

Language Education Policy Profile

HUNGARY

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1. Introduction

1.1 Language education in Hungary and a *Language Education Policy Profile*

Hungary is the first country to respond to the offer of the Council of Europe's Language Policy Division to assist with a self-evaluation of national language education policy. This self-evaluation is an opportunity for critical reflection in a process of dialogue involving different partners in government and civil society, within a debate on the questions of language education policies. This process includes all languages in education: Hungarian, languages of minorities and migrants as well as foreign languages. The Council of Europe Expert Group facilitated the process, acting as catalysts and adding a European dimension to the reflection, in particular with regard to Council of Europe policies for language education. This process of self-evaluation and analysis is summarised as a number of key policy issues in Hungary today, presented at the end of this *Profile*.

This *Profile* is jointly authored by the Hungarian Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe Expert Group and represents a combination of views, current initiatives and plans for the future. As such the *Profile* represents an innovative mode of writing combining insider and outsider perspectives, which it is hoped will be more useful than an external analysis and richer than an internal description.

In addition to this internal purpose and process, the *Profile* has a second purpose of presenting Hungarian language education to readers in other countries. This means that for Hungarians, it contains some familiar material that has been included for a wider European audience.

The decision to carry out this *Profile*, supported by both the previous and the present governments, reflects a consensus on the significance of language education at the highest level and a desire to undertake self-evaluation in the light of Council of Europe policy and principles. In this context Hungary accords particular priority to policies for plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, diversification and choice of languages in the curriculum, language education for minorities, and also for migrant communities. The particular importance attached to language education is further reflected in the preparation by the Ministry of Education of a national strategy for foreign languages (*World-Language Strategy*), which was being developed simultaneously with the visits by Council of Europe experts and which will be presented in detail at appropriate points throughout this report.

1.2 Procedures

This *Language Education Policy Profile*, prepared by the Ministry of Education with the help of the Council of Europe Expert Group, was produced at the end of the following process:

- in June 2002 two experts and a member of the Council of Europe Secretariat visited Budapest for two days to make arrangements and hold preliminary discussions with officials and a number of Hungarian experts;
- a *Country Report* was prepared on behalf of the Ministry of Education and studied by the Expert Group. This Report is available as a separate background document (www.coe.int/lang);

- in October 2002, the group of experts accompanied by a member of the Council of Europe Secretariat visited Hungary for one week to meet the authorities, visit institutions, hold discussions with experts in language education and representatives of civil society, and observe a number of language classes in schools; the group then produced an *Experts' Report*;
- in March 2003 a Roundtable discussion on the *Experts' Report* was held with officials and representatives of civil society invited by the Ministry of Education;
- in a final phase, this *Profile* was produced through interaction between the Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe Expert Group.

1.3 Overview of Council of Europe policy and initiatives in Hungary

The preparation of this *Country Profile* takes into account both new initiatives in Hungary, in particular the *World-Language Strategy of Foreign Language Competence Development*, and Council of Europe policy documents. It presents the principles of the Council of Europe and an introduction to *World-Language* which embodies those principles with respect to foreign language learning.

1.3.1 COUNCIL OF EUROPE POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

Linguistic diversity : plurilingualism and multilingualism

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 multilingualism:

- 'multilingualism' refers to the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one 'language variety' (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 consider themselves as monolingual, (i.e. speaking only one variety, their 'mother tongue') or as plurilingual, speaking two or more varieties. In such areas, what is important is to organise the co-existence among languages and language varieties using laws, regulations, rights and obligations.
- 'plurilingualism' refers to the repertoire of varieties of language which individuals use, and is, in a sense, the opposite of monolingualism; 'repertoire' includes the language variety referred to as 'mother tongue' or 'first language' and any number of other languages or varieties. In this case the important point is to promote the co-existence, in a framework of tolerance and mutual respect, of people who do not all speak the same languages even if they have some languages in common.
(see *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*, Executive Version, Draft 1 (rev))

More precisely, plurilingualism is defined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* in the following way:

(Plurilingualism is) "the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw." (Council of Europe, 2001: 168).

Thus plurilingualism refers to the full linguistic repertoire of the individual, and since it is concerned with plurilingual education, this *Language Education Policy Profile* is concerned with all language education in Hungary, including education in Hungarian and in regional and minority languages as well as those languages which are labelled as 'foreign' languages.

Choosing the plurilingual viewpoint means placing 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, and to broaden this competence through appropriate teaching and plurilingual education which facilitates the creation of linguistic tolerance, i.e. a sensitivity towards and understanding for other people's linguistic repertoire, as a basis for democratic citizenship. This is the viewpoint taken by the Council of Europe as the principle for its activity in the language domain.

Plurilingual education as the aim of language education policies

Europe as a geographic 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 promote 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 *Language Education Policy Profile* is informed by the Council of Europe position as contained in the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and diverse normative instruments, and presented in detail in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*, where it is made clear that plurilingualism is also a fundamental aspect of policies of social inclusion and education for democratic citizenship.

In the Declaration and Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship of 7 May 1999, the Committee of Ministers stressed that the preservation of European linguistic diversity was not an end in itself, since it is placed on the same footing as the building of: 'a 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, the 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 the Development of 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. Furthermore, the 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 concerning the curriculum;
- new forms of organisation, which may require special financial arrangements;
- political decisions, implying extensive discussion at all levels.

These different measures also imply the establishment of priorities and the definition of stages in the realisation of them. Such plans, even where the principle is shared, create debate in civil society and in the world of politics.

What is to be noted above all in this perspective on language education is that language learning is not simply seen as an economic asset for the individual and society. It is also a fundamental element of education for the individual and the development of their understanding of themselves as language beings and social actors. A linguistic repertoire is certainly important in economic prosperity when individuals and societies are bound into international, global markets, but language education is important to individuals as citizens in democratic processes at national, regional and international levels.

1.3.2 “WORLD - LANGUAGE” – STRATEGY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

The new, comprehensive strategy concerning the modern language teaching policy of the Ministry of Education fills in a gap of several decades; therefore, it may efficiently contribute to the teaching of modern languages in Hungary becoming a uniform and successful system. Development started with the exploration of the current situation and outlining the vision of the future. The objectives are to be achieved through a number of steps, five of which are detailed below:

- a. the elaboration of specific programmes;
- b. amendment of the Public Education Act, in order to introduce a period of intensive language teaching in grade 9;
- c. the introduction of changes in the legislation to provide tax benefits;
- d. the introduction of the new school-leaving examination in modern languages in 2005.

a.

10 programmes and, within that, 25 projects, were launched in 2003 to develop modern language teaching in the areas of public, higher and adult education. 2003 has been a pilot year, the goal of which was the further fine-tuning of the projects and the exploration of possible deficiencies. On the basis of these, the programmes can be expanded from 2004, when language learning will have become one of the operative programmes of the Hungarian National Development Plan.

The programmes are built upon the following general objectives:

- the majority of the programmes are targeted at public education since this is where basic language education has to take place;
- they efficiently contribute to the creation of opportunities through their system of criteria;
- in addition to quantitative considerations (number of lessons, working in groups), they focus on quality, and take an innovative approach to development;
- they are intended to promote development not only through obligatory changes, but by creating potential;
- they are intended to establish the environment of language learning as a whole: they encourage improvements within the classroom, outside the classroom and outside the school;
- in addition to the population of compulsory school age, they provide opportunities for the entire adult population, promoting the integration of life-long learning into the Hungarian practice of education;
- they promote institutional co-operation in ICT and language teaching, and contribute to the more effective utilisation of developments under the Sulinet Express programme.

b.

The amendment of the Public Education Act allows a 13th grade in both secondary grammar and vocational schools, provided that in grade 9, at least 40% of the compulsory lessons is devoted to intensive modern language teaching. Moreover, in grades 12-13, the secondary grammar schools have to provide modern language teaching at an advanced level in order to prepare students for the advanced level school-leaving examination in the given language. The amendment comes into effect on 1 September 2004. For the modern language component, detailed curricula are being prepared in the Ministry of Education.

c.

All adult citizens who have enrolled in an accredited language course can apply for tax benefit from 1 January 2003 (see Section 2.1)

d.

The new Public Education Act introduces a *new school-leaving examination in foreign languages* in 2005, rendering this examination the only eligibility criterion for entry into higher education. In all school subjects, the school-leaving examination may be taken at two levels: intermediate and advanced. The expected level of competence corresponds to A2/B1 for the intermediate and B2 for advanced level as defined in the Common European Framework of Reference. The examination in foreign languages is designed to assess communicative competence in all four skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) and language use with realistic task types and authentic text types. The introduction of the new examination will allow students to get a valid and reliable certificate of their language competence without charge within the framework of public education.

