

2014
European Cultural Convention
60th Anniversary



Languages for democracy and social cohesion
Diversity, equity and quality

Sixty years of European co-operation

Language Policy Unit
DG II - Council of Europe, 2014

www.coe.int/lang

Languages for democracy and social cohesion
Diversity, equity and quality

Sixty years of European co-operation

Language Policy Unit
Education Policy Division
Education Department
Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation
Directorate General II - Democracy

Council of Europe, 2014

www.coe.int/lang

French version:

*Les langues pour la démocratie et la cohésion sociale.
Diversité, équité, qualité.*

Soixante ans de coopération européenne

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The Language Policy Unit's websites

Main website

Education and languages, language policy

www.coe.int/lang

Dedicated websites

Languages in education, languages for education

Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education

www.coe.int/lang-platform

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)

www.coe.int/lang-CEFR

European Language Portfolio

www.coe.int/portfolio

Languages of schooling

www.coe.int/lang-scol/fr

Linguistic integration of adult migrants

www.coe.int/lang-migrants

Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters

www.coe.int/lang-autobiography

European Day of Languages

www.coe.int/EDL

Introduction

This paper is a contribution by the Language Policy Unit¹ to the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention and a statement of the main thrusts of the Council of Europe's policy on access to languages for both children and adults.

The Cultural Convention², which was opened for signature on 19 December 1954, provides a framework for developing co-operation between member states in the fields of culture and education in line with the Council of Europe's core values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its purpose is, in particular, to foster mutual understanding between the countries of Europe by encouraging, among other things, the study of the languages, history and civilisations of the Parties to the Convention. For sixty years, the 50 Contracting Parties have accordingly participated in intergovernmental programmes in the field of language teaching and learning, thus creating a strong dynamic of co-operation. As a result of this long and fruitful co-operation, a common goal has been established for language teaching: *plurilingual and intercultural education*. In line with the goals of the Convention, this means promoting mutual understanding between people (intercultural education) and access to unfamiliar languages or insufficiently known aspects of one's own language (plurilingual education), based on the scientifically proven principle that languages (whatever they may be) support one another.

With this in mind, the choice was made to organise this document from a historical perspective, above all in order to highlight the process whereby the member states, through their interactions facilitated by the Council of Europe, have gradually evolved the concept of plurilingual and intercultural education since the 1950s.

For it is indeed the member states' commitment over the years to the Council of Europe's language education programmes which has permitted the development of this original educational perspective, which has attracted considerable attention even outside Europe. This intergovernmental co-operation continues to play a decisive role in the promotion of innovation and the pursuit of equity and quality in education as far as language teaching is concerned.

In accordance with the guidelines set for the Council of Europe's activities at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government (May 2005), the Language Policy Unit continues to move forward with the development of language policies and common standards in order to ensure that language teaching plays its full part in maintaining

¹ Educational Policy Division, Education Department, DG II, Council of Europe - Strasbourg

² Cultural Convention, [CETS No. 018](http://conventions.coe.int/Default.asp). Available online at: <http://conventions.coe.int/Default.asp>

cohesion both within and between states, given that language issues have major social implications which need to be managed in accordance with the Council of Europe's core values. Language teaching is not merely a question of teaching methods. It is a key area for language policies and democratic co-existence.

Council of Europe policies on language teaching/learning

Since 1957, when the first modern languages project was launched, the Council of Europe's Language Policy Unit³ has been active in the study and promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning under the European Cultural Convention, opened for signature on 19 December 1954. Article 2 of this Convention calls on signatory states to promote the reciprocal teaching and learning of their languages:

Each Contracting Party shall, insofar as may be possible,

- a. encourage the study by its own nationals of the languages, history and civilisation of the other Contracting Parties and grant facilities to those Parties to promote such studies in its territory, and*
- b. endeavour to promote the study of its languages, history and civilisation in the territory of the other Contracting Parties and grant facilities to the nationals of those Parties to pursue such studies in its territory.*

In keeping with the spirit of this article, the Council of Europe's work in the area of language education policy – i.e. the provision of teaching of foreign, and also regional, languages in national and regional education systems - has developed in response to member states' changing needs and priorities. These education systems offer language learning settings which ensure a certain equality of access for all learners to languages, proficiency in which is no longer reserved for the privileged few.

While respecting national sovereignty, especially in the field of education, where national traditions play a major role, the Council of Europe has joined with the member

For six decades : designing initiatives and instruments to develop language education policies

states in developing various forms of cross-cutting action as a basis for their co-operation in this area. Projects designed to promote the acquisition of effective communicative competences in foreign languages (by offering increased

opportunities for interaction and mobility) gave way to projects geared to the development of everyone's language skills, whatever the status of the languages concerned, via shared instruments, and then to education policy concerns centred more on the personal development and training of the democratic citizen in a Europe which had in the meantime become even more multilingual.

The Language Policy Unit's programmes cover the 50 states which have ratified the European Cultural Convention: for six decades its main focus has been the design of

³ Over the years, the name of the body in charge of projects has changed, as have its fields of action and responsibilities: after being known successively as the Modern Languages Section, Division, etc., the body in charge of language policy at the Council of Europe is now the Language Policy Unit. For the sake of consistency, this name will be used throughout the document.

instruments and initiatives for developing coherent language education policies encompassing all languages – for the learner’s benefit – in line with the Council of Europe’s values.

Being a unit of the Council of Europe’s Education Department, it adopts an approach centred more on speakers than on languages, in other words a learner-centred approach, taking account of the learner’s motivation, abilities and needs.

Timeline

- 1957 First intergovernmental conference on European co-operation in language teaching
- 1963 Launch of first major project on language teaching
- 1975 Publication of first *Threshold Level* specification
- 1989 New member states join intergovernmental projects (1989 onwards)
- 1994 European Centre for Modern Languages established (ECML – Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement, Graz)
- 2001 European Year of Languages
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and European Language Portfolio launched
- 2002 First “Language Education Policy Profile” (Hungary) launched
- 2005 Languages of schooling project launched
- 2006 Project on linguistic integration of adult migrants launched
- 2008 Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters launched
- 2009 Project on linguistic integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds launched
- 2010 Platform of resources for plurilingual and intercultural education launched
- 2013 “Linguistic integration of adult migrants” website launched

For the main recent events, see [Appendix A](#)

1. From “unit-credits” to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*

Early projects set out to democratise language learning and design technical instruments to facilitate the acquisition of communicative (and not only lexical and grammatical) competences. They sought to guide the member states in their search for the necessary innovations in teaching.

