

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The conference “Towards a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of School Education?” was organised jointly by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France, and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland.

The event was prepared as the official launch of a Council of Europe project aimed at examining the feasibility of producing a common European framework of reference for languages of school education. One of the outputs of the expert work conducted in the initial stage of the project was a suggestion to organise an international conference to examine the views on the topic as presented by the broader academic audience in Europe. The event was expected to produce conclusions on the relationship between terms, concepts, notions, understandings and practices of the educational and academic fields in question.

The group of professionals that the conference attracted consisted of teacher educators and researchers in the discipline of languages in education. It was not easy to find professionals who are active in the field across the whole spectrum, but it proved possible to bring together persons dealing with foreign/second language education and those specialising in mother/first/official/national tongue education – as well as those specialising in teaching literature and those interested in teaching language itself. The goal was to look for convergences between these areas, examining to which degree and in which ways more coherence in language curricula is achievable.

The conference was held at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland, on four sunny days, 26-29 April 2006. 60 participants from 15 European countries and Canada met and exchanged views, 35 papers were presented, in a total of 11 conference sessions. This volume contains a report on the conference followed by a selection of 24 papers, arranged in seven thematic sections, peer-reviewed and revised for publication.

*Waldek Martyniuk*



## **PART I**

**“TOWARDS A COMMON EUROPEAN  
FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR  
LANGUAGES OF SCHOOL EDUCATION?”**

**THE CONFERENCE**



## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

### **27.04.06**      **Thursday**

14.45 – 15.45    Registration of participants

15.45 – 16.00    Welcoming address and opening statement: Władysław Miodunka, Vice-Rector of the Jagiellonian University and Joe Sheils, Head of the Language Policy Division, Council of Europe

16.00 – 16.25:    Introduction: Mike Byram, Durham University: *Towards a common European framework of reference for language(s) of education? – a project in the context of the Council of Europe work on language education*

16.30 – 17.30:    Session I: *Opening the scope*

1. Helmut Vollmer, Universität Osnabrück: *Language across the Curriculum (LAC)*

2. Mike Fleming, Durham University: *The use and misuse of competence frameworks and statements with*

*particular attention to describing achievement in literature*

17.45 – 19.15 3. Władysław Miodunka, Jagiellonian University / Grażyna Przechodzka, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University of Lublin: *Mother Tongue vs. Foreign Language Performance – a Polish Case*

4. John de Jong, Language Testing Services, Velp: *PISA – Assessing Reading Literacy in Language of Instruction*

5. Waldek Martyniuk, Language Policy Division, Council of Europe: *European frameworks of reference for language competences*

19.20 – 20.00: Welcoming toast with the Rectors of the Jagiellonian University

## **28.04.06 Friday**

9.00 – 11.00 Session II:  
*IMEN (International Mother Tongue Education Network) Symposium, Part I: What to (re-)research? Problematising perceptions of LS, LAC and LE for a common European framework*

1. Piet-Hein van de Ven, Radboud University Nijmegen & HAN University Arnhem/Nijmegen: *Comparative research on mother tongue education*

2. Sjaak Kroon, Tilburg University & Radboud University Nijmegen: *Unity through Diversity in European Language Teaching*

3. Sigmund Ongstad, Oslo University College: *The Concepts of 'Language' and 'Discipline' in Transgression. A paradigmatic, critical and comparative study of 'Norwegian'*

4. Jon Smidt, Sør-Trøndelag University College: *The complexities of 'writing': Conceptions of writing and the teaching of writing in Norway and other countries*

11.30 – 13.00 Session III: *Educating for plurilingualism*

1. Eike Thürman, Landesinstitut für Schule / Qualitätsagentur, Soest: *Baccalauréat européen plurilingue*

2. Suzanne Burley / Cathy Pomphrey, London Metropolitan University: *Diversity and coherence: bridging the boundaries between English (L1) and Modern Languages in language teacher education*

3. Ljudmila Ivšek, National Institute of Education, Ljubljana: *Slovene: Language of Education, Official and State Language*

Session IV: *Which curriculum for whom?*

1. Laila Aase, University of Bergen: *Convergences between first language and second language? Theoretical and practical implications*

2. Grażyna Zarzycka, University of Łódź: *The cultural, sociocultural and linguacultural layers of Polish as a native and as a foreign language as revealed in the process of education*

3. Iwona Janowska / Ewa Lipińska / Anna Seretny, Jagiellonian University: *Linguistic education in Polish schools abroad, i.e. teaching a foreign or a second language vs. teaching a native tongue*