1.4 The Language Education Policy Profile: contents and approach

1.4.1 CONTENTS

This *Profile* presents language education policy in relation to the different elements of the education system:

- general language policy issues;

- primary, secondary and higher education;
- adult education;
- curriculum requirements and assessment systems;
- teacher education.

It presents them from five points of view, which are briefly explained here:

(i) Education for democratic citizenship

Language acquisition is not simply the learning of new codes of communication. It is one of the opportunities for meeting other societies and other cultures which are by definition foreign, i.e. different. It includes education for diversity which is one of the foundations of democratic life. Education for democratic citizenship can therefore take place in the context of linguistic tolerance, for example through intercultural education.

(ii) Transversality

When an education system takes responsibility for the plurilingual competence of learners, this presupposes the creation of transversal and convergent measures :

- in political terms and with respect to the structure of decision-making processes for language education policies, the identification of national language needs in the medium term and the organisational decisions which these priorities imply
- in organisational terms, procedures to better coordinate action and resources at the central, regional and local levels of administration.

(iii) Anticipating demographic, economic and social trends

Developing a national language capacity presupposes developing medium-term perspectives. In the case of Hungary, this includes entry into the European Union, which may mean demographic change and migrational movements towards Hungary as a frontier state of the Schengen area.

(iv) Plurilingualism of the individual

The development of education for plurilingualism is a valuable aim in itself, and presupposes a sensitisation of learners, of teachers of all subjects, and of all those involved in education to the fact that languages should not be considered in isolation but as a coherent ensemble of ways of communicating linguistically and culturally as part of the development of the individual, and not simply as a set of professional communication competences.

Diversification of languages taught

The diversification of language teaching, in terms of increased diversification of the choices of languages learnt during schooling and throughout life, can be based on the typology of the competences and definition of levels of the CEF (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment*) with respect to national/first language(s), languages of migrant and immigrant communities, regional and minority languages, European languages (those widespread and those less widely spread) and languages other than European.

(v) Quality issues – the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching

Production and control of quality refers to the outcomes of education: the competences acquired related to the length of time of study and the investment required. This presupposes the definition of precise teaching objectives and the establishment of the measures needed to assess on an objective basis.

1.4.2 APPROACH

This *Language Education Policy Profile* for Hungary has been written as a consequence of the discussions among those concerned in Hungary and the Council of Europe Expert Group and on the basis of texts which were produced in the course of the whole process.

It includes:

- a general description of language education policies in Hungary, which will be particularly useful to readers outside Hungary, and more specific points which are related to Council of Europe texts and policies;
- observations concerning certain aspects of language education policy which are current or which are interesting indicators of changes to come or already taking place;
- a discussion of current opportunities and future directions
- a conclusion with a summary of key issues.

2. The current situation in language education

This *Profile* is concerned with the promotion of foreign language teaching within a wider approach to language education policy as explained above. In the following section, descriptions of the current state of language education in Hungary in all its forms, take into account the wider goals of language teaching promoted by the Council of Europe and fundamental to Hungary's concern for language education.

2.1 General description and characteristics of language education in Hungary

The multilingualism of Hungary, the presence in the territory of a wide range of languages, and the existing policy to promote the teaching of a significant number of extra-territorial, foreign languages, provides rich ground for the promotion of individual plurilingualism. Language teaching in Hungary is considered very important. Above all, after the period of communist regimes, Hungary, since its accession to the Council of Europe, has accepted clear political commitments to the protection of the languages of the 13 officially recognised minorities, both by constitutional measures which are widely considered as exemplary, and by signing and ratifying the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* and the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*.

As pointed out in the introduction, the decision to conduct this *Language Education Policy Profile* with the assistance of the Council of Europe, indicates a strong interest on the part of the current Government and of the professional bodies in development and change, and in the current context, the development of a new stage in the strategy for the development of foreign language competence, through the document *World-Language*, is a significant indication of the recognition of the significance of language learning.

The following points reflect the general high level of interest in language education policy in Hungary:

- A new initiative of the Ministry of Education approved by the Educational Act as modified on 23 June 2003 concerns the introduction of an extra year (Year 9) for the intensive learning of two languages at secondary level. It offers language learning opportunities for a wider population of secondary-school students than ever before;
- In March 2000, the Lisbon European Council set the strategic objective for the European Union to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. In February 2002, the Education Council and the Commission jointly adopted the Detailed Work Programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe, which explicitly mentions foreign languages among the 'basic skills' or 'key competencies'. Objective 3.3 is specifically focused on '*Improving foreign language learning*'.
- A working group of experts in the field of languages was set up in July 2002. As the membership of the group was enlarged to the candidate countries on the occasion of the third meeting (21-22 November 2002), Hungary could participate in the activity of the working group from this date. Hungary has actively participated in the activities of the working group on languages in the framework of the Objectives process, in particular on the elaboration of foreign-language indicators, good practices and the preparation of the Action plan on language learning and linguistic diversity. The Ministry of Education has

set up a working group of foreign-language experts in the field of early language learning, public education, higher education and vocational training. The task of this working group is to prepare the Hungarian contributions and discuss and form the Hungarian position.

- The principle that foreign languages should be taught from an early age and the diversity of languages which are offered in schools are important characteristics of Hungarian language education policy. Although attitudes need to change and specific incentives have to be thought of, so that the potential diversity of foreign languages offered in schools is taken up by learners, there is no political or civil society resistance to the notion that language learning is important, at least in the form of foreign language learning.

- The Hungarian government has increased teachers' salaries, which are currently above the national average. This measure aims to ensure that language teachers (and also ICT teachers) remain in the education system instead of offering their services on the private education market. It also aims to encourage student teachers not to abandon a career in teaching for posts in the private sector.

- The government announced that the academic year 2003-2004 would be 'The Year of Language Learning', launched on 26 September 2003, the European Day of Languages.

- The Hungarian translation of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* has been published and a professional development course has been organised to help absorb the approach and the pedagogical philosophy related to the *European Language Portfolio*. In Hungary, language policy aims to enable language teachers to work according to the European system of assessment.

- There are two streams of vocational education in Hungary. The two- or three-year vocational training schools which end with vocational qualification only, where at least one foreign language is learnt as an obligatory subject. The four-year vocational secondary modern schools lead to vocational qualification and a school leaving examination (called 'maturity' examination). They provide a mixture of vocational training and academic education with one language as minimum, but generally there can be two languages where the profession students specialise in requires them. This language education takes into consideration the special demands of the European labour market, including: the linguistic requirements necessary for the free movement of labour which may or may not be vocationally oriented; and the linguistic features and communication techniques of international projects based on professional co-operation.

- With respect to adult education, experts in education and labour policy have elaborated a common system of requirements and funding, which provides language education for participants in adult education free of charge or at a reduced price, thus contributing to the training of a more highly qualified workforce.

- Language education offered within the framework of adult education aims to develop not only general language proficiency, which is compulsory, but also vocationally oriented language skills and knowledge according to needs. Furthermore, it enables graduates to undertake self-study or retraining later on.

- the language courses, vocationally-oriented language courses and intercultural, etc. training programmes in adult education will be published in a centrally devised document at the end of the accreditation process, similarly to the courses offered for the professional

development of teachers. Potential applicants can select from this list, which is compiled according to professional and labour market requirements, and apply for grants. Accreditation enables participants to take a formal accredited language examination after completing the course, which is different from the national language examination.

- An amendment of the Act on Personal Income Tax allows all adult citizens who have enrolled in an accredited language course to apply for tax benefit and deduct 30% of the training fee from the tax payable after their consolidated tax base.

There is, therefore, both a current and future potential for accepting the view of language teaching as comprising plurilingual education. Nonetheless, the ways in which citizens and institutions view and understand diversity are varied and complex. They can be summarised as follows:

- There is a strong interest in languages and the languages of minority communities: television transmits programmes for minorities (and a magazine in Hungarian intended for them) and some minorities have a weekly newspaper. Hungarian is nonetheless the largely dominant language of political and public life, and the linguistic identity of the nation is strong, the language itself being a fundamental element of the cohesion and permanence of the Hungarian community since 1526 when Hungarian forces were defeated by the Turkish army, which was the beginning of 150 years of Turkish occupation.

- Language questions do not attract much media attention, unless there is a specific event, which is a sign either that problems are resolved, or that there is some lack of interest in language policies in public opinion and the political sphere, an attitude also present in other states.

- There is a national commitment to the Hungarian language which could be the basis for the development of plurilingualism and the potential for language education policy to be part of education for democratic citizenship and policies of social inclusion. This will mean the education system creating a sense of belonging to Europe as well as to national and regional identities.

- The law of 19 June 2001 concerning citizens of neighbouring countries of Hungarian origin generated considerable debate, since it was concerned with arrangements (for transportation, health, employment and language teaching) which applied to the citizens of other states. The law entered into force in 2002, and was then reviewed. The National Assembly modified it according to the principles of the Council of Europe and the European Union on 23 June 2003.