1.1 Projects from 1963 to 1988: from applied linguistics to Threshold Levels

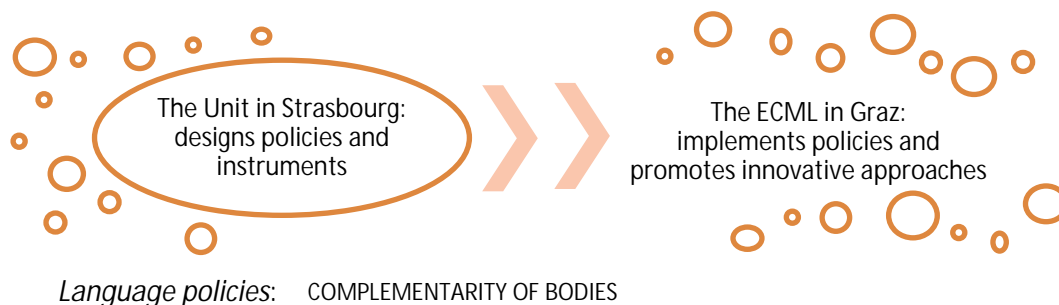
Following attempts to plan the development of modern language teaching in the late 1950s, the first major project in the modern languages field (1963-1972) sought to encourage international co-operation on the use of audio-visual methods and the development of applied linguistics, in particular by supporting the establishment of an International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA).

The feasibility of a unit-credit scheme for language learning in adult education was explored and this provided guiding principles for subsequent projects (1971- 1977). In particular, a model for specifying objectives was devised and served as the basis for the development, initially for English, of a shared reference instrument, the *Threshold Level*, in the mid-1970s. This is a specification of what a learner should be able to do independently when using a foreign language. It defines, in the form of inventories of words and expressions for a given language, the verbal resources needed to achieve that goal. The initial *Threshold Level* specification for English, together with the specification developed for French (*Un Niveau-Seuil*, 1976), provided the basic models which were subsequently adapted for almost thirty other languages. This instrument had a significant influence on the communicative approach to teaching and on national language teaching programmes, providing a basis for new national curricula and new textbooks. An intermediate objective (*Waystage*) and a higher-level objective (*Vantage*) were developed in the 1990s. These instruments earned the Council of Europe a reputation among language professionals which it still enjoys today.

In the *Language learning and teaching for communication* programme (1981 – 1988), the basic principles established in the first project were applied in a series of projects covering all sectors of education. Recommendation R (82) 18⁴ to member states concerning the results of CDCC Project No. 4 (Modern Languages 1971-1981) served as a framework for the reform of curricula, teaching methods and assessment throughout the 1980s. A schools interaction network played a major role in sharing expertise and experience between member states and in bringing innovation to classroom materials and methods. Teacher trainers were seen as key agents of this innovation and a series of international workshops on specific priority themes were organised by member states for them and other multipliers.

⁴ *Recommendation N° R (82) 18* of the Committee of Ministers to member states concerning modern languages. www.coe.int/lang → Resources → Recommendations

The period 1989-1997 saw the implementation of the *Language learning and democratic citizenship* programme and the decade-long development of what was destined to become one of the Council of Europe’s flagship projects, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR – see chapter 2). This period was marked by the rapid enlargement of the Council of Europe and the enrichment of the programme through the participation of the newer member states from Central and Eastern Europe. A series of “new-style” twinned workshops was organised on issues such as information and communication technologies, bilingual education, vocationally oriented language teaching, educational links and exchanges, learner autonomy and enriched models for specifying objectives. In keeping with the member states’ wishes, co-operation continued to revolve chiefly around foreign language teaching issues, contributing to quality teaching. But wider concerns were coming to the fore, as reflected in the title of the project (“democratic citizenship”) and especially the conclusions and recommendations drawn up at the final conference held in Strasbourg in 1997. These were the basis for the important Recommendation N° R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states⁵ concerning modern languages. This recommendation emphasises the role of intercultural communication and plurilingualism as key policy objectives. It also specifies concrete measures to be taken in the different areas of education and in initial and in-service teacher training.



This period was also marked by the setting up of a new body, the European Centre for Modern Languages⁶ (ECML), an enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, on the initiative of eight member states. While the Unit’s activities covered policy, practice and training, the member states’ needs increased exponentially after 1989 and the establishment of the ECML provided a concrete response. According to Article 1 of its Statute, the centre has as its mission “the implementation of language policies” and “the promotion of innovative approaches to the learning and teaching of modern languages”. Since the ECML was set up, the Unit in Strasbourg has been able to devote itself fully to language policy issues.

⁵ [Recommendation N° R\(98\)6](#) adopted on 17 March 1998

⁶ The ECML is based in Graz (Austria) and has 33 member states as of 2014 – www.ecml.at

The complementarity between these two Education Department bodies responsible for educational policy and practice has become very tangible and clear in connection with the approaches and tools developed by the Language Policy Unit. The ECML uses them as reference documents in projects concerned with the training of language professionals and offers its assistance to interested member states.

Two examples, among others, serve to illustrate this complementarity:

i) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*

- Language Policy Unit: development of the CEFR and of two handbooks⁷ for examiners;
- ECML (with the support of the European Commission): offer of assistance to the member states in the use of the CEFR and handbooks in order to link national examinations to the CEFR and thus obtain comparable results at European level;

ii) *Teaching of Romani*

- Language Policy Unit: development of a *Curriculum Framework for Romani* and of two versions of the European Language Portfolio adapted to the Rom culture;
- ECLM: training professionals to use this framework and the ELPs.

This division of labour also helps to forge links between professionals in the language education field and decision-makers responsible for language education policies.

1.2 From communicative teaching to plurilingualism: the 1990s

Recommendation (98) 6 brings together the results of previous programmes and gives a more specific slant to the Council of Europe's work by setting out a vision of language teaching which is common to the member states and is no longer simply an extension of shared professional and scientific knowledge.

Plurilingualism is thus seen as a form of specific competence⁸ to be instilled in learners, in contrast to the stereotype of a high degree of proficiency – very similar to that of a native speaker – in just one “useful” language (usually English). Plurilingual competence is the ability to use several languages (to differing degrees) and permits contact with other cultures, which means that relations between citizens of the member states do not have to be conducted only in an international *lingua franca*, but via all possible linguistic resources. If there is one language which Europe needs, that is plurilingualism.

