

# CEFR COMPANION VOLUME WEBINAR ON THE CEFR COMPANION VOLUME AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

*“Promoting plurilingual and  
pluricultural education”*

[www.coe.int/lang-cefr](http://www.coe.int/lang-cefr)

Concept Note &  
Programme  
ED/LANG (2018) 01

30 January 2018  
Strasbourg



# Concept Note

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## 1 Introduction

The [Education Policy Division](#) of the Council of Europe is organising a webinar on “**The CEFR Companion Volume and Practical Considerations for Implementation**” within the scope of 2018-2019 Education Programme. The **webinar** will take place on **30 January 2018** between **9 am** and **5 pm (CET)**. The event will be the first of a series of activities during 2018 to promote plurilingual and pluricultural education and improve language of schooling, including a **launch conference on 16-17 May 2018** in Strasbourg. (See below forthcoming activities). Following a programme of such activities in 2018–19, the aim is to publish a compendium of case studies documenting good practice in the use of the CEFR and related tools in curriculum, in teaching and learning including assessment, and in teacher education.

The webinar will mark the official presentation of a number of new illustrative descriptor scales that add to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR). **The CEFR Companion Volume** ([Click here](#)) is the product of a project of the CoE's Language Policy Programme, which aimed to update the CEFR illustrative descriptors.

During the webinar, following main topics will be addressed:

- ▶ The CEFR Update: Developing and Validating Descriptors for Mediation and Related Concepts
- ▶ The CEFR Companion Volume with Existing and New CEFR Descriptors
- ▶ The CEFR Companion Volume and Practical Considerations for Implementation, with reference to teacher education, curriculum and assessment,

## Objective(s) of the Webinar

The objectives of the webinar are to;

- ▶ inform participants about the CEFR Companion Volume,
- ▶ reinforce awareness of the CoE's tools and resources for promoting and improving plurilingual and pluricultural education,
- ▶ discuss ways of exploiting the CEFR Companion Volume to;
  - broaden teachers' conceptualisation of foreign/second language teaching,
  - foster enrichment and positive impact through the curriculum, and
  - ensure a balanced and principled approach to assessing the language competences of learners.

## Expected Outcomes

At the end of the webinar participants will be:

- ▶ acquainted with the new scales and in particular with the key aspects of the CEFR,
- ▶ able to further explore the CEFR Companion Volume, experiment with the new scales in their own context be it teaching, curriculum design or assessment, and
- ▶ in a better position to spread the word about the CEFR Companion Volume and their experience with using it, including best practice.

## Target Groups

The webinar will be of particular interest to those who engage in foreign/second language learning, teaching and assessment, whether as policy makers (curriculum development) or practitioners (e.g. teachers, teacher educators and trainers, language assessment experts).

## 2 Background

The Council of Europe has been working in the field of language education since 1964 with the aim of fostering intercultural understanding and improving the quality and practicality of language education in schools. Learning languages is key to accessing quality education and enjoying fundamental rights and freedoms; it also helps learners to develop the necessary competences to live in culturally diverse societies. The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR) and the *CEFR Companion Volume* (CEFR-CV) are part of the Council of Europe's goal to ensure quality inclusive education as a right of all citizens.

The CEFR Companion Volume is intended as a complement to the CEFR, which was published in 2001 and does not change the status of that 2001 publication. It elaborates some of the key notions of the CEFR as a vehicle for promoting quality in second/foreign language teaching and learning as well as plurilingual and intercultural education. The CEFR consists of far more than a set of language proficiency levels as it broadens the perspective of language education in a number of ways, not least by its vision of the user/learner as a social agent, co-constructing meaning in interaction, and by the notions of mediation and plurilingual / pluricultural competences. The CEFR has proved successful precisely because it encompasses educational values, a clear model of language-related competences and language use, and practical tools, in the form of illustrative descriptors, to facilitate the development of curricula and orientation of teaching and learning.

The CEFR Companion Volume includes:

- ▶ newly developed illustrative descriptor scales that are introduced alongside the existing ones;
- ▶ schematic tables which group scales belonging to the same category (communicative language activities or aspects of competence);
- ▶ a short rationale for each scale, explaining the thinking behind the categorisation; and
- ▶ descriptors that were developed and validated but not subsequently included in the illustrative descriptors are also made available in an appendix.

The CEFR Companion Volume is the product of a project of the Education Policy Division (Language Policy Programme) of the Council of Europe. The objectives of the project were:

- ▶ highlighting certain innovative areas of the CEFR for which no descriptor scales had been provided in the 2001 set of descriptors, but which have become increasingly relevant over the past twenty years, especially mediation and plurilingual / pluricultural competence;
- ▶ building on the successful implementation and further development of the CEFR, for example by more fully defining 'plus levels' and a new 'Pre-A1' level;
- ▶ responding to demands for more elaborate description of listening and reading in existing scales, and for descriptors for other communicative activities such as online interaction, using telecommunications, expressing reactions to creative text and literature;
- ▶ enriching the description at A1, and at the C levels, particularly C2.

The project lasted four years from early 2014 to late 2017 and the process of updating and extending the illustrative descriptors took place in five stages:

Stage 1: Filling gaps on the original illustrative descriptor scales with materials then available (2014-2015)

Stage 2: Developing descriptor scales for areas missing in the original set, in particular for mediation (2014-2016)

Stage 3: Developing a new scale for phonological control (2015-2016)

Stage 4: Developing scales for signing competence (2015-2017)

### Stage 5: Collating language portfolio descriptors for young learners (2015-2017)

The development in relation to Stages 1–3 was followed between February 2015 and February 2016 by three phases of validation activities with around 1,000 people. The validation was then followed in July 2016 to February 2017 by three rounds of consultation, with piloting from January–July 2017.