- There has been some debate about the role given to the languages of national minorities and how they may relate to linguistic rights for Hungarian speaking communities outside the Hungarian state. Thus the importance attached to minority languages for some Hungarians may not be so much a question of the purposes (i.e. as a strategy to ensure the transmission of these languages), but rather of legal recognition of the specificity of certain groups. The fact that many students stop taking courses in these languages on entry into secondary education is evidence of a perception that there is limited significance for these languages, despite their presence in certain forms of professional training.

Although current policies concentrate mainly on managing a linguistic situation inherited from the 20th century which is essentially concerned with the rights of national minorities,

new political and economic factors seem to require a more comprehensive policy which explicitly includes the development of plurilingualism among all linguistic and cultural groups, majority or minority. The implicit principle underlying language policy for minorities may provide an incentive for a 'global concept' for language education policies.

2.2 Issues arising from the analysis of Council of Europe policies and recommendations

Considered in the light of Council of Europe perspectives (represented in the documents in Appendix 1), the current position in Hungary can be summarised as follows.

2.2.1 With respect to the recommendations of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers (as presented in Recommendation R (98) 6), the following points are significant:

- language policy and regulations concerning the curricula made by Hungary make it possible to fully implement the general principles to promote the development of plurilingualism;
- the situation is less clear concerning foreign language education in early childhood: although the teaching of the first foreign language begins before the age of 11, in the 4th grade, an earlier start is made possible but not required by the regulations. The early start depends on the views and financial situation of the controlling organisation;
- although there is teacher training in modern languages, the number of language teachers taking up employment as school teachers is still limited. For the language education of young children, however, linguistically and methodologically well-qualified teachers are needed;
- as regards upper primary grades and secondary education, the current situation has not yet complied fully with the recommendations, but communicative teaching is gaining ground, and the communicative competence of pupils is improving;
- legal regulations make it possible to learn two foreign languages but only one is required by the *National Core Curriculum*. At the moment, therefore, controlling organisations of the schools are obliged to provide the conditions for learning only one foreign language. Thus, pupils' rights and the controlling organisations' obligations do not correspond but the *National Core Curriculum* is being reviewed and this discrepancy will be resolved;
- a relatively wide range of languages can, in principle, be learnt in schools, but in the majority of schools only English or German is offered, and occasionally French, Italian or Spanish in some larger schools. This is due to the fact that there are fewer teachers for less widely learned and taught languages, and parents and pupils are mostly interested in the two dominant languages only;
- the pedagogical attitude needed for improving partial competences has not yet become widespread among language teachers;

- there is a favourable trend whereby an increasing number of secondary-school head teachers, teachers and pupils participate in European educational projects and their intercultural competence will also improve as a result. In the course of these projects, they have an opportunity to recognise the role and importance of foreign languages in real life situations, and to try communication forms which may prove to be useful later for autonomous learning. The application of communication and information technology in these projects opens up new perspectives for autonomous and lifelong learning;
- teachers and schools involved in vocationally-oriented language teaching and adult education have acquired methodology, professional networks and experience in co-operation as a result of participation in international projects.

2.2.2 *With respect to Resolutions 1383 (1998) and 1539 (2001) of the Parliamentary Assembly, the following is significant:*

- these Resolutions make recommendations concerning linguistic diversity, and Hungary is open to plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, as borne out by legal and curricular regulations. Unfortunately, measures cannot be fully implemented until there is a change in general attitudes, as noted above. Although there is a framework curriculum for nine languages, the population is not yet sufficiently interested in linguistic diversity;
- the Hungarian Project Committee has evaluated the experience of the *European Year of Languages 2001*, and has responded to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1539(2001) by undertaking to organise a *European Day of Languages* every year.

2.2.3 *This analysis in terms of Council of Europe recommendations identifies a number of issues which are currently being addressed:*

- regional planning for languages and language learning could be developed on the basis of a long tradition of forging relations between twin towns and villages, and organising cultural exchanges;
- there is a potential to organise mutual language-learning projects in the border regions, and the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic has agreed that schools with Hungarian as a medium of education (in the Slovak Republic) can use the Hungarian version(s) of the European Language Portfolio;
- teaching methods for distance language teaching have not yet been elaborated;
- relations between different institutions could be developed in order to offer less widely taught languages;
- although the number of bilingual schools is on the increase, they are mostly accessible only for children with excellent academic achievement, and there is potential to experiment with similar programmes for children with average performance, and to ensure that children have equal access to learning languages - including bilingual education – regardless of their social and economic status or academic achievement;

- inter-institutional relationships, staff and student exchange are becoming more widespread and could be the basis for the promotion of language learning;
- the number of visiting teachers from other countries has fallen in the past years and continues to be limited to language teachers coming from target language countries or teachers of specialist subjects visiting bilingual schools, and there is a need to encourage more teacher visits and exchanges;
- there is a long-standing tradition of applying audiovisual media to support language learning and teaching in Hungarian language education, and this expertise could be used to create good teaching materials in the form of audiovisual teaching aids for the languages of national and ethnic minorities;
- most language teachers are now becoming aware of the culture specific aspects and the role of intercultural competence in language learning and teaching and further development of their professional expertise in this area is possible;
- the opportunity to learn the languages of the communities of minorities can be opened to the children of the linguistic and cultural majority.

2.3 Some issues for discussion concerning the current situation

In addition to account being taken of existing Council of Europe recommendations and policies, exchanges of views between Hungarian officials and experts and the experts of the Council of Europe have made explicit certain aspects of current language education policies which are particularly significant for the future.

2.3.1 THE EXTENT OF INTEREST IN PLURILINGUALISM

Indicators such as the tradition of the bilingual schools for Hungarian speakers and the possibility of offering a wide range of foreign languages in schools, suggest that there is an underlying interest in and respect for plurilingual education, focused on foreign language teaching. Representatives of civil society and employers consider that there is a clear recognition of the economic significance of language education, albeit again focused on foreign languages and particularly those of Western Europe.

The presence of programmes for minorities gives a related but different insight into the respect for other languages and cultures, which may resemble tolerance for plurilingualism rather than the pursuit of plurilingualism for its own sake. The underlying positive interest in plurilingual education is not yet realised in practice. The potential for plurilingual education among members of minorities is undermined by a tendency to move to mainstream schools at the point of transfer to secondary education. This is not necessarily detrimental to minority identity, as socialisation occurs in primary schooling, but it can be seen as a lost opportunity to develop linguistic competence in languages of neighbouring countries. The exception to this trend is to be found in schools for the German minority whose language is perceived as having economic instrumental value. This is evident when Hungarian-speaking parents, not belonging to that particular community, send their children to such schools to acquire a 'useful' language.

Also, existing attitudes in society tend to create a situation where the trend to narrowing the repertoire of languages and language varieties of the individual is strong. In particular, public opinion in Hungary, as in many other European states, seems to support the new linguistic ideology which identifies English as the language of employment, of collective wealth and well-being, of modernity and of re-found freedom. This language thus takes over the void left by the spectacular contraction of the requirement for Russian.

Similarly, the elite bilingual programmes appear to focus above all on Western European languages and particularly English, another indication that the attitude towards plurilingual education is primarily instrumental and economic.

Thus, at the moment, the main goal of foreign language teaching is not plurilingual education, as defined in Part 1, but the concern for the development of human capital as the key to economic progress. This is however only one of the important aims of language education, and needs to be developed together with a concern for education for citizenship, and for the values which are inherent in the pursuit of plurilingualism itself.

2.3.2. BILINGUAL AND MINORITY EDUCATION

The existence of bilingual education, i.e. the teaching of other subjects through a language other than Hungarian, is well established. It takes two forms, with different purposes:

- education for learners whose first and dominant language is Hungarian, through the medium of another language; this is to promote language learning;
- education for learners whose first language may be (and often is) different from Hungarian but which is the language of a well-established minority group; this has the principal purpose of supporting language and identity in the group and for the individual.

Both forms are successful, but there is little relationship evident between the two, except in isolated cases where Hungarian-speaking parents send their children to a minority bilingual school to allow them to acquire the language of the school as a linguistic asset rather than for reasons of identity support.

Although the costs of bilingual education in both forms are significantly above those for other forms of language education, these costs are not questioned and support for bilingual education is strong. The presence of bilingual education for speakers of Hungarian is part of a tradition to be found in other central and eastern European countries, such as the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, and presents a model of excellence which other countries might consider. These programmes are selective and ensure the formation of an elite with excellent linguistic competences. As such, they reflect the role of education in general as a strategy for social promotion, and the possibility of developing similar programmes for those of average linguistic achievement is one of the points for consideration mentioned above.