⁷ *Manual for relating language examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*; *Manual for language test development and examining*; and other materials

⁸ whose acquisition should be facilitated by school

Recommendation N° R (98) 6 encourages member states to promote widespread plurilingualism (*excerpts*):

- by encouraging all Europeans to achieve a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages;
- by diversifying the languages on offer and setting objectives appropriate to each language;
- by encouraging teaching programmes at all levels that use a flexible approach - including modular courses and those which aim to develop partial competences - and giving them appropriate recognition in national qualification systems, in particular public examinations;
- by encouraging the use of foreign languages in the teaching of non-linguistic subjects (for example history, geography, mathematics) and creating favourable conditions for such teaching;
- by facilitating lifelong language learning through the provision of appropriate resources.

This is not an unrealistic goal, as will be made clear in due course, but in this period it was reflected in an imperceptible shift from talking about diversity as a democratic value in itself to talking about learners’ “internal” diversity as a value for learners themselves.

The medium-term project *Language Policies for a Multilingual and Multicultural Europe* (1997-2001) was among the priorities established as part of the follow-up to the 2nd Council of Europe Summit (October 1997). The activities were designed to assist national authorities in promoting plurilingualism and pluriculturalism and in increasing public awareness of the part played by languages in forging a European identity. The diversification and optimisation of language learning/teaching gave rise to further developments. In particular, language learning from the start of schooling was extensively promoted as a means of making each learner aware of Europe’s linguistic and cultural diversity; several countries subsequently modified their curricula accordingly. The development and implementation of common European reference instruments for the planning and assessment of language learning, the mutual recognition of qualifications and the co-ordination of policies were continued.

This project concluded with the *European Year of Languages*⁹ (2001) and the official launch of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and the *European Language Portfolio* (see section 2). Following this campaign – organised

⁹ The idea of a campaign to raise awareness among European citizens of the richness and diversity of the linguistic and cultural heritage was put forward at the intergovernmental conference on “Language learning for a new Europe” organised by the Unit in April 1997.

jointly with the European Union – the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, responding to a Recommendation from the Parliamentary Assembly, designated 26 September each year as *European Day of Languages*¹⁰.

From a policy angle, namely the role played by foreign languages in democratic societies, this period saw the spread of the concept of plurilingualism as a characteristic of people (as distinct from multilingualism, which applies to geographical areas). Europe is defined as a multilingual continent and all its languages, as means of communication and an expression of identity, have the same value for people.

European citizens should be able to acquire the desired level of communicative competence in the languages of interest to them, and they

should be able to do so throughout their lives according to their needs and wishes. All the more so as the building of smooth and rewarding interpersonal relations depends also on being able to communicate in languages other than one's own, if only in terms of understanding, if each individual speaks in his or her own language but is understood by the other speaker. Making plurilingualism a policy focus means contributing to equality of

opportunity in personal development, education and cultural enrichment, which depend partly on opportunities for lifelong language learning. It also means seeking to increase the cultural diversity (in particular that of minorities) guaranteed by democracies, focusing greater attention on linguistic rights and fostering mutual understanding, all these things being prerequisites for the preservation of social cohesion.

"Multilingualism" refers to the presence, in a geographical area, of more than one 'variety of language', regardless of status

"Plurilingualism" refers to the repertoire of varieties of language which individuals may use – whatever their status and at whatever level

¹⁰ www.coe.int/EDL

2. From the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* to plurilingual and intercultural education

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment*¹¹ (hereafter abbreviated as CEFR) was drafted over a period of 10 years. After publication of the final version in 2001, because of its inherent merit, it was disseminated widely throughout Europe and beyond¹²; the many translations of the original English/French versions bear witness to this¹³.

The CEFR: a policy instrument serving plurilingualism and cultural diversity

As its title clearly indicates, it constitutes a reference framework, not a standard-setting instrument. It was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the development of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency.

The CEFR is a policy instrument serving plurilingualism. Its dissemination helped to promote a wider interpretation of *plurilingualism* (and *plurilingual competence*) as an educational goal embodying, as far as languages are concerned, the core values of the Council of Europe. In a conception of language teaching based on those values, what is of fundamental importance is not so much the language learnt as the people who speak it, the variety of languages which they speak and which they can share in interpersonal dialogue and as democratic citizens. The CEFR is learner-centred.

The CEFR is a descriptive tool serving plurilingualism. Its functions are :

- to provide coherence and transparency in language teaching by offering a set of common criteria for the development of curricula, syllabuses and teaching materials and the assessment of knowledge;
- to offer language professionals a common basis and language for reflection in order to facilitate communication between operators and policy-makers, education sectors and national educational cultures;
- to provide common reference points to facilitate national and international co-ordination in planning language teaching and in relating examinations to shared standards defining, for example, the kinds of knowledge and competences to be acquired and proficiency levels.

The notion of plurilingual speakers was explored in depth in a preparatory study published in 1997 (when the CEFR was still at a provisional stage). The study bore the subtitle *Towards a Common European Framework of Reference for language learning*

¹¹ The English version of the CEFR is published by Cambridge University Press and the French version by Didier (Paris). It is also available online on the Unit's website: www.coe.int/lang-CEFR

¹² France adopted it by decree as soon as it was launched and it is now the official reference framework for most of the member states

¹³ The CEFR exists in 40 language versions, including non-European languages.

and teaching¹⁴ and was incorporated into the CEFR, becoming one of its key components. The CEFR departs from the perspective that “native-speaker” competence is the goal for everyone and the only real language competence and suggests that bilingualism should be regarded as a particular case of individual language competence organisation.

In the final years of the 1990s, when the CEFR was already circulating in provisional form and gaining a wide audience and considerable legitimacy (including in academic circles), the *Modern Languages Division* logically became the *Language Policy Division* (now Unit) because there had been a shift from concerns relating to ways of teaching to activities focusing more on the structural organisation of language teaching (in other words, the design of language education). It was also during this period that the ECML was founded (see chapter 1).

The CEFR: a tool for certification

The CEFR describes foreign language proficiency at six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2. It sets out in detail what a competent user of a language must be able to do in order to communicate effectively with other users of the language. It offers illustrative descriptors for language activities and competences at six levels of proficiency, from the most basic (A1) to the highest (C2). The six ascending levels of proficiency describe in positive terms what learners *can do* and enable them to assess the extent to which they can fulfil reference tasks.

Based on empirical research and widespread consultation, this scheme makes it possible to compare tests and examinations in different languages (see the section *The CEFR and language examinations: a toolkit* on the Language Policy Unit’s website).

