

REPUBLIC



OF CYPRUS



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Language Education Policy Profile

CYPRUS

**Language Policy Division, Strasbourg
Ministry of Education and Culture, Cyprus**

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Abbreviations

CDG: Cypriot dialect of Greek

SMG: Standard modern Greek

CES: The Cyprus Educational System, Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), 2003

CR: Country Report

CEFR: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*

SIFE: State Institute for Further Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It should be noted that this Language Education Policy Profile refers only to the part of the island that is under the control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

This *Language Education Policy Profile* is the final stage of a three-stage analysis of language education policy in Cyprus. It is focused primarily on school and teacher education in Cyprus and the role of language education policy in these areas.

In the first stage of the process, a Country Report on language education was prepared by the Cypriot authorities for the visit to Cyprus in March 2004 of a group of experts appointed by the Council of Europe. The Country Report, which is distributed together with the *Profile*, described the current situation, referred to recent changes in education policy and raised some questions about future directions. At the second stage, the visiting group discussed with representatives of the Cyprus education system and of civil society their views on language education. These discussions led to an Experts' Report which served in turn as input to a Round Table discussion in November 2004, involving Cypriot stakeholders, authorities and the group of visiting experts. These various steps led to this final *Profile* produced co-operatively by the Council of Europe group of experts and the Cypriot authorities.

The *Profile* explains Council of Europe policy and the policies of the Republic of Cyprus on language education, analyses the current situation, and discusses some possibilities for future developments.

The main principle of Council of Europe policy is to promote plurilingualism in Europe and various instruments have been produced for this purpose, as well as policy recommendations. It is evident that plurilingualism already exists to a considerable extent in Cyprus which has for long been a multilingual society. It is hoped therefore that this *Profile* will raise awareness of this, stimulate debate about it, and promote further language education policies which draw upon this asset.

The Council of Europe perspective

The value of a review involving an external group of invited experts is to bring a Council of Europe perspective to existing reflection, planning and innovation. This perspective may be summarised as follows:

- that all language education must be analysed holistically, to include mother tongue/first language, minority languages (both well-established and recent) and foreign languages; and that the aims of education should include the promotion of the plurilingualism of the individual;
- that language education policy should promote the inclusion of all linguistic and cultural groups in a society, and that language education policy is thus a part of social policy, with a national dimension with respect to inclusion and with an international dimension with respect to interaction with other societies and their members.

Analysis of the current situation

Against this background, the analysis of the current situation (Chapter 3) identifies as significant the following factors in Cyprus:

- there exists a rich potential for the development of policies which promote plurilingualism in individuals since many Cypriots are plurilingual already;
- great importance is attached to the Greek language, both modern and classical, not only in terms of promoting high standards in education but valuing the cultural heritage of Cypriots and links with Greece; the position of the Cypriot dialect of Greek alongside standard modern Greek is a source of some debate;
- many Cypriots think of foreign language learning only in terms of the mastery of English which is seen as an essential skill for communication;
- given its presence in the media and in business for example, the acquisition of English is not due entirely to teaching in schools;
- because of the prominence of English, it can be difficult to promote the teaching and learning of other languages; the problem is recognised and a number of steps have been taken to address it;
- the presence of increasing numbers of speakers of languages other than those indigenous to Cyprus raises new issues: there is considerable potential for plurilingualism which remains untapped;
- the European Language Portfolio (ELP) will be implemented at Lower Secondary Education (Gymnasia) once it has been accredited by the Council of Europe ELP Validation Committee.
- the relationship between language education and education for citizenship is implicitly recognised in various policy and curriculum documents but remains to be developed;
- there has been successful innovation in schools in a number of areas, not least the development of Language Rooms and in styles of teaching and learning in the Eniaio Lykeio;
- there is a large private school sector whose flexible response to demand is attractive to many parents; foreign languages are often prominent in this sector;
- supplementary private tuition (*frontistiria*) in languages and other subjects is experienced by the vast majority of pupils of school age at some point; much of this sector is unregulated;
- appropriate teacher education is a crucial pre-condition for developing the plurilingual potential; adjustments to, and innovations in, curricula for teacher education are necessary to ensure quality in pre- and in-service education, embracing such matters as methods of teaching, emphasising practical language use, the multilingualism of Cypriot society, and approaches to teaching which value all languages and recognise the relationships among languages.

Possible future directions

In the light of this analysis, the *Profile* discusses (Chapter 4) possible future directions in the following terms:

- given the existing potential, a vision of Cyprus as a society of plurilingual individuals with different degrees and kinds of competence in several languages is entirely realisable; this could be effectively promoted by an action plan for language education in which a follow-up group could bring together proposals and insights from this *Profile*, drawing upon various Council of Europe instruments, including the *Common*

European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) and the Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe, and also upon European Union policies;

- coherence in the curriculum is crucial, both horizontally and vertically; horizontal coherence involves, for example, noting and profiting from relationships among languages (Greek, minority languages, foreign languages) with respect to teaching methods; vertical coherence refers to continuity between phases of education (in particular between primary and secondary education) and the need to plan the individual's learning of languages over time;
- the plurilingual potential of Cypriot students can be developed through closer attention to relationships among languages and to curriculum development (including intercultural education) which builds on these relationships;
- each learner acquires different competences in different languages at different times; the individuality of this process needs to be recognised through differentiated objectives and appropriate assessment processes and approaches to recording learners' achievements;
- further development building on successful innovation offers a vehicle for the improvement of quality and standards;
- discussion of curricular and pedagogical developments between public and private schools could provide a catalyst for improvement by drawing fully on the pool of good practice which is available nationally;
- further improvement of quality and standards in languages in school education would reduce the perceived need for *frontistiria* (supplementary private tuition outside school hours);
- many developments in curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment can be facilitated by reference to the instruments and documents of the Council of Europe, such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*, together with the associated assessment *Manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR*, now in development, the European Language Portfolio (ELP), and the *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* (in particular Chapters 5 and 6);
- medium- and long-term changes in initial and in-service teacher education can be planned in several respects: teachers need opportunities to improve their linguistic and cultural competence; they need to be introduced to a pedagogy which takes full account of the relationships among languages and the nature of plurilingualism as an educational aim; teacher educators need to focus their research and development activity on new and concerted approaches to teaching languages; again, the instruments and documents of the Council of Europe provide a useful source of ideas for teacher education; they need wider distribution in the education system of Cyprus and in particular in teacher training.

May 2005

1. Introduction

1.1 The origins, context and purpose of the Profile

The Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe offers to 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 the opportunity to undertake a 'self-evaluation' of their policy in a spirit of dialogue with Council of Europe experts, and with a view to focusing on possible future policy developments within the country. [...] This does not mean 'external evaluation'. It is a process of reflection by the authorities and members of civil society, and the Council of Europe experts have the function of acting as catalysts in this process”.

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

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

The process of the *Profile* consists of three principal phases:

- the production of a ‘Country Report’, describing the current position and raising issues which are under discussion or review; this report is presented by the authorities of the country in question;
- the production of an ‘Experts’ Report’ which takes into account the ‘Country Report’ and discussions and observations during a week’s visit to the country by a small number of experts nominated by the Council of Europe from other Member states; this is an interim report which is not published;
- the production of a ‘Language Education Policy Profile’ developed from the Experts’ Report and taking account of comments and feedback from those invited to a ‘round table’ discussion of the Experts’ Report; this Profile is a report which is agreed in its final form by the experts and the country authorities, and published by the Council of Europe in English and French. Cyprus may wish to translate and publish it in Greek

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

In the production of the *Profile* attention is paid to both the priorities of Cyprus and the policies and views of desirable practice presented in documents of the Council of Europe, in particular in terms of plurilingualism.

The contents and structure of the *Profile* after this introduction are in three main parts: a summary of current issues in language education in Cyprus (Chapter 2), an analysis of the current situation in language education (Chapter 3) and discussion of possible future directions for language education in Cyprus.

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

1.2 Council of Europe 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 recognised 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 which many individuals use, and is therefore the opposite of monolingualism; it includes the language variety referred to as 'mother tongue' or 'first language' and any number of other languages or varieties. Thus in some multilingual areas some individuals are monolingual and some are plurilingual.

Europe as a geographical area is multilingual, as are most member States. The Council of Europe has developed an international consensus on principles to guide the development of language education policies which promotes plurilingualism for the individual as a principal aim of all language education policy. This position is formulated in a number of documents listed in Appendix 1.

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 respect and understanding of the languages and language varieties of others as a basis for democratic citizenship.

Plurilingualism is defined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*² 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. (Council of Europe, 2001: 168).

Thus plurilingualism refers to the full linguistic repertoire of the individual, including their 'mother tongue' or 'first language'. The *Profile* therefore considers all language education in Cyprus, including education in Greek and in minority languages as well as those languages which are labelled as 'foreign' languages.

The process of developing the *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 instruments such as the *Common European Framework*, and presented in detail in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*³. In this latter document it is made clear that plurilingualism

² *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, Cambridge University Press, 2001. Also online on www.coe.int/lang (Language Policy Division)

³ Published in 2002 by the Language Policy Division, Council of Europe;. Available online www.coe.int/lang

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 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. (*Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe* (Main Version 2.3))

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

The responses to the *Country Profile* in any particular country can thus be expected to vary according to its circumstances, history and priorities.

1.3 Scope of this Profile

The invitation to develop a *Country Profile* for Cyprus was extended by the Cyprus authorities and the priorities for the Profile were largely determined by the coverage of themes in the Country Report. The work of the Expert Group and subsequent discussions with the Cyprus authorities consequently focused above all on school and teacher education. The Profile does not claim to be an exhaustive discussion of all language education issues in Cyprus and the Cyprus education system.

2. Current issues in language education in Cyprus

The first stage of the Profile process was the elaboration of a Country Report, which is published together with the *Profile* document. The Country Report gives an introduction to the education system and an account of those parts of it which the host country considers to be of particular relevance to the questions involved in language education policy.