The presence of bilingual education for a number of minorities is also well established. They are similar in their function to minority schools in other countries and are crucial to the maintenance of the minority and its identity, since it is not only the development of the minority language in children – the acquisition of literacy and numeracy in the language and the familiarisation with the literary and other culture and traditions – which is important. These schools have good results in the teaching of foreign languages, perhaps

because education in languages other than Hungarian allows learners access more easily to other European languages. Teachers also note a linguistic awareness among their learners - the ability to 'play' with language - which is a sure foundation for effective plurilingual education.

The two forms of bilingual education are currently perceived as separate and compartmentalised, and this is reflected in the compartmentalisation of responsibilities for the two sectors at Ministry level. This has the consequence of negating the potential for mutual aid in pedagogic developments and evaluation.

As part of a wider discussion of the relationships between these two kinds of bilingual education, there could also be an evaluation of the effectiveness of the schools and their purposes as they respond to the creation of a global concept of language education for Hungary, which responds to the changing linguistic, cultural and political environment in the immediate European neighbourhood and also on a wider, global scale.

2.3.3 ROMA AND GYPSY EDUCATION

The question of the social situation of the Roma/Gypsy communities has to be considered separately, in particular because it is shared with other member States and could be of particular interest to readers in Europe as a whole.

In this *Language Education Policy Profile* it will be discussed only from an educational and linguistic point of view, legal aspects being described in documents such as the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Application of the Charter in Hungary (Report of the Committee of Experts on the Charter and Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter by Hungary, Strasbourg 2001, ECRML 2001/4)*.

The overwhelming majority of Roma/Gypsy communities in Hungary have been Hungarian speakers for generations, and Hungarian speakers do not understand or speak their native languages. At the same time, however, efforts have been made to standardize these languages, especially in the area of writing. The languages of the Roma/Gypsy speakers in Hungary have been generally perceived as languages 'linguistically under construction'. There are initiatives to codify the Roma/Gypsy languages, thus providing a basis for teaching them and possibly using them as a medium of instruction.

Significant steps have been undertaken in recent years to improve the educational opportunities of Roma/Gypsy children. There are a number of examples of good practice where conscious efforts are being made to help Roma/Gypsy children to move into the education system, to give them the opportunity to learn about the educational culture, to facilitate access to mainstream schools and thus to provide them with opportunities to succeed in the education system. Not surprisingly, they seem to perform just as well as other children.

The inclusion of Romani languages in school curricula contributes to the educational achievements of Roma/Gypsy children: it serves both the strengthening of their identity and the preservation of their language and culture. Successful learning by children speaking Lovari or Beas as their first language largely depends on the development of their cognitive academic language proficiency in the mother tongue. This also enhances the social status of

Roma/Gypsy children and of their language and culture. Ideally this opportunity should be offered in every mainstream school attended by a certain number of Roma/Gypsy pupils.

Furthermore such language courses should be open to non-Roma/Gypsy children who wish to attend. A particularly striking example of good practice is offered by the Gandhi Gymnasium, in Pécs, where the students, belonging to different ethnic and linguistic groups, get acquainted with the language of the other (the Beas children learn their language for three years and then go on to learn Lovari, the other Roma/Gypsy language and vice versa). These courses are also open to non-Roma/Gypsy students. Gandhi secondary grammar school at Pécs was organized on the model of the other minority/ethnicity schools in Hungary: pupils here learn both Roma/Gypsy languages and take the central language examinations. Other 'model institutions' set up to serve the special needs of Roma/Gypsy pupils teach Romani or Beas only as an option.

Central language examinations can be taken in Romani (and its dialect Lovari) and Beas, two of the officially registered Gypsy languages; in public service, these languages are equivalents of other foreign languages. (Romani exams are offered in Budapest; Beas exams can be taken in Pécs, for the majority of the Beas-language community lives in South Hungary with the Pécs University as their intellectual centre.)

Despite the central language examinations offered, teaching Romani and Beas has not yet been fully incorporated in public education even in schools where Romani children study, including those who come from communities that still keep their languages. One of the main reasons for this is that teacher training in these languages does not exist. Higher level education of the two officially recognized Roma languages is only offered at the Romology Department of Pécs University where not only members of the Roma/Gypsy communities but any student of the university can participate. This training, however, does not provide a teacher's certificate. Non-Roma/Gypsy students also seem to be highly interested in the Romani and Beas languages.

Improving Hungarian language skills is another essential prerequisite for success in education and all initiatives in this respect are to be welcomed. Again there are several interesting programmes and/or projects such as pre-school courses for disadvantaged Roma/Gypsy children or specific language lessons which serve to meet this objective. Another example of good practice witnessed is a project aimed at vocabulary enrichment in Hungarian for young learners: the children try to act out the meaning of previously unknown Hungarian words and this is followed up by creating stories in which the words are used in context.

The promotion of individual plurilingualism among Roma/Gypsy children is a promising step forward in improving their general educational situation. Valuable initiatives have been set up concerning mother-tongue provision and education, the improvement of language skills in Hungarian but also foreign-language teaching for Roma/Gypsy learners. For Roma or Beas children, developing their bilingualism can be a valuable asset in learning other foreign languages and developing plurilingualism. Most of the children easily learn to communicate orally in another language as they come from an oral culture. In general, Romani (Lovari) can be the basis for learning Indo-European languages, with Beas for Neo-Latin, and Romanian in particular. An enhanced interest in these languages is also observed in assimilated middle-class intellectual families, and language-education policy needs to consider these facts in future development, all the more as the two languages are a bridge to the majority of the national languages of Europe.

2.3.4 EQUALITY AND DEMOCRATISATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Whether language learning is for instrumental/economic or inclusive and democratic purposes, it is important that it be equally available to all in a democratic society.

Hungarian researchers have argued that there are inequalities of access to language learning due to place of residence (cf. *Education in Hungary 2000*, p 129 ‘the language gap between villages and towns is widening’) which could be a visible criterion of social differentiation. This refers, in general, to education in Hungarian but may well also be a problem for foreign language learning; anecdotal evidence seems to support this view. In the case of foreign language learning, the widespread recourse to private language schools which appears to take place in conurbations is not likely to be available to those already disadvantaged by place of residence. This is an issue for further investigation and diverse means of overcoming this gap, for example by distance learning and the use of new technologies, might be identified.

A second element of this issue is the danger of social reproduction of inequality through language learning. It is clear that ‘English is not enough’ (as indicated by the representative of the Confederation of Employers and Industrialists), that advantages in the employment market will be gained by knowledge of other languages in addition to English (or German in the western part of Hungary). This information does not appear to be widely known and only well-informed parents and learners are aware of this new development.

It is therefore desirable that all parents and learners should be informed that they need more than English for employment purposes, and authorities at all levels could be encouraged to consider ways of informing the general public and parents in particular (e.g. through information meetings or leaflets for distribution in schools).

The tradition of bilingual programmes for selected and elite sectors of the learner population is, as indicated above, recognised as a success. However, there are many more applicants for such programmes than can be accepted, and those whose applications are rejected may suffer serious loss with regard to their own futures and the future of Hungary as a whole. Although tradition and experience might suggest that those who are not selected would not be able to cope with the demands of such programmes, alternative solutions could be found for these people. Instead of ‘total immersion’ as in these schools, models of ‘partial immersion’ and approaches to ‘content-based instruction’ could be investigated. Given the extent of existing experience and expertise in the education system in both types of bilingual education (for the elite and for the minorities), the modification and extension to other groups within the learner population is a natural development, and in the *World-Language Strategy* there are two programmes (one for secondary grammar schools and one for vocational schools) which aim at providing an opportunity to introduce the teaching of *certain subjects* (or parts of certain subjects) *in a foreign language in non-bilingual schools*. These programmes are highly innovative in Hungary, and for the pilot year it has been decided to limit them to seven subjects (e.g. biology, history) and three languages (English, German and French).

2.3.5 *THE TEACHING OF HUNGARIAN*

Plurilingual competence includes all languages and language varieties, not least the mother tongue/first language. The teaching of the national language is eminently a political issue because it concerns national identity and because the issues go far beyond the acquisition of communicative competences (oral and written) which are acceptable for social and professional life. As in many other countries, employers complain of disappointing results in this area but it could be a question of stereotyped accusations. In response to this, however, there could be a re-examination of the curricula to identify the role that should be played by the teaching of 'grammar', by teaching for communicative competences, by teaching about the history of the language and literatures in the Hungarian speaking region. This can be done without neglecting the fact that such teaching also provides opportunities for developing democratic awareness in learners.

