages are used in education and the media, and that their use is permitted and encouraged in legal and administrative contexts, in economic and social life, for cultural activities and in cross-border exchanges.

According to Article 8 of the Austrian Federal Constitutional Law,

1. The German language is the official language of the Republic of Austria. This does not affect any rights granted to linguistic minorities in federal law.
2. The Republic of Austria (the federal authorities, the Austrian *Länder*, and municipal and council authorities) recognize Austria's long-standing linguistic and cultural diversity, which finds expression in Austria's autochthonous ethnic groups. Their languages and cultures, and the continued existence and preservation of these ethnic groups are to be respected, safeguarded, and promoted.
3. *Österreichische Gebärdensprache* (ÖGS, Austrian Sign Language) is recognized in law as a language in its own right.

Implementation tends to vary from language to language and from *Land* to *Land*.

In Austria six autochthonous ethnic/linguistic groups are recognized as such: the Croatian group in Burgenland, the Slovenian group(s) in Carinthia and Styria, the Hungarian groups in Burgenland and Vienna, the Czech and Slovak groups in Vienna, and the Roma group in Burgenland. Whereas Slovene, Hungarian, Czech and Slovak

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[41] http://www.coe.int/minlang

are neighbouring languages, Burgenland Croatian is the language spoken by the descendants of the Croats who emigrated to Burgenland in the 16th century, and it reveals certain differences from the variety spoken in Croatia. It should be noted that according to the 2001 census younger members of these groups increasingly tend to assimilate into the majority population, giving up their distinctive linguistic and cultural identity.[42]

Croatian, Hungarian, Slovene

There are differences from *Land* to *Land* and from language to language (as stated earlier), but it seems likely that these are merely formal and have no negative effects for the populations in question. Examples of the differences are:

- The organization of kindergartens, which in Austria are not within the purview of the federal government but are the responsibility of the *Länder*. In Burgenland a kindergarten law 'regulates bilingual care and education in kindergarten' and 'sets a minimum time frame for children to receive care in the language of their own ethnic group', whereas in Carinthia a *Kindergartenfondsgesetz* 'lays down guidelines for language pedagogy concepts, for managing bodies that run bilingual or multilingual kindergarten' (Country Report, 3.1.3).
- At the compulsory schooling stage, children are registered automatically for bilingual tuition in Burgenland but their participation may be cancelled by their parents; in Carinthia, on the other hand, all children have a right to bilingual schooling but their parents must take the initiative in registering them.

The number of primary schools that provide bilingual education, the number of children in bilingual classes, the percentage of children from ethnic minorities in bilingual classes, and the supply of secondary schools are all evidence that in both *Länder* provision works well for Croatian and Slovene. The Croatian Centre for Culture and Documentation in Eisenstadt has produced language courses not only for Croatian but also for Hungarian and Romani. Some vocational schools close to the border with the Czech Republic and Slovakia offer courses respectively in Czech and Slovak.

Romani

In 1993 a project was launched to codify Burgenland Romani and to develop teaching materials. Romani is taught in schools on a voluntary basis, and not all Roma pupils attend Romani lessons since parents sometimes consider that English and German are more important than Romani. As with other linguistic minorities, pupils come to school with widely varying levels of proficiency in the language. The Rom-Bus is an ingenious solution to the organizational problem posed by the fact that the Burgenland Roma population is scattered.

It should be noted that Austrian expertise contributed to the consultative process that supported the development of the Council of Europe's *Curriculum Framework for*

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[42] A. F. Reiterer, *Volkszählung 2001, Textband. Die demographische, soziale und wirtschaftliche Struktur der österreichischen Bevölkerung*, Wien: Statistik Austria, 2007.

Romani,[43] which at the time of writing this Profile is being piloted in various educational domains in ten Council of Europe member states.

7.1.2 The deaf

Principles of deaf education

Children born with unimpaired hearing begin to learn the language of their home environment from birth, passing through a succession of developmental stages that are thoroughly documented and well understood. The acquisition of a mother tongue is an integral part of child development and thus inseparable from early cognitive development. Words, phrases and in due course more complex structures give children a means of communicating with others but also of representing, understanding and reflecting on the world in which they find themselves.