A range of issues was initially identified for consideration, including:

- the restructuring of the language examination system for employment and/or promotion purposes;
- the language education of bilingual children who are attending public primary and also secondary schools;
- the perceived gap between the level of what is taught at school and the requirements for university entrance;
- the need for a clear and direct policy concerning the place of the Cypriot dialect in language education in public schools in connection with the oral expression of children in particular and adults in general.

Further issues were identified during the process, including

- the need for a holistic view of language education (including intercultural learning);
- links between languages and between language teachers;
- administrative problems regarding foreign language provision in upper secondary education;
- the introduction of a second foreign language in primary education;
- the private tuition system (*frontistiria*);
- pre-service and in-service training of teachers.

3. An analysis of the current situation in language education

The analysis and views presented here reflect the positions and opinions of different stakeholders in Cypriot society and of different sectors of the education system, including some teachers and learners. The analysis is therefore influenced by perceptions of people in Cyprus and by the Council of Europe's policies as introduced into the debate by the members of the Expert group who also drew on their experience of a range of educational systems across Europe.

Sources

The analysis of the current situation of languages in education and society in the Republic of Cyprus is based on:

- the 'Country Report' (CR);
- *The Cyprus Educational System* (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2003) (CES);
- contacts, discussions and supporting material tabled during the visit of the Council of Europe Expert Group (29 February – 5 March 2004);
- the evaluation/survey of the Eniaio Lykeio, circulated March 2004;

- the *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe. From diversity to plurilingual education* (Council of Europe, April 2003) and other Council of Europe instruments;
- the knowledge and experience of the members of the Expert Group of policies for language education elsewhere in Europe as policy-makers and/or evaluators of policies and their effects;
- the exchange of views at the ‘round table’ discussion in November 2004.

So far, there is no regular cycle of evaluation reports in Cyprus on the education system as a whole.

3.1 The national languages

Greek

The Greek Cypriot community is remarkably homogeneous with strong historical and cultural ties with the hellenic nation. The language of instruction in public schools is Standard Modern Greek (SMG). The study of SMG as a subject is obligatory in private schools for all pupils who have at least one Greek Cypriot parent

The study of SMG in the Gymnasium aims at enabling children to understand the distinctive nature of the language and uniqueness of contemporary Greek civilisation and to treasure and enjoy its literature. The identity-building role given to the study of the Greek language is thus clearly stated. The Lyceum builds on these aims, for example through developing appreciation of the richness of the language and acquainting students with representative works of modern Greek literature.

The Cypriot Dialect of Greek (CDG) lives alongside SMG. CDG is distinguished from SMG by phonetic and lexical features (CR p.27). CDG is used mainly for oral communication and to some extent for folk poetry and plays (CR p.32). It is used on limited occasions in broadcasting. CDG is used more in rural than in urban areas and seems to have uncertain status despite its extensive day-to-day use (CR pp.31-32).

Speakers of CDG understand SMG but speakers of the latter may experience some difficulty in understanding CDG (CR p.27). The first language variety of a considerable number of young children when they start to attend school is CDG. The language of communication in the classroom is SMG not CDG (CR, p.33). There is a range of views about the nature and scale of the adjustment which pupils and teachers have to make and about whether CDG may delay the development of full literacy and oracy in SMG. Similarly, educators in Cyprus, although they generally believe the dialect should be respected, vary in the importance they attach to the cultural heritage of CDG.

Both educators and members of civil society, including parents raise the question of the (perceived) weak oral expression of many children (and adults) in SMG, although the nature of their concern varies. There is no obvious consensus as to the bearing of CDG on this matter.

Turkish

Article 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus states (paragraph 1) that ‘The official languages of the Republic are Greek and Turkish’. Article 20 (paragraphs 1-4) sets out the fundamental rights of each community to manage its own school system.

Turkish was apparently quite regularly used by many speakers of Greek before 1974 and it has always been taught at the State Institutes for Further Education. It has been taught at the University of Cyprus since 1992, with the first graduates in 1996).

Interest in learning Turkish has been encouraged recently and it is now reviving with over 500 Greek Cypriots studying it at State Institutes for Further Education. Turkish has recently been included as an optional language in the final two years of the Lyceum.

There are growing numbers of Turkish students in Greek schools, both private and public, and not only in Nicosia. There are a few students from parts of Cyprus not under the control of the government of Cyprus who are studying in the area of the Republic under the Government's control and who are taught partly in the Turkish language.

In at least one public school some teachers are being taught Turkish by a colleague. There are several centres in Nicosia which organize cultural activities for the Greek and Turkish communities, either separately or together. The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation broadcasts radio programmes in Turkish for 11 hours per day and also TV programmes in Turkish.

3.2 The provision of education in Cyprus

Public schools

Primary education covers six years, lower secondary (Gymnasium) three, and upper secondary (Lyceum – Eniaio Lykeio or comprehensive Lyceum since 2000) three. Students in Cyprus are not obliged to continue education beyond lower secondary school, but have a legal right to do so. About 10% do not continue. Of the students in upper secondary education, over 85 per cent attend the Lyceum; the rest follow courses of vocational education in Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE) schools.

Modern Greek is studied throughout primary and secondary education; study of the English language is compulsory from the fourth year of the primary school to the first year of the Lyceum. English and French, are compulsory for all three grades of the Gymnasium and in the first class of the upper secondary. At the second year of the Lyceum students choose two foreign languages out of seven (i.e. English (the most favourite option), French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Turkish) to be studied during the second and third year of the Lyceum. Teaching periods are of 40 or 45 minutes. In public schools teaching takes place in mixed ability groups. In contrast, private schools may use setting by ability or aptitude if they wish.

Since Cyprus is a multilingual country, a country in which a range of languages is spoken, it is not surprising that many Cypriots should be plurilingual people who speak and/or understand several languages. There is, however, concern among parents and educators that standards in foreign languages in public secondary education are not sufficiently high. They attribute this to a number of possible factors, including limited curricular time and the quality of teaching.

Private schools

About 12% of students in 2001 (an increase from about 10% in 1999) (CES p.47) were in full-time private secondary education; this is almost double the proportion in the United Kingdom, another country with a strong private sector. There are 34 private secondary schools compared with 68 Gymnasiums and 39 Lyceums in the public sector. The success of private schools as perceived by parents and students is attributable to certain factors. These include: selection for entrance which allows some private schools to admit the most able pupils only; clear-cut curriculum programmes, which are demanding and supportive;

continuous preparation of pupils to meet successfully international standards and tests (for example, FCE, IGCSE, TOEFL); and to bridge the perceived gap between the level of the *apolytirion* (school-leaving examination) and that of the university entrance examination. Some private schools have lessons in the afternoon until about 1600; this means these students do not have to get involved in *frontistiria* (see below).

Tuition in languages is particularly sought after, not only for its own sake but as a factor in career success, not least in gaining entrance to the University of Cyprus, or to universities in Greece, or to private colleges in Cyprus. Most private schools (those of the ‘similar’⁴ or ‘different’ type – CR p.15) have flexibility in the allocation and distribution of time for languages. They may offer, for example, a stronger emphasis on foreign languages, reflected in as many as six periods per week of English from the beginning of secondary education; integration of periods for modern and classical Greek to provide some curricular flexibility; use of English as the language of instruction in one or more subject(s) for some students. Some private schools may allow an option in a foreign language to run with as few as five students, whereas in public schools the minimum group size is 15, although there are a number of exceptions.

Private tuition (frontistiria)

As well as full-time private education, supplementary private tuition outside school hours is widespread. Most parents (estimated at over 80%) whose children attend public schools resort to seeking private classes (*frontistiria*) for them in the afternoon; this involves parents spending considerable amounts of time and money taking their children to these extra classes. The extra tuition in languages could place at a disadvantage the substantial minority of students whose parents, for financial or other reasons, rely on statutory education alone to take their children to the highest standard of which they are capable (although additional afternoon classes for children of school age are also available in the State Institutes for Further Education – see 3.3.11 below). There are about 500 officially registered organizations offering private tuition; probably an equivalent number is not registered. The quality of the tuition varies since only the recognised centres are subject to quality assurance. The pursuit of additional tuition involves most children in effect in a ‘second school day’ after a long morning spent in a public school, which raises the question whether this is conducive to efficient learning. Strong views are held in Cyprus about *frontistiria* by both representatives of civil society, including parents, and by educators.

Time allocations for the study of languages in public schools

The school curriculum in many parts of Europe is under pressure to allocate time effectively and efficiently to subjects, particularly as new areas are added to the curriculum, such as information and communication technology (ICT) and health education. Not surprisingly, this is an issue in Cyprus also. A substantial proportion of teaching periods is allocated to language education, particularly in primary schools. Greek has most time in primary schools (10-14 periods per week). A foreign language, English, is introduced in Year 4 (2 periods per week). In lower secondary schools (Gymnasium) modern Greek accounts for five periods per week and classical Greek for 3.5 periods per week compared with an average of just over three for English (3-3-3.5) and two for French as the two compulsory modern foreign languages. Overall in the Gymnasium about 22% of curricular time is spent on Greek and about 14% on foreign languages. In upper secondary education

⁴ “The private secondary education schools are classified, according to certain criteria, into three types: a) schools identical to public secondary schools, b) those similar to public secondary schools and c) those different from public secondary schools”.

(Lyceum) modern Greek accounts for an average of more than four periods per week (4-4-5) and classical Greek is compulsory for the first two years (3-1-0).

It is understandable that great importance should be attached to Greek (as a language of school education) since parents and employers expect high standards of literacy and the teaching of Greek language, literature and culture, both classical and modern is a vehicle for maintaining the national heritage and identity for the Greek community.

The following analysis by broad areas of the curriculum illustrates the overall distribution of time.