This clarification of aims and methods could imply that teachers of Hungarian co-operate with teachers of other languages to ensure that, whatever the role of Hungarian for learners, they create an awareness in learners that their linguistic repertoire includes Hungarian. It is crucial to bridge the divide between the teaching and learning of the national language(s) and the teaching and learning of all other languages.

For some learners, Hungarian is the first language, the mother tongue and language of identity; for others it is a second language, the language of the country where they reside - as members of long-established and recognised minorities, or as members of new groups taking up residence in Hungary. These differences in status need to be reflected in the diversification of curricula and the methods of teaching in particular. Where Hungarian is taught and learnt as a second language - for example by the children of immigrants from East Asia - learners need to be helped to understand the significance of the language for them and their contemporaries, to draw on their existing language repertoire and linguistic sensitivity and understanding, to develop their competences in Hungarian for all their needs. For these and other reasons, there could be research and pedagogical experimentation on the teaching and learning of Hungarian as a foreign and second language.

Hungary also took part in the PISA survey of mother-tongue competence. The PISA programme is an assessment of school performance among 15/16-year-old pupils with the aim of evaluating their cultural literacy every three years.

Main areas covered by the survey:

- skills and abilities: reading and text comprehension, numeracy, science literacy, information technology literacy and information technology skills;
- self-assessment by pupils;
- learning skills and habits.

The focus of the PISA 2000 survey was obtaining written information and the speed of information processing, i.e. reading literacy. The survey also focused on numeracy and science literacy, learning strategies of students (e.g. co-operative versus competitive learning, control strategies, memory, elaboration), self-assessment by pupils of their abilities, interests, reading and learning habits, and the way they use libraries, computers and prepare homework, relations to teachers and schools, and satisfaction with the spirit of the school.

In Hungary only 50% of the pupils fall into the highest performance zone (5th level) which is lower than in an average OECD country, but those who have difficulty with reading or can be considered as functionally illiterate (reading skills at 1st level or below) are twice as many as the OECD average, and almost four times as many as in the best OECD country.

The realisation of the reasons behind the relatively poor results of the PISA enquiry for Hungary and the acceptance of the present situation in language education of all types can be viewed as a fertile ground for change.

2.4 Conclusion

The *National Curriculum* promotes the teaching of a wide range of languages. Nonetheless, data and evidence gathered in the preparation of this *Language Education Policy Profile* show that only a small number of languages – mainly Western European languages – are in fact taught in mainstream schools. It appears that the dominant perception of the reasons for learning languages is that they provide economic opportunities for the individual and a better qualified work force for the country. Clear evidence of this phenomenon is the concentration on the teaching of English (and German).

However, the *National Curriculum* statements include in the purposes of language teaching not only communication in the economic sphere but also the development of the individual as a person and a citizen. There is a central role for language teaching with regard to the development of the individual and of society through its contribution to education for democratic citizenship and human rights, and in particular through the development of linguistic tolerance. It is important that this dimension of language learning become part of professional educational philosophy and be brought to the attention of learners themselves through the curricula and modes of teaching, whether these take place in language lessons or elsewhere.

3. Visions and tasks for the future

As a consequence of the process of developing this *Language Education Country Profile* in interaction between Hungarian officials, teachers, representatives of civil society and Council of Europe experts, the following issues and domains have been identified for consideration in the future development of policy for plurilingual education, as defined at the beginning of this *Profile* and in the Council of Europe's *Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe*. The publication of *World-Language – Strategy of Foreign Language Competence Development* as a process simultaneous with the development of this *Profile* means that issues focused on foreign language competence are already being addressed and can be referred to in this chapter.

3.1 Languages and education for democratic citizenship

The cultivation of the mother tongue/first language and the improvement of mother tongue competences are fundamental for communicative and employment purposes but are also human rights of the majority population and national and linguistic minorities, including the groups, even small, of recent migrants or immigrants. For this purpose, Hungary seeks to ensure that the necessary conditions exist at all levels and institutions of public, higher and adult education.

As far as education for democratic citizenship in Europe (through language education) is concerned, all education institutions (from the Ministry to the local authorities), at various levels of education (from nursery school to teacher training), and among all the participants in education (from pupils to teachers and the support staff), seek to strengthen and further develop attitudes according to which plurilingualism and cultural diversity will be perceived as values, as elements of linguistic tolerance, and *World-Language Strategy* (Programme 1) allows schools to establish resource centres, which will demonstrate to students that it is also fun to learn languages and serve as sources to gain background knowledge from.

The Report *Education in Hungary 2000* (National Institute of Public Education) presents the conclusions (p.111) of a survey carried out in 1999 on students and their disappointing or ambiguous attitudes to citizenship. It would appear that the concept of democracy is not always fully grasped, due to negative experiences, and that it is understood essentially as the State organising social assistance and welfare (*for most young people [.....] democracy denotes a welfare state*, p.122).

Hungary also has concerns about the continuing existence of racial prejudice, as articulated in the Report concerning the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC/OP/I (2000) 2).

In the light of the above, it may be worth considering the following future developments:

- education for democratic citizenship might be reviewed in the light of proposals being developed by the National Institute of Public Education (Budapest);
- more space might be devoted to the multiple dimensions of national identity which links to and includes the notion of belonging to Europe (e.g. through the study of literature or philosophy);
- raising awareness through language teaching of tolerance, and linguistic tolerance, might be promoted through the appreciation by all of their linguistic repertoire, for

example through a more systematic application of the pedagogic function of the *European Language Portfolio*, and the *World-Language Strategy* defines the use of the *Portfolio* as a requirement for application for inclusion in public education (where it has to be included in the local curriculum) and adult education programmes;

- intercultural education – the comparative study of ‘us’ and ‘them’ leading to analytical reflection on what ‘we’ have always assumed to be normal and natural - might be introduced in suitable subjects;
- all teachers might be trained for their significant educational responsibility. In particular it is appropriate that student language teachers, who currently do not participate in the university programmes linked to Romani language and culture, should be provided with Roma/Gypsy-specific information. They might also be trained in applied sociolinguistics, in such domains as migrant communities, multilingualism and plurilingualism (for example, through the analysis of the *Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe* and other texts on linguistic diversity). The *World-Language Strategy Programme 3* has been designed to develop language teaching for children who are *socially, ethnically* (e.g. they are from a Roma/Gypsy community) *or physically disadvantaged* (and those who suffer from dyslexia or dysgraphia). The teacher-training component of the programme is required to include special training according to the relevant disadvantage of the students, e.g. teachers who will teach students from an ethnic minority have to study the characteristics of the given culture and teachers are also advised to acquire the students’ mother tongue at a basic level. The foreign language teaching programmes have to be developed according to the special needs of the given target groups.

These actions could be implemented through short research programmes aimed at the creation and piloting of specific curricula and teaching material (some material is already available in academic and research literature and also among the tools produced by the Division for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education of the Council of Europe) and through some modification of existing curricula.

3.2 New transversalities: a ‘global concept’ for language education

A ‘global concept’ for plurilingual education aims to make the teaching/learning process in school and in vocational training more coherent, and to ensure maximum return on state investment in language education. It also maximises the positive experiences in specific sectors (such as the teaching of minorities and bilingual education).

Such a co-ordinated approach implies administrative adjustments of varying proportions, possibly sector-specific. It could concern not only curricula and teaching approaches, but equally decision-making structures, and the provision of language education. The creation of new convergences in language teaching would facilitate a pedagogic approach integrating the transversal and developing competences that make up plurilingual and intercultural competence.

In view of the above and taking account of available resources, future developments might include:

- organising closer co-ordination between the relevant services responsible for language education within the Ministry of Education, and with other Ministries concerned ((labour, foreign affairs, youth and sports) with a view to developing

(administratively and financially) joint projects for languages and language teaching/learning;

- creating a governmental national co-ordination mechanism for languages and/or a specialised Parliamentary Commission or other appropriate instance. This would be responsible for drawing up ways of implementing the action lines for national policy, in keeping with the mandate given to it by the political authorities, and in co-operation with civil society. It could take the form of a cross-departmental group in the Ministry to ensure more interaction between minority education and foreign language education, secondary and higher education, university and vocational, regional and national programmes and others;
- setting up a National Languages Council with a consultative function, or providing a forum for exchange which would allow civil society to be consulted on language matters relating to the education system; this could draw on the experience (limited but significant) gained by committees in Hungary and other Council of Europe countries associated with the European Year of Languages or European Day of Languages. The Education Committee of the Hungarian parliament could play a major role in the implementation and functioning of such a national council;
- creating networks of schools in order to enable more languages to be offered, each school focusing on one specialist language and offering this to learners from other schools, supplemented by use of on-line tutorials. There are long traditions of forging relations between twin cities or villages, and organising cultural exchanges which could be used for that purpose.