Deaf children born to deaf parents (estimated at around 10% of deaf populations) typically acquire the sign language of their home environment, passing through developmental stages that are closely similar to the milestones that have been established for the development of speech. In other words, the early cognitive development of such children is supported by the acquisition of a first language, but one that is visual-spatial rather than auditory-vocal in nature. This fact supports the argument in favour of according sign languages the same legal and societal status as spoken languages.

As regards deaf children born to hearing parents, there is great diversity and complexity of circumstances. The most important factor is the age of onset of hearing impairment, whether at birth or later, and in the latter case, whether before or after contact with spoken language. Other factors of significance are the degree of hearing impairment, the general abilities and skills of the child, possible additional disabilites, and the language situation in the home, all of which have an impact on the child's education.

From these facts two things emerge. First, no single method of communication is appropriate to the education of all children with hearing impairments. Where speech can be perceived and reinforced by the use of signs that supplement speech by decoding it, 'oralism' in the version sometimes known as 'total communication' makes good sense, especially since it exploits and builds on the language and communication skills whose development is already available to the child in his or her home environment. On the other hand, when a child with a profound hearing impairment cannot perceive speech, 'total communication' or any other speech-based approach must be replaced by sign language, which is the only means of linguistic communication *immediately* accessible to a profoundly deaf child, and thus the only appropriate primary medium of communication and education.

In most European countries the education of deaf children has been and remains predominantly 'oral'. Increasingly, however, as their full linguistic status is recognized, sign languages are being granted the same legal status as spoken languages; and at the same time there is a growing tendency to develop bilingual approaches to the education of children with profound hearing impairments. In such approaches the native sign language is the pupil's L1 and the written form of the national language is introduced as an L2, but with the intention that the pupil should in the fullness of time

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[43] The Curriculum Framework for Romani is available at www.coe.int/lang – section *Minorities and Migrants*.

become a balanced bilingual, understanding and producing sign language in inter-personal and classroom interaction, reading and writing the national language in order to access, process and communicate educational knowledge.

In recent years cochlear implants have featured prominently in discussion of deaf education. It cannot be denied that they bring great benefits to large numbers of deaf children and children with hearing impairments; and the benefits are likely to increase with further scientific discoveries and technological advances. The development of bilingual deaf education should nevertheless be considered for the following reasons:

1. Not all deaf children can be given a cochlear implant.
2. Lack of research means that little is known about language acquisition among children who have undergone an implant.
3. It is highly desirable that contacts between deaf children and their deaf environment should be maintained.
4. If bilingual education is beneficial for hearing children, there is no reason to believe that it would not also benefit deaf children.

The Austrian situation

Austrian Sign Language (*Österreichische Gebärdensprache*; ÖGS) received full legal recognition in 2005. The new curriculum for deaf children due to come into force in the school year 2008–09 takes into account the individual communication needs of deaf children and children with profound hearing impairments by offering 'tailored' approaches and provision. Establishing bilingual classes in a mainstream setting depends on a number of factors, including the number of deaf/hearing-impaired pupils of the same age in the region, parental choice regarding school type, and the linguistic approach preferred. At present bilingual education is provided by special schools for deaf children, in Vienna, Salzburg, Graz and Linz, and in two vocational schools in Vienna. Special training for teachers of the deaf and hearing-impaired was provided by the former PAs and PIs. In the spring of 2008 the PH in Lower Austria introduced a new training course (five semesters) for teachers of deaf students and students with hearing impairments. In-service courses in ÖGS will be provided by PHs as soon as possible.