In the case of the Gymnasium, if Greek (modern and classical) with a total of 25 periods over three years is taken as the base (100 %), the following relationship emerges:

Mathematics:	44 % (11 periods)
Physics, Chemistry, Biology together:	32 % (8 periods)
English:	38 % (9.5 periods)
French:	24 % (6 periods)

The number of periods for mathematics and all natural sciences together is considerably below the number of periods for Greek alone. The number of periods for English and French together is smaller still.

Similarly in the Lyceum, the number of compulsory periods for mathematics and all natural sciences together does not exceed the number of periods for Greek. The number of periods compulsory for all modern languages together equals the number of periods for Greek.

Cyprus is an ambitious new member of the European Union: it is seeking to widen the range of foreign languages taught in secondary schools and to raise standards in them. It is also considering the earlier introduction of foreign languages into the primary school, perhaps beginning English in Year 3 instead of Year 4 and possibly introducing a Second Foreign Language later in the primary school. As in any educational system, some increased flexibility would have to be found to accommodate changes of this nature.

3.3 Specific aspects of language education

3.3.1 English

Foreign language teaching is one of the five pillars of the Cyprus educational system (CR p.19).

English is very prominent in Cyprus. It has been compulsory in schools for decades and is therefore not really in competition with other foreign languages. English as a 'second language' has a major role in Cypriot society (to be distinguished from the term 'Second Foreign Language' in the school curriculum – see the definitions of first, second etc language in the *Guide* (pp. 49-51).

It is estimated that more English is used in Cyprus today than at any previous time. Some government reports continue to be written in English and a significant proportion of official and legal documents still only exists in an English text (CR p.31). English is omnipresent in everyday life, through the media (TV- films in original version, music, publicity etc.), tourism (50% of tourists are native speakers of English (CR p.31)), and the influence of global American culture. English operates as a *lingua franca* for 'out group' communication for migrant groups of non-Greek-speaking background (CR p.31) and for tourists. Many Cypriots have family ties with relatives among the estimated 180,000 Cypriots resident in the United Kingdom (CR p.29), notably in London.

Thus the learning of English is far from being dependent on the classroom and most Cypriots have the opportunity to practise their knowledge of the language, or at the very least their receptive competence, through regular exposure to English in everyday life.

English is a compulsory subject for all students between the ages of 10 and 15. At present, it is the only foreign language taught in primary schools. There are few specialist teachers of English in primary schools, and these may teach only English in several classes and even in several schools. Parents often consider insufficient the level of English reached in schools. This is one of the reasons why even young children may take private lessons in the afternoon. Some take these afternoon classes because their parents wish them to begin the study of the foreign language earlier than the fourth year. Of course, starting earlier in school would raise the question of where the time for the additional subject could be found.

About 75 per cent of children of pre-school age attend private nursery schools; English is taught in some of these. It is uncertain how many children reach primary school having received prior instruction in English, but there are evidently wide differences among them in their prior experience of, and their proficiency in, English.

English is the sole language of instruction in 17 of the 34 private secondary schools in Cyprus. It is one of two languages of instruction in another four schools. It is the language of instruction in several Schools of Higher Education (CR p.14) and in most private ones. English has prestige as a means of access to universities in the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere.

3.3.2 The second foreign language in schools

Cyprus shows its considerable commitment to foreign languages by including two languages as core subjects for three years in the Gymnasium and later, at the Lyceum, by the provision of a choice of 7 languages.

Between the ages of 12-15, both English and French are compulsory. About three periods per week (3-3-3.5) are allocated for English and two for French.

In the Lyceum, English and French were both compulsory subjects until 2000. Pupils now have a choice of two from a wider range of foreign languages after the first year (see below). The time allocation for the first year is three periods for English and two for French.

From September 2001, a minimum of four periods (this can be increased through ‘optional streaming’) was allocated to foreign languages in the second and third years (Forms B and C) of the Lyceum to foreign languages for students to choose two languages from English, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Turkish. This move to widen the range of languages offered and giving access to a third foreign language is consistent with the diversification of the foreign language curriculum which both the Council of Europe (promoting plurilingualism) and the European Union (‘mother tongue plus two’) have advocated in different ways for a number of years. As can happen in any educational system in the first years of a significant curricular change, a number of important issues have emerged in Cyprus, in this case mainly as a result of the options actually selected by students exercising greater freedom of choice.

The opportunity to start a new language has proved to be attractive. Given the special position which English occupies in education and society in Cyprus, it was scarcely affected by the new options system; the impact was felt mainly by French, which is apparently often considered by students and parents to be a difficult language. For reasons which are not entirely clear, Italian has unexpectedly proved to be extremely popular with students. In the second year of the Lyceum in 2003-2004, for example, over 4500 students

were enrolled for Italian compared with fewer than 2000 for French (CR p.21). Some educators believe that there is a tendency for students to choose a beginners' language or an 'easier' language for the last two years of the Lyceum as a means of gaining higher marks. Some believe interest in new languages, such as Italian and Spanish, has been aroused in the younger generation by sub-titled films.

The pattern of choices produced a situation in which there were very large numbers of students enrolled for Italian, for which Cyprus has very few specialist teachers, and reduced numbers for French, in which there is an ample supply of specialist teachers. In 2003-2004, for example, there were 205 teachers of French and 38 teachers of Italian (CR p.21). Various emergency measures were proposed for Italian with varying degrees of success, including the recruitment of temporary teachers of Italian (including some from Greece). The situation has now improved somewhat.

Some parents and teachers are concerned that the languages taken from the second year (Form B) of the Lyceum cannot be learned properly in only two years and would argue that this amount of study cannot go beyond an introduction to the respective language. There is concern also that changing languages after the first year (Form A) could weaken their knowledge of English or French.

There is a concern that plurilingualism could mean that learning 'too many' languages could result in not knowing any language very well. The concept and the value of 'partial competences' (emphasizing some skills, for example listening and speaking, more than others) are not widely understood in Cyprus. Many parents would prefer their children to learn one language very well rather than have partial competences in a range of languages.

There is considerable debate in Cyprus about how the principles of choice and diversification, involving a change of language(s) in upper secondary education, can be maintained together with quality in teaching and learning.

3.3.3 Minority Languages

A) Indigenous minorities

Since its foundation in 1960, the Republic of Cyprus has made special provision to extend moral and financial support for its indigenous traditional minorities, Armenians (0.3% of the population), Maronites (0.6) and Latins (0.1), in order to enable them to maintain their language and cultural heritage. They have access to equal opportunities in education with their fellow Cypriot citizens, and have the right to attend public schools which make special arrangements or private schools where their education is subsidised by the government.

Armenian is recognised as a non-territorial minority language (within the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, ratified by Cyprus in 2002). The Melkonian Educational Institute, one of the most prestigious private schools in Cyprus, is the only secondary school considered as community school and cultural centre for the Armenians of Cyprus. It is the only educational establishment in Europe, where Armenian language (Western Standard Armenian), culture and traditions constitute the core of its curriculum. As a boarding school operating since 1926, it is the only secondary school that promotes plurilingualism and pluriculturalism to its pupils of Armenian descent whose vast majority come from nearby countries, mainly in Europe. It provides instruction in Armenian, Greek, English and teaches a range of other languages.

The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation broadcasts daily programmes in Armenian and weekly programmes in Greek for the Maronite and Latin communities.

B) New minorities

Cyprus has attracted migrant workers and asylum seekers from a range of countries in recent decades, and particularly in the last three to four years. In 1999, there were some 41,000 foreign workers in Cyprus (CR p.31). In 2002, the population included 72,000 permanently resident foreign nationals (10.1% of the total population). In the same year, 4411 asylum seekers arrived in Cyprus; this represented an increase of 364%, the highest rate of increase among the European Union accession countries.

In recent years, the influx of ‘new’ minorities from outside Cyprus has presented a new challenge to which the education service is having to adjust, sometimes at very short notice, as in the case of an influx of Georgians in the area of Paphos in 2004. Some new minorities, such as Russian speakers, are likely to stay; others, such as people in domestic service from the Phillipines or Sri Lanka, may be more transient residents. Some migrant groups are more likely than others to be accompanied by children.

The most recent available statistics (CR p.30) indicate that the 12 “most popular” languages spoken as first languages by students from newly arrived minorities who attend compulsory primary education in Cyprus are: English (36%), Russian (30), Bulgarian (4), Romanian (4), German (3), Arabic (3), Swedish (2), French (2), Finnish (2), Georgian (2), Phillipino (2) and Spanish (1). A range of other languages accounts for 9% of the population of ‘new’ minorities in primary schools.

Although numbers are not huge, new minorities are proportionately significant in some of the main towns. They are concentrated in the districts of Limassol (27% of pupils of primary school age, CR p.29) and Nicosia (29%), where in some primary schools they make up about half of the population. Such schools provide special tuition in Greek as a foreign language and there is a strong commitment to developing communication skills in Greek to promote inclusion in the community. The biggest single group comprises Russians and migrants from other republics of the former USSR. It has been possible to make some special provision, including some mother tongue support, for this group, but there are many other groups. This is reflected by the fact that 96 nationalities were identified in a survey of primary schools in 2003 using statistics from 2000 (CR p.29-30). Apart from this survey, there has been no detailed audit of the backgrounds and needs of these minorities, which are described by the Ministry of Education and Culture, not as ‘foreign language speakers’ (...), but as ‘other language speaking’ (...), a term defined as meaning users of one or more languages other than Greek as the mother tongue and second language (CR p.29).

Although there is commitment and goodwill among teachers, there has been little systematic sharing of strategies about how to cope with this linguistic and educational challenge. However, a study was produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture about principles and issues in intercultural education. In a few schools common activities are organised to value the mother tongue and cultural heritage of ‘other speaking’ children. There are at present no plans to teach ‘other language speaking’ children their own first language.