Other possibilities might include :

- organising the co-ordination of language education at the level of territorial collectivities (urban, county etc), including cross-border co-operation;
- encouraging universities to develop a more coherent policy in relationship with secondary education and vocational education, students' needs (personal and professional), and national needs.

3.3 Anticipating demographic, economic and social developments

In the light of rapidly changing circumstances, not least the entry of Hungary into the European Union, it is necessary to anticipate situations concerning language and language education.

This could include:

- gathering statistics on choice of languages by each student in the education system and not only by language (number of students learning a particular language);
- gathering statistics on the language repertoires of adults (languages learned in school, university, private tuition, self-directed learning (as suggested in the *Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe*, Part 2), as such data constitute important indicators for guiding language education policies;
- developing a method of analysis of national language needs in a medium-term perspective, taking into account geopolitical considerations, main economic trends and exchanges, the structure and working methods of the employment market, and demographic and migratory trends. Guidelines on priorities would concern language needs for national and regional purposes and social cohesion. In such a perspective the organisers of the education process could monitor, support and

analyse the language-learning situation, relying on a network of experts and civil organisations;

- paying specific attention to Russian (through programmes to improve perception of the Russian language, e.g. in production of textbooks, on-line materials etc), as Russian is likely to become an important language, at least for economic reasons. This may be a delicate issue, but a general shortage of Russian speakers could be a handicap for Hungary in future years;
- preparing for the implications of the presence of new immigrants. For example, a strong Chinese community is already established in Hungary. One of the important questions for them and Hungary as their new country is whether their coming here means abandoning their mother tongue/first language. It is necessary to consider a policy for language education for asylum seekers and refugees for Hungary as a point of entry into the EU. The languages of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants can be seen as assets for the future and not as deficiencies. Apart from the fact that bi- or plurilingual Hungarians with a migration background can add significantly to the positive future development of the country, not taking up and further developing the ‘imported’ languages alongside Hungarian can lead to marginalized segments of the population. Such developments would not be in the interest of a democratic society based on the principle that social mobility is desirable. Future discussions will also distinguish between the situation of migrant children of school-going age and of adults with greater or lesser formal education.

Prudent diversification would ensure that Hungary has at its disposal speakers of lesser taught/learned languages other than the dominant ones in schools (in particular speakers of languages of the region and of languages other than western-European).

3.4 Developing education for plurilingualism

3.4.1 CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND THE “WORLD-LANGUAGE” STRATEGY

A number of important changes are currently taking place to enhance opportunities for language learning and the pursuit of plurilingualism through foreign language learning.

- According to the Education Act as modified on 23 June 2003, each secondary school has the right to offer language classes – in two languages - taking up 40% of the total teaching load (11 hours a week) in Year 9 and follow them up with systematic intensive language education throughout the further four years at school. Students of these special classes will spend 5 years at secondary school, i.e. take their school leaving exams in Year 13. This project will start in the academic year 2004-2005.
- The *World-Language Strategy* comprises ten programmes, three of which (the establishment of resource centres, introducing content-based teaching in secondary grammar and vocational schools) are defined for three languages (English, and French), one for six languages (a training programme to prepare teachers for the new school-leaving examination, which has been developed for six languages), one for any language other than English and German, and the remaining five for any language. This organisation is aimed at enhancing the development of programmes for all languages, not only for the current dominant two. There is also a special programme to support the teaching of less widely learned and taught languages.

This enables lesser-taught languages to be learned as first, second (or possibly third) foreign language in class throughout the period of education by one group of students at least (minimum required number of students is six), taking at least three lessons per week. Finally, one programme offers elementary language courses for several adult target groups, and pursuant to Act CI of 2001 on adult education, the act on personal income tax allows all adult citizens who have enrolled in an accredited language course to apply for tax benefit (see Section 2.1).

3.4.2 *BUILDING ON THE EXPERIENCE OF BILINGUAL AND MINORITY EDUCATION IN HUNGARY*

As indicated above, there are two types of schools where a language other than Hungarian is a medium of instruction: ‘bilingual schools’ and ‘minority schools’. The functional similarity is, however, misleading because they have different purposes:

- the purpose of bilingual schools is primarily to develop competence in a language other than Hungarian which is considered to be ‘foreign’ to Hungary
- the aim of minority schools is primarily to maintain a sense of belonging to the minority concerned as well as to Hungary, the language other than Hungarian being the main symbol of this. This sense of belonging is also evident through the presence of other symbols of minority identity and the creation of a strong community life, often by providing boarding-school facilities.

Both types of school have a history of successful education and their potential for education for plurilingualism could be further developed. The potential for developing an awareness of language and plurilingual competence is noted by teachers who see that learners who become bilingual in both types of school have an increased sensitivity to languages. On the other hand, the focus in minority schools on belonging to the minority may be an impediment to the actual development of plurilingual competence.

It could be useful to evaluate the reasons why both these types of school are successful and, in particular, how the potential for plurilingualism can be realised; the perceptions learners have of the purposes of the schools; the organisational factors which underlie their success; the effects on cultural identities and the perceptions of learners concerning other cultures and societies; and the modes of curricular organisation and teaching methods.

Furthermore, there is potential for mutual enrichment through closer co-operation between the two types of school in order to consider good practice in each and the ways in which each can inform the other. Co-operation could also include experience for teachers in both school types at pre-service and in-service stages. The current separation of the two school types and the institutional support for this, for example at Ministry level, would need to be overcome in order to enhance success in both.

3.4.3 *SIGN LANGUAGE USERS*

There are more than forty thousand deaf or people with serious hearing impairment in Hungary. Many of them are users of the Hungarian sign language representing a significant community.

In the 19th century and much of the 20th, deafness was considered as a disease and deaf children were given continuous medical treatment with the hope of improving their

hearing. The approach has changed over the past fifty years and developmental strategies and therapy have been introduced to develop hearing. Thus teaching, speaking and hearing of oral Hungarian has been the focus of education of deaf people for many decades.

The use of the natural language for the deaf, sign language, has been recognised only recently and still tends to be seen as an aid in communication and not as a prime medium of it. Sign language is not yet taught to deaf children as a component of the official school curriculum. They learn it from their peers during break time or through extra-curricular activities in the private sphere. Thus very few deaf people or sign language users realise that they share a special culture that needs protection and further development.

In its Recommendation 1598 (2003) ‘Protection of sign languages in the member States of the Council of Europe’ the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe presented a number of specific proposals which would give greater recognition to sign languages and to education in sign languages for deaf people, and future developments in Hungary will seek to consider these recommendations.

Possible options include:

- the creation of opportunities for learning through sign language in the education system, since sign language is the first language of deaf people;
- the training of teachers in preparation for working with deaf and hearing-impaired children in sign language;
- the introduction of bilingual education, i.e. sign language and Hungarian, as an option in education for deaf people;
- raising awareness about the nature of deafness and the importance of sign language, and offering courses in sign language to the families of the deaf and the wider community (preferably teachers, doctors and all other professionals who work with people);
- training of interpreters from and into sign language.

3.4.4 CURRICULUM

A relatively wide range of languages can be learnt in schools, but in the majority of schools only English or German is offered with, occasionally, French, Italian or Spanish in some larger schools. This is due to the fact that parents and pupils are mostly interested in the two dominant languages only. The *World-Language Strategy* attempts to compensate for this by including a special programme to support the teaching of less widely learned and taught languages (see Section 3.4.1).

This is an example of how the range of languages on offer can be increased by reviewing the curriculum longitudinally i.e. considering the languages offered to learners as they move from one sector of education to another both in and beyond compulsory education, from a life-long learning perspective.

In this situation, the structure of language education curricula could be devised in such a way that it ensures the acquisition of practical competences (e.g. in a modular system), and formal qualifications should be developed accordingly. For example, oral competences may be rated A1 in one language, while written competences are rated as C1 in another language, using the scales of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. However the pedagogical attitude required for improving partial/specific

competences has not yet become widespread among language teachers, although as shall be seen below, the *World-Language Strategy* includes major measures for teacher education.

With respect to *transversal* curriculum development, there is considerable potential to create co-operation among teachers of all languages, including Hungarian. The introduction of courses in 'Language Awareness' could provide a framework for helping individual language learners to develop an awareness of links and relationships among the languages they speak and learn, and the languages present in their environment. This could also be an opportunity to enhance language teachers' awareness of their responsibilities and identities as teachers of languages and not just of one language. For example, teachers of dominant languages such as English or German could integrate into their teaching an awareness and understanding of the nature of *all* languages. Finally, in addition to the encouragement of the *World-Language Strategy*, it is clear that some school principals are able to create an interest in plurilingualism by offering languages other than dominant languages using specific curricular designs, a practice which could be made better known and further developed. Heads of institutions could explain which measures they prefer in order to diversify the social expectations for languages and to ensure that these experiences are widely disseminated.