During the LEPP process the Austrian Deaf Community expressed very great concern at the generally low educational achievement of deaf children and adolescents and pointed to a serious lack of deaf teachers and of hearing teachers who are fluent in ÖGS. At present there are some 25 deaf students at university in Austria (a tiny proportion of the total deaf population), and they are provided with interpretation for just one course per semester (whereas deaf students require interpretation for *all* courses).[44]

In 2006–2007 a study was undertaken[45] to document the use of ÖGS in mainstream schools and schools for the deaf, to review the quality of teacher training for deaf education, and to investigate the situation of deaf students and the status of ÖGS as a

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[44] According to the Federal Act of Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities 2005 (Bundes – Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz) teacher training institutions should take account of the needs of students with disabilities and offer appropriate assessment methods (PH – Organisation Act, §§ 9(14), 63(7).

[45] V. Krausneker & K. Schalber, *Sprache macht Wissen*. Project initiated by the Innovationszentrum of the University of Vienna and funded by the Österreichisches Sprachenkompetenz-Zentrum and the University of Vienna. Published report available at http://www.bizeps.or.at/news.php?nr=8618.

research topic at the University of Vienna. The study found that deaf education in Austria lacks strategies and a common terminology and does not allow deaf and hearing-impaired children equal access to education. ÖGS is not seen as a linguistic resource in deaf education and currently plays no role in the curriculum for deaf schools. At university lack of interpreters and insufficient financial support mean that deaf students do not have unrestricted access to information and knowledge. On the other hand, there is an increasing demand for ÖGS classes at the University of Vienna's language centre and other institutions, and a growth in student interest in researching ÖGS as a minority language. From 2008–09 the University of Vienna will offer an 'extension curriculum' for students of linguistics and special needs education. This is another result of the Austrian LEPP process. However, the University does not yet provide a research framework for ÖGS, and this is necessary in order to support the development of high-quality ÖGS courses and confirm the status of the language.

The Country Report notes that 'Bilingual teaching using ÖGS and German did exist in the framework of 3 school pilot schemes, which however have been terminated in the meantime'. These pilot projects were carried out in mainstream schools, and one of them – 'Österreichische Gebärdensprache (ÖGS) in der bilingualen Volksschulklasse' – was awarded the European Label for Innovative Language Projects in 2003.

The extension of bilingual education for the deaf depends crucially on increasing the supply of teachers who are fluent in ÖGS and German. At the Round Table the *Österreichischer Gehörlosenbund* (ÖGLB) pointed out that the training currently provided in ÖGS – 75 hours – is inadequate and argued that it should be increased to 520–570 hours. The ÖGLB also urged that teachers' proficiency in ÖGS should be examined, teachers of ÖGS and bilingual contrastive grammar should receive additional instruction in ÖGS, and a clear distinction should be maintained between ÖGS as a constitutionally recognized language and other manual sign systems such as LGB (*Lautsprachbegleitende Gebärde*).

7.2 Issues for consideration

7.2.1 Autochthonous minorities, including Roma

- Consideration should be given to the following questions, raised in the Country Report:
  - How can the learning of neighbouring languages and/or of regional or minority languages be assured and receive support?
  - How can native speakers be included to a greater extent?
  - What measures should be taken to furnish 'native speakers' (particularly mother tongue teachers, in Austria) with more linguistic and pedagogical knowledge?
  - What steps would have to be taken on the part of public institutions providing initial or in-service training, to provide best possible language learning support in plurilingual teaching and learning environments? Such institutions would be: institutions for the training of kindergarten teachers; universities; tertiary colleges of education (Pädagogische Hochschulen); colleges or universities of applied science offering training in social studies and the caring professions.
  - What can be done to achieve parity of treatment for the use of 'native speaker' teachers, in different types of schools?

- Consideration should also be given to
  - harmonizing legal requirements and entitlements with a view to ensuring that provision, enrolment criteria and other key factors are the same across the country;
  - introducing measures calculated to further secure the linguistic and cultural inheritance of the autochthonous minorities, bearing in mind the trend towards assimilation and the abandonment of linguistic and cultural distinctiveness identified in the 2001 census;
  - seeking ways of building on the interest in learning Hungarian and Slovene that has developed since Hungary and Slovenia joined the European Union;
  - remedying the lack of teachers of minority languages, including neighbouring and migrant languages, by offering 'conversion' training for native speakers of those languages who already possess a teaching qualification in a modern foreign language;
  - further exploring the claim that mixed proficiency levels are not a serious problem in Romani classes provided that the organization of the classroom allows the more proficient learners to help the less proficient: this is an important pedagogical point that has relevance for the teaching and learning of other minority languages.