The CEFR descriptors offer a reliable and shared basis for defining language competences (their nature and the different degrees of proficiency in them). They have been adopted by bodies offering language certifications, including most members of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). Because these descriptors are non-language-specific, they allow comparison and mutual recognition of qualifications across languages, thus fostering educational and professional mobility. To facilitate this process, a manual¹⁵ sets out transparent, practical procedures to assist examination providers in establishing reliable links with the CEFR levels. This manual was supplemented in 2011 with a *Manual for language test development and examining*¹⁶ and other tools¹⁷.

¹⁴ Coste D., Moore D. & Zarate G. (1997): *Plurilingual and intercultural competence*, Strasbourg, Language Policy Unit, Council of Europe. Available online at www.coe.int/lang.

¹⁵ Manual for ‘*Relating language examinations to the CEFR*’

¹⁶ drafted by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE – www.ALTE.org) for the Language Policy Unit. [Online](#): see below.

¹⁷ Website www.coe.int/lang → section *The CEFR and language examinations: a toolkit*

Co-operation with the European Union

Practical co-operation was established with the European Union, as mentioned above in connection with Europass. The CEFR was adopted very quickly by the European Union: as early as 2001, a Resolution¹⁸ of the European Council recommended that member states use the CEFR to validate language competences. In 2002, the European Council decided to establish a European Indicator of Language Competence based on the CEFR. Since 2013, the European Commission has been providing financial support to an ECML project to help member states relate national test or examination results to the CEFR reference levels using two manuals produced by the Language Policy Unit for this purpose.

Responsibility of member states in the use of common references

The clear “success” of the CEFR has significantly changed the context in which language teaching and assessment of language learning outcomes now take place in Europe.

An [Intergovernmental Forum](#) on "*The CEFR and the development of language policies: challenges and responsibilities*" was held in 2007 to debate a number of policy issues raised by the rapid adoption of the CEFR in Europe and the increasingly widespread use of its

proficiency levels. This Forum had significant consequences: in particular a [Recommendation](#)¹⁹ was addressed by the Committee of Ministers to member states on the use of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR).

As follow-up to the 2007 Forum, new initiatives were aimed at developing the richness of the CEFR beyond the proficiency scales. A '[Platform of resources and references](#) for plurilingual and intercultural education' was established to this end (see 3.3.1).

The CEFR: an instrument for the organisation of language learning/teaching

But the CEFR is also a technical instrument whose function is to list in a structured, analytical way the most important parameters involved in language learning/teaching and to give explicit and transparent descriptions of them so that they can be identified across languages and national boundaries. Hence the importance of the definitions proposed and the terminology adopted, which are intended to be common for all. The overall perspective adopted is action-oriented because, in order to develop a theoretical model of the learner (and learning), the learner is viewed as a social agent with tasks to perform: his/her language activities are set in a social context. This document seeks to facilitate exchanges between practitioners by proposing shared analytical tools and categories. It is not intended to be prescriptive and it states clearly that its purpose is not to promote any particular form of teaching or assessment.

¹⁸ [Resolution](#) of the Council of the European Union adopted in 2002 (N° 14757/01)

¹⁹ Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)7 adopted in 2008 on “the use of the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the promotion of plurilingualism”.

See www.coe.int/lang → Resources → Conventions/Recommendations

3. Towards plurilingual and intercultural education (2001/2002-2014)

The dissemination of the CEFR, whose 6 reference levels were very extensively adopted by member states' education systems, created other needs, to which the Language Policy Unit responded by establishing new instruments.

3.1 Developments relating to the CEFR

The CEFR does not deal with any language in particular, but with the teaching of all foreign languages: this is so obvious that it is not specified in the title. It constitutes the necessary underlying model for the *Threshold Levels*.

3.1.1 The CEFR's Reference Level Descriptions (RLDs) for national and regional languages

Growing expectations regarding the use of the CEFR led to the production of further “anchoring instruments” because, for textbook writers and teachers, the specifications of the CEFR, which do not relate to any language in particular, might still have been too wide. The *Reference Level Descriptions for national and regional languages* (RLD) were created to fill this gap. These are inventories which, language by language and CEFR level by CEFR level, specify the linguistic forms corresponding to a certain communicative competence. A CEFR descriptor such as *describing how to do something, giving detailed instructions* (in B1) does not specify what vocabulary or syntactic resources are necessary for this purpose. These RLDs are sets of shared benchmarks whose function is to describe possible teaching content in the form of “word” inventories, and they can serve as a basis for the development of language teaching syllabuses that are comparable yet different, whether the language is being taught as a first, second or foreign language or as the language of instruction.

These specifications of content by language are modelled on the CEFR. They have the same status as the old *Threshold Levels*, but derive from a common “model” which was lacking in their case. This new wave of reference descriptions goes in sets of six. They were developed initially for German, then for other languages²⁰.

The sole purpose of these language-by-language descriptions of the CEFR reference levels is to provide a common platform for designers of teaching materials. They are used in particular for the setting of language certification tests. The RLDs have made the CEFR operational at a level familiar to teachers: that of forms (vocabulary, grammar) to be taught.

3.1.2 The European Language Portfolio

The *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) was designed to make the CEFR directly useful to learners. It is a document aimed at learners, for classroom or independent use.

²⁰ A list of reference descriptions together with a *Guide for the production of RLDs* and a review of developments so far can be found on the website www.coe.int/lang → Descriptions of reference levels.

The *European Language Portfolio* is a personal document divided into three parts: a language passport, a language biography and a dossier. The ELP allows its owner to document linguistic knowledge and competences already acquired and to confirm that self-assessment by means of official qualifications. It invites learners to set learning targets, always with reference to CEFR competence descriptors. It is therefore a key instrument for reflective learning and for fostering learner autonomy. Its fundamental purpose is to give value to all language learning experiences. The important thing is that it should be used to highlight the diversity of learners' language repertoires, whatever their make-up in terms of the languages used by each individual (national or regional languages, languages of origin, foreign languages, languages of neighbouring countries or regions, minority languages, etc.).

Versions of the ELP have been created for learners of all ages in all education sectors in a great many Council of Europe member states. One of the three components of the ELP, the *language passport*, is part of the *Europass* scheme. The electronic version of this document was developed by the Language Policy Unit and CEDEFOP, the body in charge of *Europass* for the European Commission. One of the other *Europass* documents (there are five in all) is the Curriculum Vitae, in which citizens are invited to indicate their linguistic competences in terms of CEFR levels.