15.15 – 16.15 Session V:  
*IMEN (International Mother Tongue Education Network) Symposium, Part II: Tension and translation*

1. Ellen Krogh, University of Southern Denmark: *Fuzzy criteria in the mother tongue classroom*

2. Nikolaj Frydensbjerg Elf, University of Southern Denmark: *Unfit for the Dyadic Split? Modes, Media and Semioicy*

Session VI: *Migrant children in a MT classroom*

1. Piet van Avermaet, University of Ghent: *The curriculum/policy in language(s) of school education. The case of Flanders. With a special focus on migrants*

2. Marie Hádková, Charles University, Prague / Jaromíra Šindelářová, /Usti n. Labem University: *'Multicultural' classroom interaction – participation of migrant children*

16.45 – 18.15 Session VII: *Teaching literature*

1. Tanja Janssen / Gert Rijlaarsdam, University of Amsterdam: *Describing the Dutch literature curriculum: A theoretical and empirical approach to describe the perceived and actual curriculum*

2. Kari Sallamaa, University of Oulu / University of Helsinki: *Constructing a European Canon and its didactic implications*

3. Giuseppe Longo, University of Venice / University of Verona: *Teaching literature: how? Towards new paradigms in the didactics of literature*

**29.04.06 Saturday**

9.00 – 11.00 Session VIIIa: *Reading literacy*

1. Marli Tijssen, Centre for the Innovation of Vocational Training and Adult Education in the Netherlands (CINOP): *Levels of Dutch in upper-secondary vocational education and the use of the CEFR for the*

*description of language proficiency of the language of school education*

2. Irene Pieper, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt/Main: *Reading literature as a major sub-discipline in German primary and secondary education under challenge*

Session VIIIb: *Reading literacy*

1. Gerhard Rupp, Ruhr-Universität Bochum: *Promoting reading literacy in mother tongue education*

2. J. L. Milton, University of Wales, Swansea: *The Importance of Vocabulary Measures in a Language Framework: Lessons from the Common European Framework for Foreign Languages*

Session IXa: *Mother Tongue(s) as part of European Language Portfolio?*

1. Irina Khaleeva, Moscow State Linguistic University: *Teaching national languages in Russia*

2. Helge Bonset / Theun Meestringa, National Institute for Curriculum Development of the Netherlands (SLO): *Some Steps Taken Towards a CEFR for Languages of School Education*

Session IXb: *Mother Tongue(s) as part of European Language Portfolio?*

1. Peter Broeder / Rita Sorce, Tilburg University: *Managing diversity in multilingual Europe*

2. Georgii Khruslov, Pushkin Institute of Russian Language / Institute for Ethnic Issues in Education,

Moscow: *General Analysis of Current National Curricula in Language(s) of School Education in Russia*

11.30 – 12.30 Session X: *LE curriculum*

1. Anne-Marie Broi, Office de la statistique et de l'informatique scolaires (OSIS), Neuchâtel / Brigit Eriksson, University of Applied Sciences, Zurich: *HarmoS – language 1: „The development of a model of competences for the language 1 (language of education) and the development of minimal standards for grades 2, 6 and 9 in Switzerland”*

2. Mina Drever, Training and Development Agency for Schools, UK: *Interactional corrective feedback in first language (L1) and second/foreign language (L2) acquisition and learning: does it have the same effects?*

14.15 – 15.15 Session XI: *Teaching Polish as Mother Tongue*

1. Agnieszka Kłakówna, Pedagogical University, Kraków: *Wychowanie językowe jako podstawa kształcenia kulturowego (Learning through language to develop cultural competence) – in Polish, with interpretation to English*

2. Jadwiga Kowalikowa Jagiellonian University / Urszula Żydek-Bednarczuk, University of Silesia, Katowice: *Standaryzacja wymagań i osiągnięć jako konsekwencja rozwoju modelu nauczania języka polskiego jako ojczystego (Standardisation of requirements and achievements in Polish as MT) – in Polish, with interpretation to English*

15.15 – 16.15 Closing Session: *Towards a common European framework of reference for language(s) of education? – summary and discussion, introduction by Mike Byram*

Władysław Miodunka  
Vice-Rector, Jagiellonian University

## WELCOMING ADDRESS

Witam Państwa serdecznie w Polsce, w Krakowie, w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim – najstarszym polskim uniwersytecie.