7.2.2   The deaf

- Starting from the study carried out by the *Innovationszentrum* of the University of Vienna, further research needs to be carried out in order to get a complete picture of the situation of deaf education, taking various perspectives into account

- Consideration should be given to
  - further developing bilingual deaf education, which will require a significant increase in the number of teachers proficient in ÖGS and German;
  - developing training programmes for deaf (native signer) teachers of ÖGS;
  - providing for the empirical evaluation of developments in bilingual deaf education;
  - increasing the number of hours devoted to teaching ÖGS to future teachers of the deaf;
  - increasing the number of deaf students at Austrian universities and ensuring that they have full access to information and knowledge;
  - establishing a research framework for ÖGS in at least one Austrian university.

8 Into the future

8.1 General considerations

The Country Report is clearly in favour of establishing a national framework for language education. However, a national framework needs the impetus of a national strategy that embraces all the domains and challenges that have been discussed during the LEPP process; and a national strategy needs to be elaborated as an interlocking network of action plans, each with its own timelines, funding support and criteria for independent empirical evaluation. The process of strategy development will need to give careful consideration to a number of key issues in order to achieve successful educational innovation. Among the most important are the following:

- To what extent can a national language education strategy be developed and implemented top-down?

- How can a bottom-up dynamic be developed and made to interact with top-down control so that the wealth of available expertise is fully exploited and the ownership of all stakeholders secured?

- How can the federal and regional authorities work together to overcome some of the inequalities, discontinuities, inconsistencies and compartmentalization that can be found in the present system?

- In developing and implementing a national language education strategy, what roles are to be assigned to the different stakeholders, and how are their positive involvement and active support to be achieved?

- How is the impact of innovation to be evaluated, and by what criteria is sustainability to be judged?

- How can the central importance of language education for Austria's future be brought to the attention of the general public and made a matter of constructive public debate?

- What role should market forces play in the development and implementation of national strategy? Given that educational aspirations often run counter to 'the market', are there limits beyond which a national language education strategy should not attempt to shape market trends?

- How can a national language education strategy give a central role to the establishment of plurilingualism while recognizing that the ideal of plurilingualism is not yet deeply rooted in the Austrian (or European) mind-set?

There is a consensus that ÖSKO should play a central role in finding answers to these and other key questions, though careful thought needs to be given to its composition and structure and its relation to the ministries. As suggested in the addendum to the Country Report, consideration should be given to extending ÖSKO's terms of reference and membership to include German as mother tongue, national language and language of education.

This Profile reflects a holistic view of language education that embraces *all* languages, including the national language(s)/language(s) of education. There is a consensus that a national language education strategy should be based on the same view, and that it should span all sectors and levels of education: kindergarten, primary, lower and upper secondary, vocational and university education, in-company training, and adult education (private as well as public). It is worth emphasizing in

particular the importance of including adult education in a national strategy, because it is obvious that no school system can meet all of a country's foreign language needs. In any case, a considerable number of people who left school 15 or more years ago may not have had sufficient language learning opportunities and must depend on adult education institutions to compensate for this.

Educational reform is a major undertaking for any government, and the need for reform should be well documented before the process itself is embarked upon. The Country Report provides a wealth of information not previously accessible to the public, and it is clear that the LEPP process has begun to stimulate a wide-ranging public discussion and reflection. Careful thought must nevertheless be given to dissemination.

8.2 Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture

The current focus areas of the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture in the field of language education policy are:
- diversification (minority, neighbouring and migrant languages);
- continuity;
- early language learning;
- further development of language teacher education;
- the promotion of German as language of instruction (in its role as first, second and foreign language) in order to support equal opportunities;
- the promotion of bilingual education/schooling;
- the promotion of mother tongue teaching/learning.