The ELP has enjoyed undeniable success since it was launched in 2001: over 130 ELP models had been validated by the Council of Europe by the end 2014 (when registration ceased). ELP designers can rely on the many models and templates available on the dedicated website²¹ to continue development.

3.1.3 The CEFR in specific contexts

The CEFR does not offer ready-made solutions. It always has to be adapted to the needs of specific contexts and it is therefore an instrument that can be tailored to a wide range of contexts, such as sign language, Romani or adult migrants.

The example of Romani

There is little teaching material in Europe concerning the teaching/learning of varieties of **Romani**. To help the authorities design appropriate syllabuses, but also to help textbook designers and teachers, the Language Policy Unit developed a *Curriculum framework for Romani*²²; in addition to this, two versions of the European Language Portfolio were produced for learners.

The linguistic integration of adult migrants

Where adult migrants are concerned (see 3.2.2), it is particularly important that the description system and competence levels of the CEFR should be carefully interpreted

²¹ Dedicated website: www.coe.int/portfolio → *Development of ELP models*

²² This material is available in several languages and varieties of Romani: www.coe.int/lang → Romani

and adapted when it comes to analysing their communication needs and evaluating their proficiency in the language of the host country.

3.2 Political co-operation activities

Concerns relating to plurilingualism are central to the educational instruments described above. Member states have decided to use them at strategic levels of the education system having direct implications for national or regional policies. For this purpose, the Language Policy Unit developed and has made available to member states since 2002 a system of dialogue and expert assistance to help them with analysis of their language education policies and with their plans to put in place an overall language teaching strategy geared to plurilingualism (3.2.1).

In addition to this, other language policy issues outside formal education and the widening scope of the CEFR led the Language Policy Unit to focus its attention on questions relating to the linguistic integration of adult migrants (3.2.2).

A *Profile* involves several stages:

- Preparation of a Country (or Regional / City) Report by the authorities describing and evaluating current policy and outlining new or planned initiatives;
- Study visit by a Council of Europe expert group who subsequently draw up a *draft Profile* which is discussed with at a round table or consultation forum with the national (or regional etc.) authorities;
- Production of the final version of the *Language Education Policy Profile*.

3.2.1 Language education policy profiles

The "Profiles": a process of assisted self-assessment

The Council of Europe offers international expert assistance to member states wishing to analyse their language education policies. Its intention in so doing is to enable member states or other entities (regional or local authorities, for example) to carry out self-assessment in the language education policy field in consultation with Council of Europe experts with the main aim of identifying possible and desirable developments in that policy area. Joining the *Profiles* process does not mean submitting to external evaluation; it is a process of reflection conducted by the responsible authorities, which also involves civil society and in which the Council of Europe experts act as catalysts.

In the *Profile*²³ process, language education as a whole is assessed. In their report, the experts focus in particular on education for plurilingualism and the teaching and learning of national or official languages as languages of schooling, foreign

²³ For a detailed description and a list of Profiles produced, see the Unit's website: [Language Education Policy Profiles](#).

languages or regional or minority languages. Each country's Language Education Policy Profile includes a description of the current situation in which all viewpoints are reflected. It also includes proposals for future action.

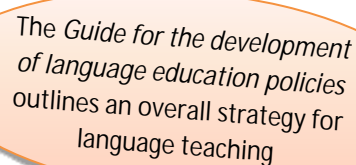
Since the system was introduced, 17 *Profiles* have been produced. They have led states to be more aware of the issues involved in, and the need for, plurilingual education; they have prompted corresponding adjustments to education systems and, in some cases, large-scale reforms.

Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies

To help member states with their plans for putting in place an overall language teaching strategy, and also to support the Profile process (see above), the Language Policy Unit produced a framework document²⁴ *From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education. Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* (2003), which outlines an overall strategy for language teaching. It establishes a link with Chapter 8 of the CEFR (Linguistic Diversity and the Curriculum) and sets out to explain the Council of Europe Recommendations already subscribed to by the member states (in particular Recommendation (98) 6) concerning linguistic diversification²⁵).

This instrument helps member states to study ways of implementing language education policies which contribute to social cohesion and to the education of learners as democratic citizens, and which promote linguistic diversity in societies (multilingualism) and plurilingualism of speakers.

This *Guide* goes beyond the field of foreign language teaching/learning proper and positions itself at the level of strategic organisation, and hence education policy. It is not merely concerned with diversifying language provision, but sets out to define concrete forms of plurilingual education covering all taught languages, including the language used for learning/teaching (language of schooling). Languages in pupils' repertoires which are not taught at school are also taken into account. The *Guide* explains the concept of plurilingualism and lists ways of implementing it in practice, in terms of organisation and teaching methods.



The *Guide for the development of language education policies* outlines an overall strategy for language teaching

It is aimed at all decision-makers in this field, from head teachers to MPs and ministers, and also at all those to whom languages are of concern: learners, teachers, employers etc. Like the CEFR, it is not prescriptive, in the sense that it does not describe solutions to be adopted but seeks to bring out principles that can serve as a starting-point for addressing comparable problems in the context of intergovernmental co-operation.

²⁴ Accompanied by reference studies. *Main version* and *Executive version* online at: www.coe.int/lang

²⁵ [Recommendation](#) of the Parliamentary Assembly to the Committee of Ministers on linguistic diversification, 1998. www.coe.int/lang → Resources / Recommendations

The *Guide* has been put into practice via the *Language Education Policy Profile* process described above. The *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* is also very useful for producing ‘Profiles’ (see detailed description in section 3.3.2).

3.2.2 Linguistic integration of adult migrants (LIAM)

Already in the 1970s, with the industrialised nations seeking to encourage immigration in order to remedy labour shortages, the Policy Unit was studying the question of migrant workers’ needs in terms of proficiency in the language of the host country²⁶. But the project was discontinued and it was only some thirty years later that this issue came under the spotlight again, albeit in a very different context.

A project was launched in 2006 to help member states with their policies for the linguistic integration of adult migrants by offering practical support (see 3.1) and resources that could be adapted to different contexts.

While the issue of how children from a migrant background²⁷ are dealt with in education systems has given rise to extensive research and to a wide range of responses in the member states, questions relating to the language education of adult migrants and language tests still raise many problems, including directly relevant human rights issues: can migrants be “obliged” to attend language courses? Are language tests as a precondition for obtaining a residence permit or nationality fair and transparent or do they not in fact conceal forms of discrimination? It was against this background that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation²⁸ in 2014 entitled *Integration tests: helping or hindering integration?*



The LIAM Project offers support to member states in designing language policies to foster the integration of adult migrants

This Recommendation – which emphasises the importance of the Language Policy Unit’s work – follows on from a series of earlier initiatives by the Council of Europe, which has been dealing with questions relating to migrants’ acquisition of proficiency in the language of the host country since 1968²⁹.