3.3.4 Relations among languages

There are few links in any sector between the teaching and learning of Greek on the one hand and foreign languages on the other. Similarly, any links between the ‘core’ foreign languages, English and French, have been incidental and informal, although inspectors are emphasising the importance of strengthening the links. There are active Associations for teachers of English and French and associations of teachers of German, Italian, Spanish and Russian have recently been formed, although there is no umbrella organisation for the

(foreign) language teaching profession as a whole. There are separate publications for teachers of English and French, but no overall professional journal for language teachers to disseminate points of mutual interest or transferable good practice across languages. The absence of such media leaves teachers of other foreign languages and teachers of the new linguistic minorities with limited points of dialogue with colleagues with complementary interests and expertise.

In the English Curriculum for the Gymnasium (revised edition Nicosia, June 1999), the 'Transversal Aims' include promoting the 'interrelation with other subjects in the school curriculum for the provision of a more balanced general education and the enrichment of students' experiential background (cross-curricular approach)'. In the 'Basic Aims and Purposes of Teaching Modern Greek at the Eniaio Lykeio', the third 'aim of Linguistic Teaching' is 'to identify and account for influences of other languages on the Modern Greek language'. There has been no tradition of cooperation and cross-curricular work among language teachers. They have been trained as experts in the subject (or one of the subjects) they studied at university and are often not aware of the value of taking a holistic view for the benefit of the pupils. Some seminars have now been offered to raise awareness in this respect.

3.3.5 Education for citizenship in a multilingual and multicultural society

Cyprus has long been a multilingual and multicultural society with established groups of different identities. Recognition of this situation is reflected to some extent in the principles behind the curriculum. For example, the fundamental assumption behind the core curriculum for the Gymnasium is that pupils should be provided with 'the knowledge, skills and attitudes that empower them to understand themselves (i.e. self-knowledge), their own language and culture and to relate meaningfully to people who are linguistically and culturally different and with whom pupils choose to communicate in various situations' (The Language Syllabuses, MEC, 2000) (CR p. 12).

However, awareness of multiculturalism and plurilingualism and of their links with citizenship remains to be further developed, although a European Language Portfolio (ELP) is being developed and should help in this respect. The ELP model was designed and constructed by a national committee set up at the MOEC. It will be implemented at Lower Secondary Education (Gymnasia) once it has been accredited by the Council of Europe ELP Validation Committee.

The content of pre-service courses at the Pedagogical Institute now includes components dealing with intercultural education and the European Dimension (CR p. 20-23) but there is scope for further development in these areas.

The aims of the Eniaio Lykeio include 'developing responsible, democratic and law-abiding citizens' and 'the preservation of (...) the universal ideals of freedom, justice and peace upon which civilisation is based' (CR p. 13). It may be that, as the Eniaio Lykeio becomes more established, these aims will be explicitly developed in the context of language education and will permeate the Gymnasium also.

3.3.6 Teacher education (pre- and in-service)

Teachers join the profession through different routes for primary and secondary education. Training for primary education is through a four-year degree course at the University which includes practical work in schools during one semester in the third year and one in the fourth. Teachers are trained for teaching the full range of subjects in the primary school, although they may specialise in arts, science or mathematics. There is no foreign language

specialisation available, but the system does not allow for specialist secondary school teachers of a foreign language to teach their specialism in primary schools.

Secondary school teachers qualify by taking a degree in a specialist subject (or subjects) followed by a pre-service course at the Pedagogical Institute lasting one academic year. This pre-service programme shows a balance between work in the classroom (two or three days) under the supervision and guidance of the trainers of the Pedagogical Institute and/or of the headteacher, mentor and teachers at school and course work at the Pedagogical Institute. The Pre-service training course at the Pedagogical Institute takes place either in the morning or afternoon according to their own choice. The teachers who attend in the morning have lessons twice a week and the rest of the week they are placed in schools and work with their mentor. Those who attend in the afternoon, twice a week, are appointed in schools in the morning.

Trainees have a separate specialist methodology course in one of Greek or English or French. There are at present few common, or jointly taught, elements in this training which might promote a holistic view of languages. Applicants with a 'double major' or 'combined honours' in two languages must opt for one of them for their training and subsequent career, even if they are willing to teach both. Consideration could be given to allowing teachers who are qualified in two subjects (for example, if they have a 'double major') to teach both of them.

Pre-service training is not provided by the Pedagogical Institute in foreign languages other than French and English since only these languages are core subjects in secondary schools. However, informally, the Institute has been providing training for Italian. This concentration on English and French is reflected in in-service training. Consequently, when the pattern of options shifted unexpectedly in 2003 towards other languages, there was an insufficient pool of teachers prepared to cope with the demand and considerable numbers of unqualified or partially qualified teachers were engaged to close the gap.

When teachers have passed their pre-service training, they are placed on the official waiting list until a post becomes available. Graduates with a Master's degree or a Doctorate are exempted from some courses and are not obliged to take pre-service courses. The Educational Service Commission, an independent body nominated by the President of the Republic, has responsibility for the appointment of teachers in schools. The Commission assesses the applications and the documents submitted by the teachers and, if those fulfil the conditions of the law, the names are put on the waiting list with a number of points awarded according to their qualifications, extra qualifications (Master's degree or Doctorate), and any previous teaching experience.

The waiting period, particularly for secondary school teachers, can cover many years. In 2004, there were 1004 applicants on the list for English against an average of 13.6 permanent appointments per year and for French 235 against 8.4. Teachers on the waiting list may teach in the private sector (where a specialist first degree is the minimum qualification) or may join other occupations in the meantime. As a result, teachers joining public sector education may have had no experience of it, or of teaching elsewhere, since completing their training perhaps many years before.

In-service courses for serving teachers are provided by the Pedagogical Institute (optional) and also by the Inspectorate (optional and compulsory). Therefore, language teachers taking up their first post many years after completing their pre-service training may not be required to undertake in-service training at that point for refreshment and updating.

3.3.7 Potential for innovation in schools

A number of educational changes were implemented to contribute to the strengthening of the European dimension in Cyprus in the run-up to the accession of the country to the European Union on 1 May 2004. Special attention was given to the drawing up of new curricula, the creation of specialised rooms equipped with modern technology, the introduction of information technology in schools and the learning of foreign languages (CR p.7).

The recent development of the comprehensive Lyceum, the Eniaio Lykeio, has also been a stimulus to innovation. It has promoted, for example, a common core in the first year (Form A) and a broadening of the curriculum to seek a better match with students' interests, and development of a wider range of teaching and learning styles (including a more student-centred approach, differentiation, teamwork, autonomy (including the use of ICT and libraries) and creativity. Language education stands to gain much from such changes. An evaluation survey in 2003 (circulated in 2004) of the first three years of implementation based on a sample of 11 Eniaio Lykeio provided evidence of progress (including a positive response to Language Rooms) across a number of areas, but highlighted the need for further work in others, such as differentiated teaching. Evaluation of this reform has pointed the way to a number of supporting measures including school-based and school-focused workshops to promote cooperative working among teachers, the further development of the observation techniques of inspectors, and more focused in-service training based on demonstration lessons and planning of sequences of lessons.

The creation of 'Language Rooms' in secondary schools, which was given a new impetus in the European Year of Languages 2001, is a valuable and interesting innovation. Their creation reflects the principles of the Eniaio Lykeio and a belief that language teaching and learning need dedicated space in which a wide range of media and activities can be deployed to meet the needs of the specialism and develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and other linguistic competences. Each Lyceum has one or two Language Rooms and they are gradually being introduced into Gymnasiums. Typically, a Language Room includes overhead projectors, computers linked to the Internet, audio-visual facilities, enhanced display space and flexible furniture which can be configured to promote a range of teaching styles, including collaborative group work. Immediate access to reference material, printers and photocopiers within the Language Rooms enables students to work independently and also to take away the products of their work for private study. The enhanced opportunities for teaching and learning offer teachers a stimulus to be innovative, to share ideas and to widen their range of strategies.

3.3.8 Coherence, quality and assessment

The Unified Nine Year Education programme which aims at ensuring continuity and coherence between Primary and Lower Secondary Education sets out common overall aims for the six years of primary education and the three years of the Gymnasium (CR p.8), but there is a case for making more explicit how curricular continuity between primary and secondary education can be assured at the operational level. In Greek for example, the aims for the Gymnasium are more formal and less 'communicative' than those for primary schools. In English, it is not evident from the CR (p. 24) how the primary curriculum relates to that of the Gymnasium. Reference is made (CR p.25) to the use of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment in primary schools, but it is not clear how the outcomes of this are used to inform teachers at the Gymnasium about the experiences and progress of the children joining their classes from the earlier phase.

In secondary education, syllabuses and examinations are determined by each language separately. For example, the English curriculum for the Gymnasium is based on the acquisition of communicative competence and refers to the Threshold Level. The French curriculum reproduces the contents of a textbook for French as a foreign language published in France but there is no clear theoretical basis for this programme. There is no generic core of aims and objectives to ensure consistency in expectations across the language specialisms. There is no other common scale of descriptors of language competence to apply consistently across languages, or to set expectations at crucial points of transition (primary school- Gymnasium - Lyceum).

A European Language Portfolio is being developed (see also 3.3.5 above), initially for students in the Gymnasium. There was a pilot in 11 schools in 2003-2004 and Portfolios are to be provided free for all Gymnasiums.

Great store is set by certification in Cypriot society. In languages, certificates from external/international bodies are often regarded as a necessary supplement to qualifications in the public sector of education. Establishing equivalences between different qualifications, as in other subjects, presents a considerable challenge, for example, for the Educational Service Commission.

Examinations are set by inspectors and teachers for each language for the *apolytirion* and the university entrance examination separately. Candidates' scripts are marked by teachers from other schools.