As a result of the LEPP process the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture has already undertaken a number of measures and committed itself to others. The ministry attaches central importance to the following measures in the short term:
- enhancing German as a second language and intercultural training in (kindergarten) teacher training;
- increasing the language competence of future primary school teachers;
- moving towards a competence-based approach to language teaching at primary level;
- providing additional support for mother tongue teaching., the teaching of German as a second language (eg. continuation of German language support courses in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 and their extension to *Hauptschulen* and *Polytechnische Schulen*), and bilingual programmes.

8.3 Ministry of Science and Research

In the area of language education and language education policy and in the context of the LEPP process, the Ministry of Science and Research assigns particular priority to:
- promoting cross-disciplinary cooperation in the education of language teachers;
- promoting an ethos in language teacher education that is open to educational contexts other than school;
- reconsidering language teaching goals and exploring new models of language teaching and language teacher education;
- reconsidering the regulations (*Rahmenbedingungen*) that govern language education, with particular reference to the problem of continuity between educational sectors.

The ministry intends to respond to these issues as follows:

- Incentives will be granted to enable universities to establish centres (or comparable units) for language education research (*Sprachlehrforschung*) in order to upgrade their language education studies through joint research and teaching activities. The centres will be expected to engage in local, regional and national activities that promote the development of language education.

- Guidelines will be supported for consideration in the development of future curricula leading to the *Lehramt*. The guidelines will take account of the argument that future language teachers need to be prepared for a potentially wide range of professional responsibilities; focus on the need to establish continuity between language curricula and continuity of educational opportunity across the higher education sector; emphasize the importance of offering a sufficient range of languages; and promote courses and projects that aim to develop composite language competences and an adequate range of meta-competences.

- New types of academic development will be introduced by initiating projects in *Sprachlehrforschung* designed to meet specific language education needs, planning a federal PhD programme in language teaching research, and encouraging post-doctoral researchers to acquire top-level qualifications (e.g. *Habilitation*) in areas that link established domains of research to *Sprachlehrforschung*.

- Incentives to support a variety of research programmes, from excellence research to small-scale studies designed to meet ad hoc local and regional needs, will be awarded on a competitive basis. The ministry intends that research focuses should include: programme evaluation; linguistic and language acquisition studies; studies of the foundations and assessment of intercultural learning; studies of the effectiveness of specific teaching approaches; and studies of language teaching in the vocational education sector. Incentives will also be offered to the universities to consider developing a project-based research structure and one or more PhD programmes in language education research.

- Incentives will also be offered to develop expertise in minority languages, including Austrian sign language (*Österreichische Gebärdensprache*; ÖGS), the languages of neighbouring countries, and the languages of minorities in Austria.

- Additional incentives will be granted for university language centres to ensure a sufficiently broad range of teaching activities and to further open doors to *Sprachlehrforschung*.

8.4   Public discussion of the Language Education Policy Profile

In December 2008 public discussion of the issues raised in this Profile will be launched at a two-day conference organized by the two ministries in Graz.

Appendix 1 – *Council of Europe viewpoint on language education: plurilingualism*

In view of the linguistic diversity of Europe and each of its states, the Council of Europe has adopted the policy of valuing and promoting plurilingualism. A consensus has been reached by Council of Europe member states that plurilingualism for every European should be the principal goal of language education policies. This position is set forth in various documents (see Appendix 2) and is spelled out in the *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* (see Appendix 3).

The concept of plurilingualism can be misunderstood and should be clearly defined. In the first place, the plurilingual approach puts the chief emphasis of education policies not on languages as such and multilingual diversity[46] but on the persons who use languages. Attention is then focused on each individual's ability to learn and use more than one language in social communication.