Finally, a provisional edition of the CEFR Companion Volume was published in English on the CEFR website in September 2017. The French version will be available in January 2018 followed by the German version in late spring 2018.

## 3 Forthcoming Activities

As mentioned above the Education Policy Division will organise both project and communication activities to promote and support plurilingual and pluricultural education and improve the language of schooling. These will include webinars, round tables with various stakeholders, implementation of CEFR descriptors (both old and new) in different contexts (especially teaching/learning) as well as two conferences to launch the CEFR Companion Volume and to raise awareness on sign language respectively.

### Webinar (30<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Online)

#### “The CEFR Companion Volume and Practical Considerations for Implementation”

Please see full details of the webinar programme in section 4 below.

### Round Table (6 March 2018, Paris) (TBC)

#### “A Multi-stakeholder Approach for the Promotion of Plurilingual and Pluricultural Education”

The round table will bring decision making representatives of language teaching/assessment networks, institutions, the CoE secretariat and the ECML together to discuss opportunities for promoting plurilingual and pluricultural education, with a focus on the CEFR Companion Volume. It will serve as a common and transparent platform to share opinions, arguments as well as new ideas. One of the expected outcomes of the round table is that all stakeholders will be well equipped to promote the CEFR Companion Volume by circulating news and organising regional and/or national seminars, webinars, etc.

### Launching Conference (16 - 17 May 2018, Strasbourg)

#### “Building Inclusive Societies through Enriching Plurilingual and Pluricultural Education at a Grassroots Level”: The Role of the CEFR Companion Volume

#### Parallel Workshops (16 May 2018)

The objective of the parallel workshops is to discuss implications and opportunities for teacher education, fostering enrichment and positive impact through curriculum, and a balanced and principled approach to assessing language proficiency.

#### Launching Conference (17 May 2018)

The objective of the conference will be to officially launch the CEFR Companion Volume and present a number of good practices already derived from the piloting stage. The participants who are interested in implementing the descriptors (both existing and new) will be provided with a set of tools (a template for reporting good practices and/or case studies).

### Call for Proposals

The Education Policy Division will issue a call for proposals to invite language professionals to present their work during the launching conference. The proposals will be for a 20 minute presentation; however, the organisers may propose that the proposal topic is included in a forum, workshop or panel discussion. The call will be announced in the **first half of January** on **Education Department’s website** ([www.coe.int/education](http://www.coe.int/education)).

## 4 Language and Format of the Webinar

### Language

The language of the webinar will be **English**. However, participants who wish to ask a question in their language will be able to do so by using the chat window. You will be provided with necessary instructions before the webinar.

### Format

The webinar will run on the [Click Meeting](#) platform. The webinar will be accessible from 9 am on 30 January 2018. Registered participants will be invited via email and/or provided with a webinar ID to connect to the webinar.

The webinar will include expert presentations some of which will be followed by a questions & answers session. The participants will be able to use the live chat window all the time to ask questions or make comments. In the afternoon there will open discussion sessions where the participants are encouraged to actively contribute to discussions.

In order to contact you on time we kindly ask you to fill out the contact form in the following link by **12 January 2018** at the latest. (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LF9TGDY>)

# Programme

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TUESDAY, 30 JANUARY 2018

8.30 Registration of online participants

## 9.00 – 12.30 Morning Session

9.00 Opening speech by **Villano QIRIAZI**, Head of Education Policy Division, Council of Europe

9.15 “Overview of CEFR Related Council of Europe Tools and Resources”

**Ahmet Murat KILIC**

*Education Policy Division, Council of Europe*

## 9.30 The CEFR Update

9.30 “Developing and Validating Descriptors for Mediation and Related Concepts”

**Enrica PICCARDO & Brian NORTH**

*University of Toronto and Université Grenoble-Alpes & Eurocentres Foundation*

10.15 *Questions from the audience*

## 10.30 Break

## 11.00 The CEFR Companion Volume with Old and New Descriptors

11.00 “A Tool for Teaching and Learning”

**Brian NORTH & Tim GOODIER**

*Eurocentres Foundation*

11.15 “Introduction to the Online Interaction Scales”

**Tim GOODIER**

11.30 “Updated Descriptors for Phonological Control”

**Enrica PICCARDO**

11.45 “Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence in the CEFR”

**Enrica PICCARDO**

12.00 “The Collation of Descriptors for Young Learners”

**Tim GOODIER**

12.15 *Questions from the audience*

## 12.30 Lunch

## 14.00 – 17.15 Afternoon Session

## 14.00 The CEFR Companion Volume and Practical Considerations for Implementation

14.00 “Teacher Education: Implications and Opportunities”

**Enrica PICCARDO**

14.30 *Open discussion facilitated by:*

**Rosanna MARGONIS-PASINETTI**

*Haute école pédagogique du Canton de Vaud, Lausanne, Suisse*

- 14.45 “Curriculum: Fostering Enrichment and Positive Impact”  
**Tim GOODIER**
- 15.15 *Open discussion facilitated by:*  
**Daniela FASOGLIO (Netherlands)**  
*SLO Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development, The Netherlands*
- 15.30 Break**
- 16.00 “Assessment: Ensuring a Balanced and Principled Approach”  
**Brian NORTH**
- 16.30 *Open discussion facilitated by:*  
**Vincent FOLNY (France)**  
*Centre international d'études pédagogiques, France*
- 16.45 Closing remarks**  
**Brian NORTH & Ahmet Murat KILIC**
- 17.00 End of the Webinar**

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