3.3.9 Match to economic needs and employment

Given its position at a crossroads between Europe and the Middle East and its limited natural resources, Cyprus has sought successfully to become a significant player in service industries in the region, notably in finance and banking and in tourism. In this situation, there is great awareness in Cyprus of the relevance of education for careers. There is a premium on effective communication and languages are seen as very important. As well as SMG, in which high standards of literacy and oracy are sought, English occupies a prime position in the minds of employers. For example, all but the most junior jobs in banking require a working knowledge of English. For senior posts in that industry, French, Russian or Turkish can be important alongside English. A study in 2000 across a range of employers (CR p. 41) showed demand for English to be overwhelming with 'very few instances of Russian, German and French in that order'. There is increasing awareness that languages other than English will be needed as Cyprus establishes itself in the European Union. German and French are considered to be important in that context; this is reflected in a recent decision of the Parliament to make one language from English, French and German at a good standard an entry requirement alongside SMG for all new entrants to teaching regardless of their subject specialism.

Despite the proximity of the Middle East, there seems to be little demand for Arabic at present.

3.3.10 Language qualifications for employment in the public service

The recognition of qualifications and recruitment for all personnel for the education service is supervised by the Educational Service Commission. It requires applicants from all disciplines to have a very good knowledge of SMG which students who have graduated from the Lyceum with the *apolytirion* are deemed to have, and a good knowledge of English or French or German. A 'good' knowledge of a foreign language is not further defined in the criteria, but an exhaustive list of acceptable qualifications has been drawn up

from those offered by, for example, the United Kingdom examination bodies, the CIEP, the Alliance Française and the Goethe Institut.

For posts in the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, a very good level of SMG and of English is required. The examinations are set on demand by language inspectors from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the University of Cyprus.

Standard descriptors, such as those in the CEFR levels, are not used to ensure comparability of standards across languages or areas of the public service, for example to define what a 'good' level means.

3.3.11 Adult education

Educational Centres (EC) for adults (minimum age 15) have existed in Cyprus since the 1960s and cater for a wide range of subjects and interests. They are organised by the Primary Department of the Ministry of Education and Culture and provide opportunities for 'lifelong learning for all citizens and to encourage their participation in a wider Europe' (CR p.10). In 2002-2003, 18,000 people were enrolled in the 240 Centres. Eighteen per cent of the enrolments were for foreign languages. The languages offered were English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Bulgarian, Russian and Turkish.

There are about 40 State Institutes for Further Education (SIFE) (CES p. 15); they offer programmes to primary and secondary pupils as well as to adults (see also 3.2). They operate in the afternoon/evening, usually on the premises of Lyceums. More than 14,000 people attend classes annually at these centres which are staffed by qualified teachers. Languages constitute the most important subject area, but a range of other disciplines is also taught. Enrolments for English account for about 80 per cent of language courses but some 1200 people follow courses in French.

Courses in Turkish are now being organized and have attracted considerable interest: between 500 and 750 people were enrolled in 2004. Tuition in Greek is provided free of charge for some 300 Turkish Cypriots. The transport for the learners attending classes at the Government Institute in Paralimni (94 in 2004) is paid for by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The centres also teach Greek as a foreign language (60-70 teachers involved) for new arrivals in the country and others interested in the Greek language. These courses are free for students of Greek origin who do not speak Greek.

The fees for adult classes are about 110 Cypriot pounds per year (about €200), and three to four times cheaper than the prices currently charged in the private sector. Private establishments sometimes complain about 'unfair competition'.

Public adult education through the State Institute for Further Education offers a flexible and non-elitist means of meeting social needs in language while at the same time offering good guarantees of quality and official recognition, although these courses do not fall under the pedagogical responsibilities of inspectors.

The public adult education service is to be responsible for teaching Greek to substantial numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers, under the programmes sponsored by the European Union and the United Nations.

The legislation has been passed to create an Open University of Cyprus (CR p.14) but it is not yet operational.

3.3.12 Higher Education

About half the age group in Cyprus goes to university after the Lyceum: this is a much higher proportion than in many European countries and represents a considerable achievement.

Cyprus has a long-standing tradition of sending its students abroad for their university studies. Although the University of Cyprus was founded in 1992 and has since then developed courses covering most school subjects including languages, only 28% of the overall number of higher education students in the academic year 2000 - 2001 studied in Cyprus, compared with 39% in Greece. Nearly one third of the students left for a country where Greek is not spoken: 25% took up their studies in the United Kingdom or the United States and 7% went to non-English-speaking European countries

The language of instruction in the University of Cyprus is Greek, but the textbooks used are often of English or American origin. The languages of instruction in the Technological University of Cyprus and the Open University of Cyprus are to be Greek and Turkish (CR p.13).

Access to universities is controlled by an entrance examination which serves as a ranking instrument. This is organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture in association with the University. In 2002, out of 8004 candidates, 5558 were admitted to the University of Cyprus or to universities in Greece. The entrance examinations for the University in Greek and in foreign languages are pitched at a level somewhat above that of the *apolytirion* and examinations are set by inspectors from the Ministry of Education and Culture, teachers from secondary education and faculty members of the University. The standards expected across the languages involved are not determined by common criteria such as those of the CEFR.

The competitive entrance system is also reflected in language courses: for example, it is apparently easier to gain entrance to read French than to read English and harder to gain entrance to read French rather than to read Turkish.

During their studies, BA and BSc students of any discipline at the University of Cyprus are required to follow three semestral language courses (in other words 45 hours x 3). The Language Centre, which manages these enrolments, offers courses at present in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Many students continue with English, but choices are becoming more diversified (for example there is a strong demand for French and for Spanish, whereas in the second year of the Lyceum it is Italian which seems to be the most attractive language). This distribution of choice of languages seems to indicate that students see more clearly the value of having an extended plurilingual repertoire.

The Department of Education is responsible for the training of future teachers for primary schools. It is not stated in the CR what level of competence in English is expected of these future teachers (to teach in Years 4,5,6 in the primary school) or whether they have a specific theoretical preparation (for example in teaching young children), or what amount of practical work in schools they undertake. The Department of English studies devotes 10 per cent of the total timetable to an introduction to the methodology of language teaching (two or three semestral courses) with the main part of the training devoted to the study of linguistics and literature.

The academic staff consider in fact that their role is to give a broad cultural and intellectual training in this specialism which can be reinforced later through specific training in professional competences.

The University offers a BA degree in Byzantine and Modern Greek Language and Literature and one in Turkish Studies (students may follow either a History and Politics or a Linguistics and Literature route). University teachers are working on the preparation and launch of a Master's degree in European Studies within which languages will have a significant place.

This analysis of the current situation of languages in the Cyprus educational system underlines the fact that civil society recognises the importance of languages in the context of the island's geopolitical position and its economic future and a number of important steps have been taken to promote plurilingualism. The Republic of Cyprus as a multi-lingual society has considerable potential which can be exploited further to promote plurilingualism among its citizens.

Chapter 4 of this Profile explores ways in which these linguistic assets could be developed in the future in the context of the aims of the Council of Europe drawing upon its policy instruments.

4. Possible future directions

4.1 Introduction

The stance adopted is based on the statements on plurilingualism⁵ in the Recommendations (in particular R (1998) 6) and associated documents of the Council of Europe to which all 46 Member states subscribe and which are set out in more detail in various Council of Europe documents, and particularly in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (see Appendices 1 and 2).

4.2 Coherence in national Education policy for all languages

4.2.1 Addressing the issues

The teaching of languages is not simply an educational issue concerning pedagogy and other areas of interest to professionals in the field. It is concerned with wider social policy issues such as:

- the coexistence of different cultural and linguistic groups within or across national borders;
- the development of a sense of belonging to Europe, based on shared values and the principles of democratic citizenship;
- social equity and equal access to languages for all citizens regardless of their social or cultural background.

These concerns point to specific issues including:

- the relationship between language teaching and learning and: democratic citizenship in Europe; social cohesion; and equality of opportunity;
- language teaching for specific groups, such as national minorities or migrants;

⁵ The distinction between “plurilingualism” and “multilingualism” (see 1.2 above) is very difficult to make in Modern Greek since the word “πολυγλωσσιμός” [polyglossismos] translates into both expressions.

- ‘national capacity’ and the economic and geographical situation of a country;
- the coherence of language education (across the curriculum and over the different phases of education);
- the setting of goals for language teaching and for language education policy in general, taking account of the concerns of civil society.

In any country, responding to such issues involves a number of steps, including research, in the field of language education focused on:

- evaluation of the impact of policies for language education;
- relationships between language teaching of different types (mother tongue/national and foreign languages; different foreign languages; languages taught at school, at university and in the business world);
- the respective contributions of the public and private sectors of education and their interplay;
- the drawing up of programmes of study for languages and the role of the CEFR in this process.

As in some other countries, plurilingualism for the individual and a society of plurilingual people are aims which cannot be met fully by the current vision of teaching of languages in Cyprus and by reliance on English as an international language. Many people in Cyprus are aware of these matters but others are not. An informed public debate could be a means of making all partners in education and civil society, particularly parents, fully aware of the significance of the issue. This *Profile* offers an important stimulus for such a debate.

4.2.2 Medium- and long-term planning

Although the vision of a society of plurilingual people is hardly realised so far in any Council of Europe country, Cyprus has a rich potential. Planning for language education for this vision needs to be realistic. While some changes would require relatively small adjustments, most suggestions might be best considered as medium- or long-term goals. There are, for example, in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (Chapter 6) suggestions which require radical re-consideration of current curricula, and which might lead to the development of a long-term strategy, as well as specific proposals which can be implemented more quickly.

There is a complex relationship between national capacity in languages and the specificity of local concerns with language and identity – with respect to the official languages, those of traditional minorities, and ‘new’ minority languages, for example, but also with respect to economic needs for languages for economic purposes. If one looks at language education policy holistically rather than simply focusing on discrete areas of provision, this complex relationship becomes less difficult to understand and address.