In the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, plurilingualism is defined as 'the ability to use languages for the purpose of communication and to take part in cultural 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'.[47]

In any political and social entity, languages do not all enjoy the same status or even recognition: they may be official languages, languages of instruction, languages of recognized minorities, languages of unrecognized groups; some are sought after and a source of prestige, while others are devalued or a handicap and thus a factor conducive to exclusion, etc.

It is for the state to ensure by democratic means a balance between the plurilingual repertoires of different groups and between the languages which the national, regional, federal etc. community uses for its projects (relations with border regions, integration in the region and in Europe, international trade, etc.). The major role of language policies is thus to organize the balanced management of plurilingual repertoires, the languages of the territory and collective needs, according to the resources available and cultural and educational traditions, in order to ensure social cohesion, if necessary by the explicit recognition of the linguistic rights and duties of each individual.

The valuing and promotion of plurilingualism thus forms one of the fundamental aspects of social inclusion and education for democratic citizenship.

In its Declaration and Programme on education for democratic citizenship of 7 May 1999, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe stressed that the preservation of European linguistic diversity was not an end in itself, since it was placed on the same footing as the building of a more tolerant and more interdependent society: '*a freer, more tolerant and just society based on solidarity, common values and a cultural heritage enriched by its diversity*' (CM (99) 76). In making, from 1997 onwards, education for democratic citizenship a priority of the Council of Europe and its member states, Heads of

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[46] '*Multilingualism*' refers to the presence in a given large or small geographical area of several linguistic varieties (forms of verbal communication regardless of their status). '*Plurilingualism*' refers to the repertoire of linguistic varieties that may be used by speakers (including mother tongue/first language and all those acquired subsequently, again regardless of their status at school and in society and the level of mastery).

[47] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, p.168

State and Government defined the central place of languages in the exercise of democratic citizenship in Europe: while the active participation of citizens in political decisions and society is necessary in a democracy, this means that such participation must not be rendered impossible by the absence of appropriate language skills. The possibility of citizens' taking part in the political and public life of Europe, not only in that of their own countries, presupposes plurilingual competence, that is, the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with the other citizens of Europe.

The development of plurilingualism is not just 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 with linguistic majorities, respect for freedom of expression, respect for linguistic minorities, respect for the least spoken and taught national languages, and respect for diversity in interregional and international communication. Language education policies are closely bound up with education in the values of democratic citizenship because their goals are complementary: language education, which provides a particularly favourable opportunity for intercultural contact, is a sector where education for democratic living in its intercultural dimensions can be given tangible form in education systems.

It should be stressed that this goal, which reflects a consensus among the member states, will have to be reached gradually. The introduction of appropriate measures (syllabuses and curricula, teacher training, etc.) may involve new forms of organization requiring additional financial resources or important policy decisions. The formulation of language education policies for the development of plurilingualism can be envisaged in many ways. We can therefore expect the implications of the *Profile* and its potential or actual consequences to vary with the country according to the national political situation or to its history and educational traditions.

Appendix 2 – *Documents formulating the position of the Council of Europe on language education policy*

CONVENTIONS:

- European Cultural Convention (1954)

- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages [www.coe.int/minlang]

- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, www.coe.int/minorities

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

- *Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe* www.coe.int/T/CM
  o Recommendation R (82)18 based on the results of the CDCC Project N° 4 ('Modern Languages 1971-1981')
  o Recommendation R (98)6 based on the results of the CDCC Project 'Language Learning for European Citizenship' (1989 – 1996)
  o Recommendation R (2008)7 on the use of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the promotion of plurilingualism

- *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* www.assembly.coe.int
  o Recommendation 1383 (1998) on Linguistic Diversification and (CM(99)97)
  o Recommendation 1539 (2001) on the European Year of Languages 2001
  o Recommendation 1598 (2003) on the protection of Sign languages in the member states of the Council of Europe

- *Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education*
  o Resolution on the *European Language Portfolio* adopted at the 20th Session of the Standing Conference (Krakow, Poland, October 2000)

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

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 3 – *Council of Europe instruments: presentation*

> 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*

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 website).