Although, in its preamble, the European Cultural Convention was not aimed at an audience of adult migrants, the goals of the project are fully in keeping with the spirit of

²⁶ *The language needs of adult migrants*, Report, 1973. D.A. Wilkins. Council of Europe. CCC/EES (73) 30

²⁷ The Language Policy Unit sees this work as forming an integral part of the languages of schooling project – see 3.3.3

²⁸ Adopted in January 2014. [Recommendation 2034 \(2014\)](#) addressed to the Committee of Ministers

²⁹ See the compilation produced by the Language Policy Unit: [Extracts](#) from Council of Europe Conventions and Recommendations/Resolutions by the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers (1968-2014). Online at: www.coe.int/lang-migrants

the Convention, given that “the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose, among others, of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage” and that “the achievement of this aim would be furthered by a greater understanding of one another among the peoples of Europe”.

In order to assist member states in this area of current political concern, the Language Policy Unit has produced a range of resources³⁰ in the form of studies, guidelines for reflection (for example, on the *CEFR and levels of proficiency* or *Language courses and assessment*) and framework documents such as *Linguistic integration of adult migrants. Guide to policy development and implementation*. Tools have also been designed, such as the *Self-assessment handbook for providers of courses* or a specific version of the European Language Portfolio. The Unit conducts surveys³¹ of states’ language training and testing arrangements, organises intergovernmental conferences and runs practical activities in individual countries.

One of the key tools is its dedicated website (www.coe.int/lang-migrants), whose main aims are to:

- provide assistance to member states in developing coherent and effective policies and in reviewing existing policies in keeping with shared Council of Europe values and principles;
- provide practical support for the effective implementation of policy;
- encourage good practice and high quality in the provision of language courses and in assessment of language proficiency;
- offer a platform that enables member states to reflect on policy and practice in this area.

These issues are viewed from the angle of equity and plurilingualism and in accordance with the Council of Europe’s values and principles. Equity can be guaranteed through the quality of the courses offered to (or imposed on) migrants in response to their specific needs. Courses should, as far as possible, be “made to measure” because migrants exhibit great linguistic diversity: “migrant” is not a linguistic category. The plurilingual perspective calls for migrants’ languages of origin to be taken into account and used in learning of the host country’s language, in order to confer legitimacy on them and ensure that they are passed on, at least within the family. This means viewing integration also from the migrant’s perspective and not solely in terms of learning the host society’s language(s) or taking tests whose relevance to integration has not been

³⁰ LIAM website → ‘Categories’ (see also research by key terms)

³¹ 42 of the 47 Council of Europe member states participated in at least one of the three surveys conducted in 2008, 2010 and 2013. See [Survey report](#) (2014)

proved. Successful integration is a two-way process, involving rights and responsibilities not only on the part of migrants but also on the part of the host society³².

3.3 Plurilingual and intercultural education as a value and as a concept

We have seen how the concept of plurilingualism grew out of the notion of linguistic diversity. After being set forth clearly as a *competence* in the 1997 study, it was given a central but still fairly discreet place in the CEFR. The *Guide for the development of language education policies* described it as a holistic approach to language education, not confined to modern/foreign languages but including all languages taught or present in school, such as “mother tongues”/first languages and those used for teaching (languages of schooling). The successive shifts in the concept have resulted in a comprehensive project now known as *plurilingual and intercultural education* – a concept serving the values of the Council of Europe.

Plurilingual education recognises that the “plurilingual competence” which it is its role to develop through teaching comprises psycho-cognitive, didactic, social and political dimensions, which can all constitute common goals for European language education policies:

- plurilingual competence is present in all individuals, who are all potentially or actually plurilingual; this competence gives concrete expression to the language faculty which is part of every human being’s genetic make-up and can be invested in several languages. It is for school to ensure the harmonious development of everyone’s plurilingual competence in the same way as their physical, cognitive or creative abilities;

- plurilingual competence is one of the foundations of democratic “living together”. If we recognise the diversity of languages in our own repertoire and the diversity of their functions and value, this awareness of diversity that we carry within us will foster a positive perception of other people’s languages. The promotion of plurilingualism is therefore one of the foundations of an education in linguistic tolerance viewed as a form of intercultural education.

The Council of Europe puts *speakers* and not languages at the center of policy issues. The development of individual plurilingualism can become a common goal of European countries’ language education policies.

The promotion of plurilingualism is therefore one of the foundations of a critical education in linguistic tolerance. Language teaching, and particularly the teaching of the most sought-after languages (such as English), should lead learners/users to adopt this kind of open-minded and enlightened attitude and to realise that the development of

³² This approach has been repeatedly reaffirmed not only by the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance ([ECRI](#)), but also by the European Union.

their plurilingual competence is one of the prerequisites for educational success and self-fulfilment.

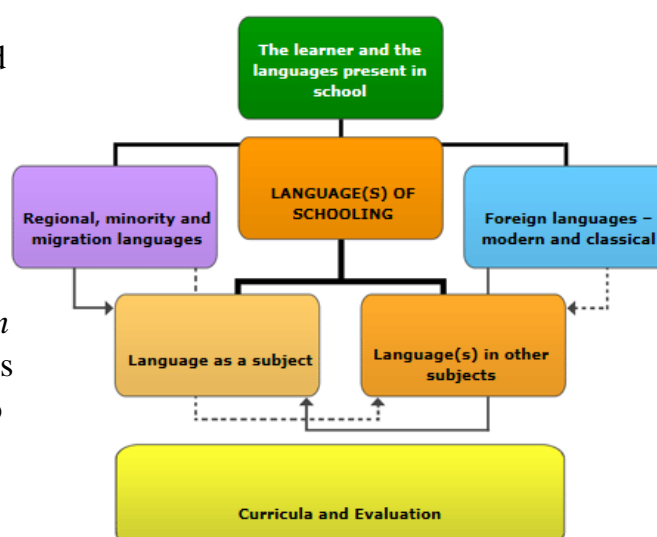
Over the years, the goals of plurilingual education have been fleshed out and formulated in more practical terms.

3.3.1 The Platform of Resources and References for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education

The plurilingual and intercultural education perspective has been given concrete form in a *platform for plurilingual and intercultural education* entitled *Languages in education, languages for education*, available as a dedicated website³³ created in 2009.