There are tools available for carrying out language audits in a locality, whether large or small, to describe existing plurilingualism. Similarly there are tools for investigating the needs of individuals and/or institutions and businesses in civil society. These are described in Chapter 4 of the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*.

Such tools and approaches are an important part of medium- and long-term planning which takes the specific conditions of varied educational environments into account.

4.3 Curriculum Coherence and Flexibility

4.3.1 Maximising the potential of Cyprus as a multilingual society

Cyprus is a multilingual society which has a strong basis for developing the plurilingualism of its citizens. Its Constitution established two official languages, Greek and Turkish, and for many of its citizens English operates as a second, rather than as a foreign, language. Virtually everyone (at least in urban areas) has some knowledge of English and many people in professional life, though not ‘bilingual’, have an excellent command of English alongside their mother tongue.

The school curriculum has for some time provided a Second Foreign Language for all; choice in upper secondary education offers a vehicle for students to acquire a third (or even fourth) language (see below); other languages may be added through adult education. However, the understandable focus on English after the official language has resulted in a somewhat limited awareness of the potential to extend plurilingualism. It would be more constructive to regard the learning of English as a step on the road to plurilingualism which values all languages than to simply assume that ‘English is enough’.

An important, but less recognised, potential is represented by the languages of the new minorities in Cypriot society. As in a number of countries, there is as yet no overall policy about how such languages might be developed in public education. A more conscious effort to value and support the cultural heritage and enrichment which the range of languages brings would represent an asset for an outward-looking Cyprus in its dealings with other countries. The European Language Portfolio could play an important part in this process of valuing all languages.

Cypriot Dialect of Greek (CDG) and Standard Modern Greek (SMG)

The CR emphasises that CDG is commonly used for everyday oral communication. The use of SMG, as the language of instruction, is expected to take place in the first year of schooling when teachers use teaching materials adapted for this purpose. Some people attribute deficiencies in performance in SMG (in particular in oral expression) to the influence of CDG, and many to the influence of modern media. It is important to clarify this point through objective surveys. Such surveys could provide a description of the forms of CDG used in lessons (by both teachers and pupils) and the specific problems which may occur in acquiring SMG (such as lexical usage and aspects of pronunciation or intonation which are deemed to be defective) in order to establish which are genuine difficulties and which are simply the result of value judgements made by speakers of SMG.

It can also be said that the difficulty of adjusting to SMG may be exaggerated. Dialects feature strongly in many European countries, and the clash of dialect and standard language has ceased to be a major problem, not least because children will have already heard the standard language, possibly for hundreds of hours, on television before starting school.

In order to reach some conclusions about these matters, qualitative and quantitative data are needed (see *Guide* 4.2). In Cyprus, as in many other member states, such data are lacking at present.

Principles which merit consideration for the early years of primary school education include the following:

- make pupils aware that successful communication with Greeks all over the world is based on the common acceptance of SMG;
- make pupils aware of the varieties of SMG and CDG spoken and accept the use of CDG in some situations;

- foster through these approaches a feeling of identity, belonging and pride;
- encourage the teacher to set an example by using SMG in classroom conversations without reproaching pupils for using CDG;
- make clear the importance of using spoken and written SMG well for the pupils' careers;
- emphasise that a thorough knowledge of SMG is a prerequisite for informed reading across a range of disciplines;

Turkish

Whatever political decisions emerge over time about the future of the island of Cyprus as a whole, improving their knowledge of each other's language is an important factor in promoting mutual understanding between the Greek and Turkish communities.

As noted above (3.1), before 1974 such linguistic knowledge was not unusual across the island. Some important steps have been taken recently to introduce Turkish into the education system, such as making the language available as an option in upper secondary education and also in adult education

The response to this increased provision has been encouraging and offers a basis for further development. The initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture aim to increase awareness among the population of the importance of intercultural dialogue; it is important that this dialogue should continue to be promoted.

Equity and access

If language learning is to be of economic value to the country and of career benefit for individuals and to promote social inclusion, it is important in any democratic society that citizens should have equal access to it. State institutes for further education contribute towards ensuring equal access through lower fees and institutional welfare as well as sponsorship measures.

Data are not available to show whether or not there are social inequalities in access to language learning, although the increased experience of it provided by private schools and by additional supplementary private tuition (*frontistiria*) is bound to affect equality of opportunity. It follows that the chances of gaining access to higher education could be affected for the 88 per cent of students who attend public school and in particular for the 15 per cent of these who do not receive supplementary private tuition. Within private schools and within supplementary tuition, there are likely to be considerable variations in the amount and quality of teaching which students receive. At the same time, there are no data by which to judge the effectiveness and efficiency (or otherwise) of additional tuition in languages, although reservations have been expressed about the likely benefits resulting from the considerable extra investment by parents, and about the possible demotivation of students working under too much pressure.

The *frontistiria* issue extends well beyond tuition in languages: for example, it is not unrelated to the principle of selection, as opposed to open access, for university. However, objective evaluative studies could be commissioned on the impact of private study on knowledge, skills and understanding in languages. If resources permit, provision in the public sector could be increased, for example in the afternoons or on (international) summer schools, in order to provide an alternative to supplementary private tuition.

There are various ways in which the effectiveness and efficiency of public education can be improved (see 4.3.4 below). If this can be done, the gap between the public schools and the

(best) private schools could be reduced and the standing of national certification alongside international certificates improved. Parents would become less anxious about relying on public schools without resorting to supplementary tuition to ‘top it up’. As in a number of areas, there is a need for an informed debate about these matters.

4.3.2 Organisation, complementarity and flexibility

In order to maximise potential for plurilingualism, coherence in policy needs to be reflected in coherence in implementation in terms of organisation, both vertical (through ages and stages) and horizontal (across areas of the curriculum), so that learners may benefit from the complementary contributions of different language specialisms.

A continuum of language education

The professional commitment and the specialist knowledge of language educators, whether teachers of Greek or Turkish or English or French are often impressive. At the same time, it is surprising, although not unusual, that a high proportion of language teachers see themselves simply as teachers of a particular language, rather than as professionals working on a continuum of language education. There has been little shared planning, or even discussion, between (say) teachers of Greek on the one hand and teachers of foreign languages on the other, or between teachers of English and French, or between primary and secondary school teachers in language education. Organisational structures and the ways in which syllabuses are developed seem to reinforce this tendency.

Inspection makes a valuable contribution in Cyprus to promoting and verifying quality in education. Its impact could be even more effective if inspectors were expected to look across languages, using common instruments (such as observation grids or questionnaires), and taking into account transferable methodology encountered in the different specialisms. Valuable development work with inspectors was carried out following the evaluation of the Eniaio Lykeio in 2003 and is beginning to have an impact.

Both the Council of Europe and the European Union have emphasised the value of taking a holistic view of language education, although most countries still need to make considerably more progress towards this goal. Cyprus has much to gain from developing such a view and establishing close professional contact between colleagues from related specialisms. There are common areas across languages (such as the use of terminology, learning strategies) where joint planning can make language learning more effective for all. If there is too much compartmentalisation of provision, students’ perceptions of language in turn can become compartmentalised. It is more difficult to convey a sense of the value of all languages and their complementarity if there is no shared thinking. Language teachers’ own understanding of how they contribute to the aims of the wider curriculum is enhanced if they appreciate the perspectives of those with other language specialisms and take full account also of the linguistic diversity of their students, including those from the new minorities. The potential of Cyprus as a multilingual society would be strengthened by such appreciation.

In the context of lifelong education, a review of continuity and transversality in school education could provide a basis for a subsequent reflection on languages in adult education. Adult education has a number of distinctive features, including Greek for adults recently arrived in Cyprus and a wide range of foreign languages, including important non-European languages such as Arabic.

Education for democratic citizenship

The development of competences in languages, whether national, regional, neighbouring or foreign, is obviously important for communication and for professional qualifications, but it is also one of the rights of citizens. It is important therefore that Cyprus should invest further in the area of plurilingualism on which harmonious co-existence in Europe and the wider world between groups of culturally diverse backgrounds ultimately depends.

There is some reference in various programmes of study to educational action in the field of plurilingualism and of democratic citizenship. The basic aims and purposes for the teaching of modern Greek in the Gymnasium seek to make students aware of ‘the particularities and values of modern Greek culture’ or ‘to acquire self-knowledge and a sense of the potency of modern Greek culture and thus come into contact, fully equipped with the ancient Greek culture and culture of other countries’. In the English Curriculum for the Gymnasium (Revised version, June 1999, Part I: Underlying Philosophy), the educational principles include the development of autonomy and of creativity, and also bring in education for democracy in terms of equality of opportunity and mutual respect for students within the class. The preamble to the programme for French language and civilisation (*1ère classe, Lycée unifié, Programme analytique*) emphasises the communicative approach and briefly mentions ‘intercultural understanding’.

Further consideration could be given to the contribution of:

- education for democratic citizenship within language learning, both in terms of content and of activities in the classroom;
- understanding the relationship between national identity and belonging to European society;
- intercultural education to foster objective ‘us and them’ comparisons.

Obviously, the implications of these areas for the education and training (pre- and in-service) of teachers would also need to be considered together with those for the development of teaching materials and possibly modifications to curricula. Relevant sources are to be found in research literature and in the instruments produced by the Division for Citizenship and Human Rights Education of the Council of Europe. In 2005, the Council of Europe’s Year of Democratic Citizenship through Education, in which Cyprus participates, provides a valuable opportunity to consider further developments in this area.

The allocation and use of time for language education

Given the high proportion of curricular time devoted to language education in schools, there is a case for looking globally at the time available in order to see how it might be most effectively deployed and used, particularly in the Gymnasium. A number of questions might usefully be reconsidered. For example, is there a case for some flexibility in the distribution of time at various points during compulsory education? What scope is there for common elements? Are there aspects of methodology and good practice in the teaching of Greek and the various foreign languages which could be made transferable?