Experiments in creating regional or municipal centres for language learning, for children and adults of all ages, may be considered, in order to cater for the obvious needs currently met only by commercial language schools.

In general, further experimentation in curricular design could be encouraged, with models such as those suggested in the Council of Europe's *Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe*. Such experimentation could include training for school principals who play a pivotal role in curriculum innovation.

3.4.5 INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

In addition to the potential for co-operation among minority and bilingual schools noted above, other possibilities are:

- the organisation of mutual language-learning projects in border regions; it might be particularly useful to examine how neighbouring states organise the teaching of Hungarian as a second language in their territory and to envisage a rapprochement in this domain which could facilitate inter-regional and cross-border mobility and co-operation;
- teaching methods for distance learning, which is a fast developing area using new technologies, and the *World-Language Strategy* requires co-operation between IT and language teachers in all its programmes;
- more attention to staff and student exchanges to counteract the fall in recent years of the number of foreign visiting teachers, which continues to be limited to language teachers from target language countries or teachers of specialist subjects visiting bilingual schools.

Language learning in pre-school education is a topic for future consideration, and it is clear that if the conditions are right, the potential for language learning among pre-school children is high. There is a potential here for discussion and co-operation among different responsible authorities.

Finally, financial incentives are crucial for enhancing the status of language teaching in educational institutions. Hungary has already increased language teachers' salaries, as noted earlier, but further incentives for the promotion of language teaching might merit future consideration, for example special allowances to schools, to allow them to provide particular incentives for language teachers or, within the school budget, to allocate a certain amount of money exclusively to language teaching.

3.4.6 HIGHER EDUCATION

There exist a number of supportive features in the present situation with respect to the promotion of language learning in higher education.

- Language education policy defines the set of requirements for the formal recognition of vocationally-oriented language competences, in the output regulations related to higher education language teaching, independent of general language teaching objectives and requirements. It provides the necessary conditions (number of classes, teaching material) for meeting these requirements as a continuation of the students' previous language learning. It enables students with a B2 (*Common European Framework*) level of knowledge of two languages by the time they finish secondary education to take up a new language.
- Language teaching in higher education provides vocationally-oriented language teaching; therefore, participants in training may choose from a wide variety of languages for special purposes offered according to the most popular subjects and specialisations, thus improving the chances of finding employment on the labour market. Objectives related to vocationally-oriented language learning should be based specifically on developing plurilingualism for general rather than specific purposes, which need to be ensured by the output requirements set for secondary schools.
- Within the framework of higher education a large number of fully bilingual programmes has been launched (in addition to foreign language programmes abroad offered to foreign students or organised in Hungary), or some courses or programme modules are offered in a foreign language and are also fully accredited.
- The *World-Language Strategy* has a dedicated programme for language teaching in higher education where support is given to launching professional language courses in higher education institutions offering language courses for general purposes, developing credit courses in professional language and organising training in the methodology of teaching foreign languages for special purposes and in-service training.

It is clear that at this level there are specific needs, but universities also have other potential roles which merit further discussion in future considerations:

- to pursue the development of the plurilingual repertoire of students beyond strictly academic and professional considerations;
- to be an institution of language education based in a region, which means that they need to be placed in close synergy with other educational bodies that also have this responsibility, in particular with respect to continuing adult education;
- to plan their policy of European co-operation in relation to their language policies.

- The independence of universities in Hungary as in many other European countries, allows sufficient margin for manoeuvre for them to play their role to the full. They could therefore consider languages not as a secondary responsibility left to the individual initiative of the students or to the private language market, but as an educational and social responsibility. Institutions such as the Supreme Council of Universities might consider creating a means of co-ordinating these language questions.

Some future changes are already planned. Secondary school leaving ('maturity') exams will be taken at two levels – medium and advanced – from 2005. This new system of school-leaving examinations will replace university entrance examinations at the same time. It will be for individual universities to decide which level of school leaving exams they will accept for entrance. Some institutions of higher education might prefer advanced level school-leaving exams in the respective subjects, while others may be in the position to accept medium-level exams also. The *World-Language Strategy* includes a programme to provide a training course to prepare teachers for the new school-leaving examinations.

3.5 Quality issues – the efficiency and effectiveness of language teaching

The Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* has been translated into Hungarian and used in the design of the National Core Curriculum, the Frame Curriculum and the requirements of the school leaving examination. The *Common European Framework* can be used as an instrument to continue to ensure quality with regard to setting objectives and evaluating results.

3.5.1 MEASURING EFFICIENCY

There is as yet no mechanism in Hungary to evaluate the efficiency of foreign language teaching, for example with respect to the levels of attainment reached by learners in a given period of time and a given number of lessons. This applies both to institutions with special arrangements such as bilingual education, and to ordinary, mainstream institutions. In bilingual and minority education, there is widespread satisfaction with the quality of education and there is long and substantial experience which confirms the success of such institutions.

On the other hand, in the report produced by the National Institute of Public Education, *Education in Hungary 2000*, it is noted that international organisations 'put issues concerning the quality of education in the centre, whereas in Hungary considerations concerning the structure of schools are more dominant. One of the crucial reasons behind the structure-oriented thinking is the lack of information on the pedagogical efficiency of education' (p 130). Comparative studies of how and over how long a period specific *Common European Framework* levels are reached in other education systems would provide some indication of the effectiveness of Hungarian institutions.

The *European Language Portfolio* is being used as a tool to assist learners in planning, reflecting upon and evaluating their progress in language learning, and for recording their language competences in an internationally transparent manner. A Hungarian Portfolio has been developed for the formal education system and was one of the first to be validated for use by the Council of Europe. It could be more widely introduced in future developments into the school system to support other forms of assessment and to enhance the quality of

language learning and teaching. Moreover, the linguistic and cultural knowledge of pupils coming from a minority group ought also to be treated as an asset to be further developed and considered valuable both by the immediate environment and the majority population. This is especially important in the case of the language and culture of a minority carrying a social stigma. The *European Language Portfolio* is a valuable tool for achieving these goals also.

However, many people acquire languages outside formal education through exposure to languages in their family, in the social environment, through travel etc. The significance of this linguistic capital for individuals and society needs to be recognised and its quality assessed and recorded.

It is for these and related reasons that the *World-Language Strategy* makes use of the *European Language Portfolio* a requirement in all applications for funding in the strategy.

3.5.2 CREATING AND VERIFYING QUALITY

Methods of creating and verifying pedagogical quality in education include inspection by public authorities, comparative studies with institutions in other countries, reviews of teaching and learning methods and experimentation. For example, with respect to schools with special arrangements, it may be possible to consider comparative studies with bilingual and minority schools in other countries.

With respect to teaching methods, the potential for developing methods which exploit the geographical proximity of some languages to the languages spoken by learners in minority schools is a matter for future consideration. For example, there are suggestions in the Council of Europe *Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe* and supporting documents on how to exploit linguistic proximity and learners' sensitivity to languages. In connection with this, consideration could be given to admitting more students from the Hungarian-speaking majority to minority schools to allow them to develop their bilingual and plurilingual competence.

With respect to teaching materials, although there is a long-standing tradition of applying audiovisual media to support language learning and teaching in Hungarian language education, there are few good teaching materials in the form of audiovisual teaching aids for the languages of national and ethnic minorities, and there is scope for further development in this field in order to extend the provision of contemporary language learning and teaching materials in minority languages.

3.5.3 TEACHERS AND TEACHER TRAINING: PLURILINGUALISM AND QUALITY

In the *World-Language Strategy*, considerable emphasis is placed on teacher education for foreign language teachers:

- In six out of the nine relevant programmes there is a teacher training component in order to attach appropriate importance to the role of teacher quality. These courses are open to all language teachers working in public education, including those teaching in lower primary grades.
- Programme 4 is specially designed to develop the linguistic and methodological skills of language teachers.

- Programme 10 provides financial support for the organisation of relevant conferences or seminars and to the publication of professional publications.
- Programme 6 is intended to provide a training course which prepares teachers for the new school-leaving exam.

Language teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the culture specific aspects and the role of intercultural competence in language learning and teaching, and this is an area which will be developed further.

The number of language teachers taking up employment as school teachers is still limited but the new increased salaries for language teachers is expected to have a significant effect on this.

Language teachers should not be employed without having the minimum qualification required for teaching a certain age group. This is especially important in pre-school institutions and the first four years of primary school, as the language education of young children requires linguistically and methodologically well-qualified teachers. According to the Education Act as modified on 23 June 2003, teachers not qualified to teach languages are not entitled to be involved in teaching unless they start their requalification in higher education by 2006 at the latest. However, schools are often under pressure from parents to start language courses, a sign of the importance of linguistic capital in the eyes of many Hungarians today.