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 CEFR
www.coe.int/lang

A pilot version of this Manual for relating language examinations to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) has been produced by the Language Policy Division[48] in order to assist member states and national/international providers of examinations in relating their certificates and diplomas to the CEFR.

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

The Manual 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 Pilot Manual with additional information that will help them in their efforts to relate their certificates and diplomas to the CEFR.

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[48] A revised version will be published in early 2009

Appendix 4 – *National authorities and Council of Europe Expert Group*

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Appendix 5 – *Programme of the week's study visit of the Group of Experts*

(See next page)

Time	MON 21-5-2008: Vienna	TUES 22-5: Vienna	WED 23-5: Vienna	THURS 24-5: Burgenland	FRI 25-5: Vienna
8.30			8.30 to 9.30 am: **Meeting with representatives of the political parties**	8.30 am: Departure from Vienna	
9.00		9 to 10.30 am: **Best Practice 1** A visit to the kindergarten of *Verein Wiener Integrationshaus*			
9.30			9.30 to 10.30 am: **Meeting with the AT Project Team** Venue: Ministry		9.30 to 10.30 am: **Best Practice 5** A visit to the *Pädagogische Hochschule Wien* teacher training institution
10.00	10 am to 12.30 pm: **Opening session with the competent Austrian ministers and meeting with representatives of the ministries** including the AT Project Team Venue: Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture/Ministry for Science and Research (Audienzsaal)				
10.30				10.30 to 11.30 am: **Best Practice 3** A visit to Weiden primary school (close to Rechnitz) Lunch: sandwiches on coach plus time to get to Eisenstadt	10.30 am to 12.30 pm: **Round Table 4** Multilingualism and teacher training Venue*: Pädagogische Hochschule Wien*
11.00		11 am to 12.30 pm: **Best Practice 2** A visit to the European Primary School, Vienna	11 am to 1 pm: **Meeting with the Austrian Language Committee** (ÖSKO) at the Ministry		
11.30					
12.00					
12.30	12.30 to 1.30 pm: official buffet lunch at the Ministry	12.30 to 2 pm: lunch break plus time to get to the *Europabüro/Stadtschulrat für Wien*			12.30 to 2 pm: lunch at the *Pädagogische Hochschule Wien*
13.00			1 to 2 pm: buffet lunch at the Ministry plus time to get to the *Sprachenzentrum* of the University of Vienna	1 to 2 pm: **Best Practice 4** A visit to *Kroatisches Kultur- und Dokumentationszentrum* at Eisenstadt	
13.30					
14.00	2 to 4 pm: **Round Table 1** Early language learning and multilingualism, focusing on 'new' minority languages Venue: Ministry (Audienzsaal)	2 to 4 pm: **Working session with practitioners** Continuity between pre-primary / primary and primary / secondary education Venue: *Europabüro/Stadtschulrat für Wien*		2 to 3 pm: free	2 to 4 pm: **Final session with the AT Project Team** Venue: *Pädagogische Hochschule Wien*
14.30					
15.00			2.30 to 4.30 pm: **Round Table 2** Promoting multilingualism outside the formal education system Venue: *Sprachenzentrum* of the University of Vienna	3 to 5 pm: **Round Table 3** Promoting minority languages Venue: *Landesschulrat für Burgenland*, Eisenstadt	
16.00					
16.30	From 4.30 pm: Expert group working session Venue: Hotel Tigra conference room (computer facilities and refreshments available)	From 4.30 pm: Expert group working session Venue: Hotel Tigra conference room (computer facilities and refreshments available)	From 5 pm: Expert group working session Venue: Hotel Tigra conference room (computer facilities and refreshments available)	5 to 6 pm: Expert group working session Venue: *Landesschulrat für Burgenland*, Eisenstadt (computer facilities and refreshments available)	From 4.30 pm: Expert group working session Venue: Hotel Tigra conference room (computer facilities and refreshments available)
19.00	Free	Wiener Konzerthaus: San Francisco Symphony Orchestra	Free	Dinner in Burgenland	Farewell dinner with the AT Project Team