This platform embraces issues relating to languages of schooling and the linguistic dimensions of the teaching of knowledge in different subjects (history, science, maths, literature etc.) while establishing a clear link with issues relating to foreign, regional, minority or migrant languages.

Along with studies, research papers and reports, it includes another significant document setting out the Council of Europe’s language education policy: the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* (2010³⁴) which deals in depth with ways of organising the curriculum in order to ensure convergence between language courses (see section 3.3.2).



This *Platform* interlinks concepts and documents in a network structure, as reflected in the box diagram on its homepage.

Via this new instrument, the Council of Europe continues to present the development of individual plurilingualism as a common goal of European countries’ language education policies. The individual speaker’s plurilingual repertoire is no longer perceived as consisting solely of the languages learnt in the family and the foreign/regional languages taught at school.

It also includes the languages of schooling: language as subject (“French” lessons in France, “German” lessons in Germany, etc.) and the language of other subjects (maths, geography, etc.), because the textual genres employed there lie outside the ordinary experience of learners and require targeted teaching.

³³ www.coe.int/lang-platform

³⁴ revision in progress in 2014

The *Platform* embraces all the languages of school, including those which are used but not taught there.

The *Platform* is an open and dynamic resource providing a system of definitions, points of reference, descriptions and descriptors, studies and good practices

As regards the languages of schooling, they are not necessarily the first languages of all learners. The role of school is to expand the learner's repertoire through an increasing command of discourse genres and a wide range of different language experiences.

3.3.2 Cross-cutting links and convergences in language teaching

It is the links across school subjects which contribute to plurilingual and intercultural education. Without denying the specific nature of each school subject, the plurilingual and intercultural education perspective aims to make decision-makers and language teachers aware of the fact that they have a shared responsibility across subjects, particularly as regards the most vulnerable learners. The possible forms that this convergence may take are discussed in particular in the following document available on the platform: the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*³⁵.

The *Guide* suggests ways of structuring curricula in order to ensure convergence in language teaching. It sets out principles for curricula and cross-cutting activities: plurilingual education does not consist in teaching more languages in parallel but in ensuring convergence in their teaching in order to develop plurilingual competence. In practical terms this means, among other things:

- setting common goals for language teaching related to educational values (plurilingual and intercultural education), including an explicit awareness of the diversity of languages (their structure, status, history, behavioural aspects, discourse genres etc.);
- the presence of convergent learning goals relating to intercultural education and the building of democratic citizenship;
- the presence of teaching goals specified by means of general descriptors (CEFR) or on the basis of reference descriptions expressing these descriptors in forms specific to each language (RLD);
- identifying cross-cutting communicative competences (e.g. written reception in official/minority/foreign languages taught as subjects);
- providing indications concerning comparable or convergent teaching methods depending on the specific role assigned to each language in learning ;

The *Guide for the development...* deals in depth with ways of organising the curriculum in order to ensure convergence between language courses

³⁵ See www.coe.int/lang-platform: → diagram → *Curricula and Evaluation*

- [...]

It is possible to change existing curricula step by step in order to achieve forms of convergence in language teaching without any upheaval.

3.3.3 Languages of schooling: a central element in all plurilingual and intercultural education

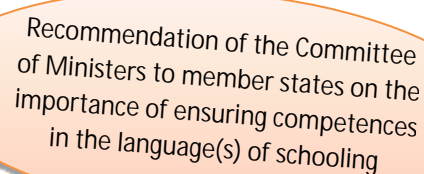
This project is aimed at developing learners' competences in the language(s) of schooling³⁶, which are essential for equity in education and educational success.

In school subjects (such as history, maths, literature, science etc.), language is not just a medium. Different forms of academic discourse are present in language and share the common characteristic of being unfamiliar to all learners because they lie outside their immediate experience (the *I-here-now*). A command of these forms of language is essential to the acquisition of subject-based knowledge and hence to educational success.

This concerns all pupils because these forms of language have to be learnt/taught. They are not acquired naturally. For pupils from an immigrant background, and especially those who have arrived recently and do not speak the host country's language, special support may be necessary³⁷. This issue is addressed in the concept paper *Linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds*, which is accompanied by toolkits for language diagnostics, professional development of teaching staff, co-operation and networking etc.

The acquisition of academic competences and knowledge involves a transition, at the different stages of learners' education, from their immediate ordinary perceptions of the world to academically based representations. At the same time, there is a transition from mastery of certain genres to mastery of others.

These are the approaches to this classic question suggested in certain studies available on the *Platform*³⁸.



Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the importance of ensuring competences in the language(s) of schooling

³⁶ “*Language of schooling* denotes the language used for teaching the various school subjects and for the functioning of schools.” Para.3 of the Appendix to Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2014\)5](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states (see footnote 31)

³⁷ See the compilation produced by the Language Policy Unit: *Extracts from Council of Europe Conventions and Recommendations/Resolutions* related to the education of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds, 2012. Website www.coe.int/lang → Resources → Recommendations

³⁸ Reference may be made, for example, to the following two studies:

- *Language and school subjects. Linguistic dimensions of knowledge building in school curricula* (Beacco *et al.* 2010): www.coe.int/lang-platform → Language(s) in other subjects
- Items for a description of linguistic competence in the language of schooling necessary for *teaching/learning history* (end of compulsory education) An approach with reference points (Beacco 2010): www.coe.int/lang-platform → Language(s) in other subjects

A Committee of Ministers Recommendation

The social significance of this educational issue was stressed in the recent Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2014\)5](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on *the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success*³⁹.

The measures set out in Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2014\)5](#) principally concern

- a) educational content and programmes in the various school subjects: making explicit the specific linguistic norms and competences which learners must master; highlighting, in programmes, convergences in the linguistic dimensions of the various subjects; bearing in mind the cross-cutting effect that learning of the language of schooling as a school subject has on all learning processes conducted in that language;
- b) learning modalities: exposing learners to diversified learning situations in order to develop their cognitive and linguistic capacities;
- c) school textbooks: encouraging authors to ensure that such materials explicitly take account of the linguistic dimensions of the different subjects;
- d) processes of diagnosis and assessment: [...]
- e) provision of appropriate forms of support;
- f) increased awareness of the role that can be played by all the diversified linguistic resources available to learners in facilitating their access to knowledge;
- g) training for school management staff and teachers of all subjects to prepare them for their role in devising and implementing an overall school policy...