There may be a case for reviewing the distribution of time to foreign languages in the context of the whole curriculum. For example, one might ask whether computer studies needs to be taught as a discrete subject with its own separate time allocation in all three years of the Gymnasium: experience elsewhere in Europe shows that information and communications technology (ICT) can be integrated for some of the time into the teaching of other subjects, including national and foreign languages, in ways which develop both

generic and subject applications. In parts of the private schools sector in Cyprus there is some flexibility in the allocation of time to modern and classical Greek and to foreign languages, and this could be worth considering in the public sector. In foreign languages, a teaching approach based on partial competences in a foreign language (see 4.3.3) could provide a focus for more efficient use of limited time in the Lyceum.

In any stage of education, time can be used more effectively if students are able to experience a consistent methodology across languages, apply common learning strategies and compare language structures to make the understanding and learning of languages more efficient.

The wider curriculum and CLIL

At the same time, one might consider links with areas of the curriculum beyond languages. For example, to what extent do other areas of the curriculum, such as the humanities, realise their potentially valuable contribution to students' language learning? Are there areas of the curriculum which might be taught at some point, perhaps in short modules, through the medium of one of the foreign languages, such as (say) biology through English or geography through French? In this way, some students in Cyprus might benefit from the experience of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) which both the Council of Europe and the European Union seek to promote and which is becoming more frequent in education systems across Europe. Given that many Cypriot students pursue their studies abroad in a range of subjects through the medium of a foreign language, some exposure to CLIL for some students in secondary education might provide a useful preparation for that experience.

Language Rooms

As noted earlier, Language Rooms offer great potential for teachers and learners of Greek, English, French and other languages. They offer a catalyst for the professional development of teachers by allowing ready access to new technologies and media and to flexible teaching space. Since teachers of all languages use Language Rooms, these also offer a vehicle for raising awareness of good practice across languages. This contribution to professional development could be developed further. For example, joint seminars with demonstrations of practice could provide a means of sharing the best practice, not only within particular languages but between them.

Given the benefits, actual and potential, of Language Rooms, consideration might be given also, when resources permit, to establishing them in primary schools also and/or providing access to them or to similar facilities elsewhere for adult classes.

Autonomous learning

Considerable efforts have been made through the introduction of Language Rooms and reforms in upper secondary education (Eniaio Lykeio) to promote autonomous learning by students. The consolidation of good practice in this area and its permeation through other areas of education could make a significant contribution to improving quality and standards in languages, as in other subject areas.

Teaching materials

The quality of textbooks and other teaching materials is obviously a key factor in the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Economies of scale do not favour national production of textbooks in Cyprus and therefore textbooks developed for use in other countries (notably France and the United Kingdom) are heavily used. Publications from

abroad do not necessarily correspond fully to national programmes of study and to the pedagogical goals prioritised by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The match could usefully be reviewed, although there is some valuable liaison with publishers in this area. This work could be linked to a review of objectives (see 4.3.3 below). It would also be very worthwhile to consider the scope for targeted development of supplementary materials to match national needs. The success of Council of Europe Workshop 16, hosted by Cyprus in 1994, is only one indication of the experience and expertise available in Cyprus in this area.

Upper secondary education: the Second Foreign Language

The issue of flexibility and choice in upper secondary curriculum is a familiar one in many parts of Europe, not least as it relates to the provision of Second Foreign Languages. This matter has been the subject of considerable debate in Cyprus during the last two years.

The introduction of options into the Lyceum, as noted earlier, represents a significant step towards the promotion of plurilingualism in Cyprus. Offering students the responsibility of more choice has also been an element in the democratisation of the curriculum. The difficulty in the academic year 2003-2004 was that the ways in which students exercised choice produced a gross imbalance between the languages offered (see 3.3.2 above). Where imbalance is too great, the aims of plurilingualism are not well served. At the same time, while there is an educational case for many students using choice to acquire some knowledge of a third (or fourth) foreign language and to widen their horizons, there is also a case for other students continuing with the language(s) which they have studied for several years. The latter might include weaker students who need more time to consolidate their knowledge as well as those high attainers who wish to build further on their proficiency to reach the highest standard possible. It is important that, whatever choice students make, it is an informed choice based on relevant educational and career factors.

For informed choice to be possible, students need counselling focused on the respective merits of changing to another language or remaining with the ones already studied. They also need counselling about the particular opportunities which the various languages open up. It is noted that there were considerable logistical difficulties in providing the options chosen by students in 2003 - 2004, not least in terms of teacher supply and training (see 4.4 below). The imbalances in choice may manifest themselves in different proportions in different years, so the initial difficulties in implementation of the new curriculum may not always be repeated to the same extent. Informed planning will continue to be very difficult if the appropriate balance of options remains unpredictable from year to year and the range of languages on offer is currently under review. There are ways of making the situation less volatile. For example, it might be possible to adjust the offer so that each Lyceum offered (say) only two languages other than French or English from the list. If each Lyceum within an area offered a different combination, the principle of diversification could be maintained across the Republic, but in a less fragmented way. Another possibility would be for students to decide their options earlier so that there is more time for reflection on the implications of choices for planning the delivery of courses. In some countries, decisions usually have to be taken as early as March of the previous academic year.

It is important to keep the gains made by the diversified curriculum for languages in the upper secondary school in promoting plurilingualism.

4.3.3 Assessment and evaluation

Transparency and coordination

It is important to develop greater coherence and transparency between the objectives for each language in terms of the competences to be acquired and the levels to be reached. Valuable work has already been done in this area by the Educational Service Commission.

In order to improve transparency and co-ordination, it would be helpful if the national programmes of study for languages and those of institutions accredited by the Ministry of Education and Culture were based on the CEFR⁶, so that the levels at each stage and across languages could be related and readily compared. The Council of Europe is also developing a Manual to relate language examinations with the CEFR. This manual is accompanied by illustrative material to promote consistent interpretation and standardisation of levels across languages and countries. These instruments are intended to help policy-makers and managers to situate national examinations in each language in relation to each other and to international standards.

Issues such as the following could then be addressed in a more informed way:

- the longitudinal co-ordination of language teaching, particularly between the final year of primary education and the first year of the Gymnasium (where it is not unheard of for students to ‘start from scratch’ in English) and between the final year of the Gymnasium and the first year of the Lyceum;
- the levels of competences to be required of language teachers themselves;
- the replacement of examinations organised on demand by a system of certification based on a regular calendar of examinations, the banking of test items, and the compilation of comparative statistics kept for monitoring of standards from year to year.

As languages are prominent in the Cypriot curriculum, it is important that the amount of time and the levels expected of students are better aligned.

Objectives and planning

Where there is increased coherence and transparency, it is easier to determine realistically what level students might reach in a given amount of time, or *vice versa*, determine the amount of time which reasonably would be needed to reach a given level. For example, at present English in the primary school has about 130 hours in total (40 minutes x 2 periods x 32 weeks x 3 years): it is difficult to imagine, even with considerable out of school exposure to English, the great majority of students going significantly beyond CEFR Level A2, but this assumption needs to be verified.

Such an analytical approach would also make it possible to gear expectations for the Second Foreign Language (*ab initio*) to the time available in the final two years of the Lyceum. Such expectations might be based on teaching ‘partial competences’, an approach which both the Council of Europe and the European Union have proposed could be exploited more widely. For example, focusing on spoken interaction and written and spoken comprehension can provide a useful competence in much less time than is needed for the development of a full range of skills. The climate, not least among parents, appears at present to be unfavourable to this particular kind of change, but there is a case for at least considering the contribution to plurilingualism of partial competences and for further awareness-raising about the issues and possibilities.

⁶ *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (see Appendix 2)

The opportunity should also be taken to set expectations for teachers who wish to train to teach two foreign languages (to two different levels, for example to CEFR Level A1 and Level B1).

Such flexibility based on clear definition of objectives could be introduced without disturbing the overall coherence of the system.

A consideration of the longitudinal coordination of language education could also address the issue of continuity in the provision of language courses for the 15 per cent of the secondary school population who proceed from the Gymnasium to vocational education rather than to the Lyceum.

The apolytirion and university entrance

There is a gap between the leaving examination for the Lyceum (First Certificate level) and the entry requirements for English or American universities (GCE, TOEFL). There is also a perceived gap between the *apolytirion* and the entrance requirements in English for Greek and Cypriot universities, although the examinations for both of these are set by the same group of language inspectors, secondary school teachers and Faculty members. There is apparently a high correlation between success in the *apolytirion* examinations and in the entrance examinations. The latter are used basically as a ranking instrument, since, although the great majority of candidates secure a university place, admission to some courses is more competitive than to others.

The perceived gap in foreign language standards between the *apolytirion* and the university entrance examination is a source of considerable anxiety for parents and students. Many parents wish to provide their children with an 'edge' and this results in increased pressure to invest in supplementary private tuition (*frontistiria*). Some of the changes mentioned earlier could help to solve this problem by ensuring that students left the Lyceum with higher standards. A review of objectives could help to resolve this problem: a clear definition of levels of expectation could be used to set an appropriate standard for school leavers for foreign languages in the *apolytirion* and identify what additional requirements, if any, are really necessary for ranking for university entrance. Various outcomes could emerge. One possibility is that a single examination might suffice, possibly with a mark threshold for school-leaving and general employment purposes on the one hand, and on the other hand a higher threshold for university entrance. Another possibility would be to set papers for the *apolytirion* examinations at different levels. A further possibility would be to offer tuition for external (international) examinations in the public sector within the Lyceum, since Cypriot society has a high regard for official certificates from abroad in languages, notably those of English or American bodies.

Along with any of these possibilities, some ability setting could be considered for foreign languages in the final two years of the Lyceum, based on diagnostic assessment in the first year.