Inaugurując konferencję na temat „Europejskiego systemu opisu kształcenia w języku edukacji szkolnej” w auli *Collegium Maius*, zwanej początkowo *Lectorium Theologorum* nawiązujemy do początków Uniwersytetu, założonego 12 maja 1364 roku przez króla Kazimierza Wielkiego. W latach 1397 – 1400 uniwersytet, zwany wtedy Akademią Krakowską, został odnowiony z inicjatywy Królowej Jadwigi. 26 lipca 1400 roku w obecności króla Władysława Jagiełły oficjalnie otwarto *Collegium Maius*, a wykład inauguracyjny odbył się w *Lectorium Theologorum*.

Ponieważ nasza konferencja jest organizowana wspólnie przez Wydział Polityki Językowej Rady Europy i Uniwersytet Jagielloński, warto zwrócić uwagę na współpracę europejską, której przykładem są początki Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego: założycielem uniwersytetu był polski król Kazimierz z dynastii Piastów, inicjatorką jego odnowienia – królowa Jadwiga, urodzona w Budapeszcie reprezentantka europejskiej dynastii Andegawenów, a wykonawcą jej woli Władysław Jagiełło, wielki książę litewski i król Polski.

Dziś Uniwersytet Jagielloński jest drugim co do wielkości – po Uniwersytecie Warszawskim – uniwersytem w Polsce, kształcącym 42.000 studentów i zatrudniającym 6520 pracowników, w tym 980

profesorów. Uniwersytet liczy 15 wydziałów, a najmłodszymi z nich są Wydział Zarządzania i Komunikacji Społecznej, Wydział Stosunków Międzynarodowych i Politycznych oraz Wydział Biotechnologii. Ponieważ Uniwersytet Jagielloński dynamicznie się rozwija, musi rozwijać się jego baza lokalowa: gotowe są trzy części kampusu po drugiej stronie Wisły, a niedaleko stąd w 2005 roku zostało otwarte *Auditorium Maximum*, mieszczące kilka dużych sal, w tym – największą na 1200 miejsc.

Nauczanie i studiowanie języków zawsze należało do ważnych zadań Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Nauce języków obcych służy Jagiellońskie Centrum Językowe, aktualnie zmieniane i modernizowane. Języki można studiować na dwóch wydziałach: Wydziale Filologicznym oraz Wydziale Polonistyki, gdzie nauczaniem języka polskiego jako obcego zajmuje się Centrum Języka i Kultury Polskiej w Świecie, kształcące na kilku programach około tysiąca studentów rocznie. Centrum ma duże zasługi we wprowadzaniu w Polsce standardów europejskich. Od roku 2000 Centrum reprezentuje Polskę w *Association of Language Testers in Europe* (ALTE). Pracownicy Centrum dbają o zachowanie standardów ALTE w systemie certyfikacji języka polskiego jako obcego. Także tu powstała polska wersja językowa ważnej z punktu widzenia naszej konferencji publikacji Rady Europy pt. „*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*” („Europejski system opisu kształcenia językowego: uczenie się, nauczanie, ocenianie”), którą opracował dr Waldemar Martyniuk.

Szanowni Państwo, to wielki zaszczyt dla nas, że ta konferencja odbywa się w Krakowie, w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim. Jest to także moja osobista satysfakcja, że konferencja na temat standardów europejskich w językach edukacji odbywa się tu, gdyż osobiście jestem przekonany, że ta tematyka jest ogromnie ważna dla nauczanych dzieci i młodzieży. Jako dziecko wiejskie ze wschodniej Polski chodziłem do prowincjonalnych szkół. Języka polskiego i innych języków uczyli mnie znakomici nauczyciele, a rozwinięte umiejętności językowe pomogły mi potem w studiach w Polsce i za granicą. Pamiętam jednak, że wielu kolegów nie miało tak dobrych nauczycieli i w rezultacie do dziś mają oni kłopoty z publicznym wypowiedaniem się, czy formułowaniem listów oficjalnych. Dlatego wierzę, że w skutecznym kształceniu umiejętności językowych bardzo mogą pomóc europejskie standardy.

Wygłaszając 26 lipca 1400 roku swój wykład inauguracyjny, ówczesny rektor Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Stanisław ze Skarbimierza, powiedział, że „w małym domu tego kolegium mądrość całego świata

jest zamknięta”. Wierzę, że dziś, 606 lat później, mogę powiedzieć, że w auli *Collegium Maius* mądrość językowa całej Europy została zgromadzona. Dzięki temu ta konferencja ma szansę stać się ważnym krokiem w stronę europejskiego systemu opisu kształcenia w języku edukacji szkolnej. Organizatorom i wszystkim uczestnikom serdecznie tego życzę.