At the member states' request, a *Handbook on subject literacy* is currently in preparation. It will usefully supplement the many reference texts and studies already available and provide support for the member states in the implementation of the above measures recommended by the Committee of Ministers.

Preventing underachievement, striving for fairness in access to knowledge and in learning situations and developing critical thinking and the ability to effectively exercise democratic citizenship are all part of the search for quality in education, which was set as a goal in the *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on ensuring quality education*⁴⁰, to which the above-mentioned Recommendation (2014)5 is complementary.

³⁹ Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2014\)5](#) adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 April 2014 and *Appendix*. Online at: www.coe.int/lang → Resources/Recommendations.

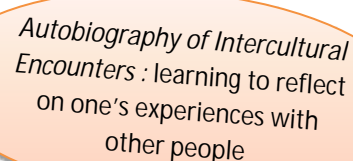
⁴⁰ Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2012\)13](#) to member states on ensuring quality education

3.3.4 Intercultural competence

As emphasised in the *White Paper*⁴¹, education for intercultural dialogue is not the preserve of a particular school subject but the responsibility of all school subjects, each according to its identity. Languages have their role to play as an education in interpersonal (verbal and human) relations where verbal communication serves as the basis for human communication. Their role is also to provide learners with significant experiences of real or virtual (through documents) contact with unknown realities so as to develop attitudes of curiosity and interpretative competences that are at once benevolent and critical.

In close co-operation with other sectors of the Council of Europe’s Education Department, the Policy Unit has developed a new tool in the context of the Cultural Convention: the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters*⁴².

This tool is designed to encourage users to think about their intercultural encounters and learn from them. Experience of such contacts can be recorded in it and, with the benefit of distance, analysed.



Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters: learning to reflect on one’s experiences with other people

The *Autobiography* has been supplemented by a volume geared more to the media (television, internet, etc.): “*Images of Others: an Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media*”.

These autobiographies of intercultural encounters, which also draw on language biographies, are particularly relevant in the context of language teaching.

⁴¹ [White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue](#) – *Living together as equals in dignity*, 2008

⁴² www.coe.int/lang-Autobiography

Conclusion

Many recent political events have shown how crucial language issues are to the social cohesion of states and co-existence between them. Many international surveys⁴³ have also highlighted the importance of a command of languages (languages of schooling and foreign languages) for educational success. The development of the information society depends on everyone having access to knowledge (which is also a linguistic competence). And the successful integration of migrants in the processes of democratic life also depends partly on their language skills. Language questions are not the preserve of teachers and educational theorists. They are a policy area in their own right, for which co-operation and consultation between member states are essential. For 60 years – since the Council of Europe began work on language-related projects – they have evolved as European societies have evolved. And they call continually for new responses in line with the common *acquis* developed within the Council of Europe.

The Language Policy Unit therefore intends to continue its policy activities and its work to promote better understanding and the spread of plurilingual and intercultural education. For example, it has put the CEFR back on the drawing-board (2014) in order to adjust it to current dynamics of education policy. Its conceptual framework is being reviewed and a series of new descriptors will be added to those already available.

This should not be seen as looking back but rather as looking ahead to the issues likely to arise in future, for which the work of such international institutions as the Council of Europe, which acts impartially in the common interest of its member states, is indispensable, as emphasised by the stakeholders – not only the decision-makers, but also the experts and other key players.

The work of the Council of Europe's Language Policy Unit under the European Cultural Convention was ground-breaking from the start and it has had a profound influence on education in Europe.

Work on language policy will be continued to meet the needs of the member states, whether in terms of languages of schooling (educational success), foreign languages or the linguistic integration of adult migrants, to mention only the main projects.

⁴³ E.g. OECD: [PISA](http://www.oecd.org) survey on the state of global education, 2012 (Programme for International Student Assessment) – www.oecd.org

APPENDICES

A. Recent events organised by the Language Policy Unit (2012-2014)

- 3rd Intergovernmental Conference: *Quality in the linguistic integration of adult migrants (LIAM): from value to policy and practice* - Strasbourg, 3-4 June 2014
- WEBINAR: online conference on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* organised on 28 and 29 March 2014 and followed by thousands of web users throughout the world.
- Intergovernmental Conference on *Quality and inclusion in education: the unique role of languages* - Strasbourg, 18-19 September 2013.
- Seminar on *Plurilingual and intercultural education in primary education (Language teaching in primary education and the integration into the curriculum of plurilingual and intercultural education)* - Strasbourg, 22-23 November 2012
- Seminar on *Languages of schooling in all subjects* - Strasbourg, 27-28 September 2012
- Seminar on *Plurilingual and intercultural education in vocational education and training curricula* - Strasbourg, 10-11 May 2012
- Intergovernmental seminar: *Meeting the challenge of multilingual classrooms: exploiting plurilingual repertoires, managing transitions and developing proficiency in the language(s) of schooling* - Strasbourg, 7-8 March 2012

Selection of major texts produced by the Language Policy Unit

- *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* – Council of Europe/Cambridge University Press, 2001
- *From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education. Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe*, 2003
- *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*, 2010
- *Linguistic integration of adult migrants. Guide to policy development and implementation*, 2014

Concept papers, 2010:

- *Linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds*,
- *Adult migrant integration policies: Principles and implementation*

In preparation (*provisional titles*):

- Handbook on subject literacy
- Reviewing and enriching the conceptual system of the CEFR. Otherness, mobility, communities and the challenge of mobility

Language Education Policy Profiles

Seventeen states, regions or towns have to date benefited from this process of self-assessment of language education policies by authorities with the assistance of the Council of Europe

B. Main documents setting out the Council of Europe’s position on language education policy

Conventions, Recommendations and Resolutions

Conventions

[European Cultural Convention \(1954\)](#)

[European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages](#)

[Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities](#)

Recommendations and Resolutions on policy issues

Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

- [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2014\)5](#) to member states on the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success
- [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2012\)13](#) to member states on ensuring quality education
- [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2008\)7](#) to member states on the use of the Council of Europe's “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages” (CEFR) and the promotion of plurilingualism (and Explanatory Memorandum)
- [Recommendation N° R \(98\) 6](#) to member states concerning modern languages

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

- [Recommendation 2034 \(2014\)](#) Integration tests: helping or hindering integration?
- [Recommendation 1740 \(2006\)](#) on the place of the mother tongue in school education

Extracts from official texts

- [Extracts from Council of Europe Conventions and Recommendations/Resolutions](#) related to the education of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds
- [Extracts from Council of Europe Conventions and Recommendations/Resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers \(1968-2013\), 2013](#)