A discussion paper on these possibilities and an open debate could help to identify the most appropriate solution. Consensus might not be easy to reach, but the potential gains for students, parents and teachers from finding a solution are considerable.

4.4 Teacher Education and Training (Pre- and In-Service)

Flexibility and responsiveness

Teacher Education has a pivotal role in language education, as in any other area of education. It needs to be flexible both to anticipate change and to respond to change. Given the many changes which Cypriot society and education are experiencing and the Republic's

closer relations with other European states and organisations, further consideration should be given to making the provision of teacher education and training for languages more flexible and responsive to need. Such responsiveness is needed in both pre-and in-service training so that newcomers to the profession are equipped to cope with change and established teachers are helped to adjust to change.

Pre-service teacher education and training for all

There is a case for making pre-service teacher education compulsory for all intending teachers regardless of their academic achievements. There is no reason to believe that possession of a Doctorate or other higher degree in any country will guarantee effective teaching by those who have not received pre-service teacher education

Content of pre-service education and training

There are clearly strengths in Cyprus in the teaching of Greek, English and French and other languages, but, as noted above, little cross-fertilisation of ideas between specialists or between primary and secondary school teachers. There would be much to gain from greater sharing of transferable good practice and from identifying elements in teaching and training from which all specialists might benefit.

There is a need to develop a more holistic view of language education and to raise the awareness of language teachers and trainees of such matters as multiculturalism, the European dimension, and democratic citizenship, and the implications of developments in these areas for their subject. Students of foreign descent, and native speakers such as foreign language assistants, can be an asset when dealing with some of these areas, for example in promoting intercultural learning and respect for minorities.

As in other countries, there can be a tendency for language teaching to be too centred on grammar-based activities, or focused too narrowly, and too far in advance, on examinations. In order to counter such tendencies, it is important to emphasise more in the training of teachers areas such as the role of teaching teams (within school years, but also across disciplines and languages); training for autonomous learning (building on recent experience in the Lyceum (Eniaio Lykeio)); and the use in lessons of overt assessment criteria by teachers.

Routes into teaching: primary and secondary

Teachers in primary and secondary schools follow quite different routes into the teaching profession and there is apparently little contact between them. Limited contact is not conducive to promoting continuity and progression in language education as children move through the transition from primary to secondary schools. Some links between the training for primary and that for secondary education would promote greater understanding of continuity and progression in language learning.

There are primary teachers who teach English as a foreign language effectively, but it must be asked whether there is a case for some specific input of the methodology of foreign language teaching into pre-service training, particularly if the age of starting English is lowered in primary schools, and providing in-service training at least for the less confident teachers of English. Joint in-service training for primary and secondary teachers in English could also be a means pooling their expertise in teaching children languages at the age of transition. The appointment of foreign language assistants would provide support for non-specialist teachers and direct contact with native speakers for both students and teachers.

Diversification and the training of language teachers

If Cyprus is to sustain its commitment to the diversification of foreign language provision in secondary schools, the implications of this policy for teacher education and training require closer study. In some European countries, teachers are expected to teach two foreign languages, though not usually to the same level. Such flexibility enables shifts in option choices to be coped with. In small and/or isolated schools it enables diversification to be combined with efficiency where the alternative would be for one language to be discontinued or for a specialist teacher of that language to travel around a number of schools teaching a few hours here and there in order to make up a full timetable. Teachers can also gain professional and personal satisfaction from the opportunity to teach a second foreign language, particularly if they have in any case studied two foreign languages as part of their degree course.

There are particular factors in the situation in Cyprus which would not make it easy to increase flexibility overnight. Nevertheless, there are possibilities which might be considered, together with the suggestions for upper secondary education. For example, where graduate trainees have a 'double major' or 'combined honours' degree, they could, if they wished, opt for training in both their subjects and seek recognition for teaching either language or both. In this way, flexibility could be introduced gradually into the language teaching force. Secondly, it would be worth looking again at the possibility of providing in-service training at the University of Cyprus in order to enable those teachers of English or French who wish to do so to develop their knowledge of a second teaching language so that they can teach at least the initial stages of that language. There will be much in the professional experience and expertise of teaching their first foreign language which would be transferable to that situation.

Summary conclusion

Cyprus is fully aware of the importance of languages and is committed to improving national capacity. For centuries, Cyprus has been a multilingual society and a number of steps have been taken in recent years to promote plurilingualism among its citizens. There is considerable potential to build on these efforts and to develop plurilingualism further.

The process of reflecting on language education policies holistically can help to bring about further development, taking full account of the interplay between the various language specialisms and between sectors of education and of the impact of this on the development of plurilingualism. The various Council of Europe policy documents and instruments have much to offer in informing and stimulating such a process of reflection. At the same time, there is a case for looking again at a number of technical matters, for example in the functioning of the curriculum and of teacher education, which impinge on both existing and proposed policies. Cyprus possesses the professional expertise to carry out a process of reflection and review productively.

Consideration could be given to the establishment of a follow-up group to take the process further, possibly through a discussion document about future directions leading to an action plan.

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

Conventions:

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

Policy recommendations and Resolutions:

- **[Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe](#)** www.coe.int/T/CM
 - [Recommendation R \(82\)18](#) based on the results of the CDCC Project N° 4 ('Modern Languages 1971-1981')
 - [Recommendation R \(98\) 6](#) based on the results of the CDCC Project 'Language Learning for European Citizenship' (1989 – 1996)
- **[Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#)** www.assembly.coe.int
 - Recommendation 1383 (1998) on [Linguistic Diversification](#) and (CM(99)97)
 - Recommendation 1539 (2001) on the [European Year of Languages 2001](#)
 - 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](#)**
 - [Resolution](#) on the *European Language Portfolio* adopted at the 20th Session of the Standing Conference (Cracow, 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 Language Education Policies in Europe*, options for the implementation of policies include the teaching and learning of national/official languages, which for many, but not all individuals, are their mother tongue/first language.

Appendix 2: Council of Europe instruments: Presentation

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

1. Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe

www.coe.int/lang - Policy development activities

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

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

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

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

- the *Main Version* (reference version), which discusses, argues and exemplifies all the principles, analyses and approaches for organising European language education policies, as they are conceived in the framework of the Council of Europe. This version is designed for readers interested in all aspects of these issues, including their technical dimensions. It provides the means of answering the question: *how can language education policies geared towards plurilingualism actually be introduced?*

This version is itself extended by a series of **Reference studies** (see web site) which have been produced specifically for the *Guide* by specialists in the relevant fields. They provide a synthesis of or take up in more detail the issues dealt with in this version. They are published separately;

- 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 are available on the website.

2. **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 Framework 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 Framework 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 Framework facilitates a 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 eighteen languages: Basque, Catalan, Czech, English, Finnish, French, Galician, Georgian, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Moldovan, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian and Spanish (see website).

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

English version: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*, 2001 - Cambridge University Press - ISBN: Hardback 0521803136 Paperback: 0521005310.

3. **Manual for relating Language Examinations to CEFR** www.coe.int/lang - Policy development activities

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 in order to assist member states, national and international providers of examinations in relating their certificates and diplomas to the CEFR.

The primary aim of this Manual is to help the 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 *Common European Framework of Reference* (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 the users of the Pilot Manual with additional information which will help them in their efforts to relate their certificates and diplomas to the CEFR.

4. 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 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** describing 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, regardless whether gained inside or outside of formal education.
- The European Language Portfolio is the property of the learner.
- It is linked to the *Common European Framework of reference for Languages*.

A set of common *Principles and Guidelines* have been agreed for all Portfolios (see web site)

Accreditation of ELP models: see detailed information on the website

Appendix 3: Council of Europe Expert Group and Authorities

Cyprus

Liaison Person

Mr Costas Markou, Liaison with the Council of Europe
Former Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education and Culture, Department of
Secondary Education, Gregori Afxentiou Str, 1434 NICOSIA, Cyprus
(until November 2004)

Mr Savvas Pavlou (after November 2004)
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Rapporteur

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Appendix 4: Programme of Visit 1 – Cyprus: 29 February - 5 March 2004

Monday 1 March	9:00 - 9:45	Language Inspectors, Primary / Secondary (Greek, English, French)
	10:00 – 11:30	Schools Union Representatives and Teachers' Associations (Primary, Secondary, Technical)
	12:00 – 12:45	Mr. Prodromos Prodromou, Chairman of Education Committee, House of Representatives
	13.00 – 13.30	Mr. Skotinos, Head of Secondary Education
	13:45 – 14:15	Mr. Savvas Pavlou (teaching of Greek languages)
Tuesday 2 March	8:00 - 8:45	Primary School
	9:00 - 9:30	- Minister of Education, - Permanent Secretary, - Department Directors of the Ministry of Education and Culture
	10:00 - 11:00	Ambassador Eftyhiou, European Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	11:30 - 13:00	Director and Trainers, Pedagogical Institute
Wednesday 3 March	9:00 - 10:00	Pancyprian Gymnasium (Language Rooms, Lesson Observation)
	10:30 - 11:30	Melkonian Educational Institute (Visit to Language Classes)
	11:45 - 13:00	Mr. Mavrikios, Director, Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation
Thursday 4 March	9:00 - 10:30	Educational Service Commission
	11:15 - 12:00	National Parents Association
	12:15 - 13:00	Representatives of Bank of Cyprus, Popular Bank, Hellenic Bank; Universal Bank
	15.30	Ms Maria Chrysomila (CBC), Cyprus Tourist Organisation
	16:30	Mr. Chrysathou Chrysantos, Journalist, Eleletheros
	17.30	Mr. Pambos Thimotheou (SIFE (Language Centres) – ELP)
Friday 5 March	9:00 - 10:00	Philips Greek-European School
	10:15 – 11:15	English School
	11:30 – 13:00	University of Cyprus (Teachers of English – French - Turkish, Education Department; Language Centre)