One option for future consideration could be a new structure which provides free or inexpensive language learning opportunities for all teachers in public education who do not have language subjects and who may obtain a qualification accordingly.

The following observations on teacher education might be taken into consideration as tasks for the future:

First-degree training

- The requirements related to teacher training emphasise the importance of skill-based language teaching. Therefore, the time frame determined for specialised methodology and the amount of credits might be increased as a form of positive discrimination, instead of philological, pedagogical and psychological courses. In addition to this, the number of classes required for teaching practice is currently a minimum of 30 hours, and in order to achieve this, the 111/1997 Decree and the related qualification requirements for teachers might be considered for amendment in view of achievements in teacher training programmes, which won international acclaim in the 1990s.

In language teacher-training programmes, in addition to the usual professional content new elements could be considered, e.g. intercultural learning, EU studies, the *Common European Framework* levels of assessment, the standardisation procedures for language assessment, vocationally-oriented language teaching methodology, with a view to future needs concerning the integration of European educational systems.

In the training of primary school teachers, more emphasis might be placed on the complementary linguistic training necessary to promote the language development

of 4-10 year old children, taking into consideration specific needs in early language teaching and the specific abilities of the age group. Language teachers and teacher educators are becoming aware that language teaching in the lower grades of the primary school is a highly-qualified teaching assignment mobilising special pedagogical skills, and is of fundamental importance for the future success of language learning.

- Subject to their progress and academic results, students of colleges and universities attending language teacher-training programmes might spend some time at a chosen higher education institution in a target country as part of their training, the credits awarded during training abroad being formally recognised in the course of their studies in Hungary on the basis of credit-transfer agreements.
- By the end of the teacher-training programme each language teacher with a single language could be encouraged to acquire a language certificate for another language.

Further professional development programmes for teachers

A key element of professional development programmes for language teachers is the application of modern information and communication technology in their teaching, and the *World-Language Strategy* pays particular attention to the links between language teaching and information technology. Teachers need help to develop new teaching material that satisfies the needs and interests of the students, and to learn about ways of applying and processing this new material. They also need the confidence to motivate students to find and process information relevant to their language-learning process on their own, thus promoting autonomous student behaviour in achieving their language-learning objectives.

To summarise, the main objectives of the professional development programmes for language teachers should be:

- the acquisition of skill and communication-oriented language teaching methodology and the new roles of teachers required by changing demands;
- knowledge of how to assess skill in communicative language proficiency, and the acquisition of assessment techniques, practice and skills needed for assessment;
- the development of learning strategies;
- the methodology of vocationally oriented language learning-language teaching.

These considerations may seem rather technical in a document such as this *Language Education Policy Profile*. However, it is essential not to underestimate the role of teachers in the realisation of language policies and, therefore, to give full attention to and ensure all the necessary investment in their initial and in-service training, their status and conditions of work, and their responsibilities with respect to the development of quality teaching.

In Hungary there is a particular awareness of these issues and an emphasis on teacher education as one of the keys to a successful language education policy, as is evident not only from the fact that the issue has been identified for future consideration in the medium term, but also from the immediate changes taking place in teacher salaries, in the programmes of the *World-Language* and in the attention paid to the work of the Council of Europe and the experience of other European countries.

4. Conclusion

A number of areas and issues for possible further development have become evident as a consequence of the review process which has led to this Language Education Policy Profile. These are not in any order of priority and are issues and areas which may be considered in due course as social needs and curricula continue to change and develop in the coming years.

Education for democratic citizenship

Given the significance of education for democratic citizenship as a priority of Council of Europe countries, the promotion of an understanding among the general public of the significance of languages for participatory citizenship in Hungary and Europe is important. It may be possible to experiment in new curricula or new elements of curricula for education in languages and democratic citizenship in order to facilitate active participation in social and democratic processes, and to deepen mutual understanding and linguistic tolerance.

National language capacity – future demographic, economic and social trends

As Hungary joins the European Union, it may be useful to consider an analysis of national language needs and capacities in languages and language competence in the population.

This could include:

- informing parents about needs for languages other than English – for economic, social, political and cultural purposes;
- increasing awareness of the importance of languages in the life of citizens with respect to diversity, linguistic rights and linguistic and cultural heritage;
- preparing to take account of the increasing importance of the linguistic and cultural heritage of immigrants and other new citizens.

Equal access to quality language education

The relationship of language and identity is a strong one and the teaching of Hungarian, as a mother tongue, and as a second language, has a particular part to play in the constitution of national identity and as well as a sense of belonging to Europe. It may be useful to consider how the changing social circumstances in Hungary and in Europe could imply a change in the ways Hungarian is taught.

The teaching of Roma / Gypsy languages and the education of the children of these groups is recognised as an extremely important issue and further developments based on the success of experiments already carried out can help to ensure inclusion of these children in Hungarian society, and the opportunity for them to maintain their identity and play a full part in Hungarian society.

In order to ensure coherence and a holistic approach to language teaching and learning, it may be helpful to consider creating a *National Languages Council* comprising officials, educationists, language specialists and members of civil society with the task of providing advice and support for new initiatives.

Plurilingualism of the learner

The approach to plurilingualism presented in this Profile presupposes a constant consideration of how language education can be an integrated and meaningful experience provided for all learners. There may, therefore, be a case for further experimentation with alternative curricular models for more diversified provision of languages in schools and post-compulsory education. This could be linked to the recognition and valorisation of the plurilingualism of the learner, in particular through the wide use of the *European Language Portfolio*, already established and validated by the Council of Europe.

A ‘global concept’ for integration and transversality in language education

There is scope for further promoting a global concept for language education, through a variety of initiatives, for example through a National Language Policy which includes all language education, in order to develop transversal co-ordination of planning at national, regional and local levels, and vertical co-ordination throughout the education system.

This could in particular include:

- creating greater co-operation between bilingual and minority schools, between these two and mainstream schools, and between bilingual schools in Hungary and bilingual schools (dealing with the same languages) across borders;
- introducing different models of bilingual/plurilingual education for a wider range of learners, for example through content and language integrated learning;
- developing new approaches to institutional provision in particular by improving the financial incentives enabling new models of learning and teaching.

Quality issues - efficiency and effectiveness

The relationship between time spent on language learning and the outcomes acquired is a constant focus in all education systems. There might be scope for developing new approaches to evaluating the efficiency of language teaching in terms of levels of competence achieved for time dedicated to teaching and learning.

This might include further improving the effectiveness of language teaching by:

- continuing research and development on new teaching methods;
- new systems of assessment and quality control using transparent measurable standards, as provided in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*;
- introducing more coherence in progression from one sector to the next and between formal and informal education through the use of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and *European Language Portfolio*;
- improvements in teacher education, in particular by creating a better understanding of the principles and practices of plurilingual education.

Most of these areas and issues are already part of the ongoing developments in the Hungarian education system. The current focus is on policy for foreign language teaching

with a policy strategy entitled *World-Language*, as has been pointed out earlier in this *Profile*.

It shows how Hungary is meeting the needs of contemporary society in respect of foreign language teaching and learning as they have been analysed above, in particular through programmes to:

- promote plurilingualism through the teaching of all languages, including less widely taught or used languages, and not only the currently dominant two
- support the use of the European Language Portfolio in public and adult education
- develop teachers' linguistic and methodological skills
- provide increased opportunities for teaching certain subjects (or parts of subjects) through a foreign language
- support lifelong learning in vocational and higher education, as well as adult education where individuals can also benefit from tax allowances
- support the setting up of resource centres in schools where language learning can be a source of new knowledge and enjoyment
- develop language teaching for disadvantaged children (social or ethnic or physical disadvantage), with appropriate teacher training.

This is the most important aspect of the evolution of policy and practice in foreign and second languages at the time of finalising this *Language Education Policy Profile* for Hungary.

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

Conventions:

- European Cultural Convention (19 December 1954)
- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, treaty open for signature on 5 November 1992 (<http://conventions.coe.int/>).
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, treaty open for signature on 1 February 1995 (<http://conventions.coe.int/>)

Policy recommendations:

- Resolution (69) 2 elaborated at the conclusion of the CDCC 'Major Project' established following upon the Conference of European Ministers of Education (Hamburg 1961)

Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (<http://www.coe.int/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 (<http://assembly.coe.int/>)

- Recommendation 1383 (1998) devoted to 'Linguistic Diversity'
- 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 the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe

- Resolution on the European Language Portfolio
20th Session, Cracow, Poland, 15 – 17 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. The *Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe* suggests options for the implementation of policies which include the teaching and learning of national/official languages, which for many, but not all individuals, are their mother tongue/first language. (www.coe.int/lang)

Guidance on European proficiency standards, and on diversification of the language curriculum, is contained in *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; learning, teaching, assessment*. (www.coe.int/portfolio)

Appendix 2

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