Władysław Miodunka  
Vice-Rector, Jagiellonian University

## WELCOMING ADDRESS

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my great honor to welcome you to Poland, to Kraków and finally to the Jagiellonian University – the oldest Polish university.

We are inaugurating the conference “Towards a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of School Education?” in a very special place. *Collegium Maius*, previously called *Lectorium Theologorum*, draws our attention back to the beginnings of the University, which was first established as the Studium Generale on May 12, 1364 by Casimir the Great, King of Poland. Later it was restored on the initiative of Queen Jadwiga d’Anjou who bequeathed her jewelry for that purpose. The University was officially re-established after its benefactress’s death on July 26, 1400 by King Władysław Jagiełło and the opening ceremony was held precisely in *Lectorium Theologorum*.

This conference is being organised jointly by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe and the Jagiellonian University and it is by no means an exaggeration to say that the history of our University is an excellent example of European cooperation. The University was established by Casimir the Great, Polish King; restored by Jadwiga, Polish Queen from the European dynasty d’Anjou, whose will was executed by her husband Władysław Jagiełło, Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland.

At present the Jagiellonian University is – after the University of Warsaw – the second largest university in Poland, with 42 000 students

and 6 520 employees among whom 980 hold the title of professor. The University is divided into 15 faculties – the most recently created ones are: Faculty of Management and Social Communication, Faculty of International and Political Studies and Faculty of Biotechnology. As the Jagiellonian University is constantly developing it is important to improve the academic and research environment by enlarging the University premises. So far four new buildings have been built, three of them in the outskirts and the newest one – Auditorium Maximum – in the city centre. The latter, opened in 2005, houses several theatre rooms, the largest of which can hold up to 1 200 people.

Teaching and studying languages has always been an important issue at the Jagiellonian University. Nowadays language education at the University is carried out by the Jagiellonian Centre for Foreign Languages which is currently being modernised and reorganised. There are two faculties devoted to language teaching: Faculty of Philology (Faculty of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures) and Faculty of Polish Studies. Recently at the Faculty of Polish Studies a special academic unit – the Centre for Polish Language and Culture in the World – was created in order to teach Polish as a foreign language. The Centre runs several different programmes and educates around 1.000 foreign and Polish students per year. Since 2000 the Centre has been representing Poland in the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). The academic Staff of the Centre has taken an active part in implementing the ALTE standards into the process of certification of Polish as foreign language. It was also at the Centre, where the Polish version of “The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages” was translated by Dr Waldemar Martyniuk.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great privilege for the Jagiellonian University to host this conference. I personally feel very satisfied with the fact that the conference concerning European standards in language education is taking place in Kraków. I am inclined to believe that its subject matter is of great importance in child and youth education. I grew up in the countryside of Eastern Poland and therefore I attended small-town schools. Nevertheless I had most excellent teachers of both Polish and foreign languages. The language skills they helped me to develop were essential in my further studies both in Poland and abroad. Unfortunately, I remember that not all of my friends had such an auspicious start and as a result nowadays they find it hard to make public statements or to write official letters. All of the above makes me believe that European standards can be very helpful in efficient language education.

During his inaugural speech – on July 26, 1400 – Stanisław of Skarbimierz, at that time rector of the Jagiellonian University said, “The little house of this *collegium* contains the wisdom of the whole world”. I think that today, 606 year later, it is justified to say that this very Hall of the *Collegium Maius* contains the linguistic wisdom of all Europe. I am strongly convinced that owing to the latter this conference has a chance of becoming an important step towards a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of School Education. This is precisely what I would like to wish both the organisers and the participants.



Joe Sheils

Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France

## OPENING STATEMENT

The Council of Europe promotes international cooperation in language education policy and practice among its 46 member states. The projects carried out by the Language Policy Division in Strasbourg aim to share expertise and experience in the development of policies for plurilingualism among citizens as a basis for active, democratic citizenship and social cohesion. The Division's projects include the elaboration of instruments for policy analysis and planning, and more recently initiatives designed to promote a holistic approach to language education embracing all languages in a coherent approach. It assists states in reviewing and planning policies for all sectors and all languages, develops common European benchmarks for curriculum and examinations, and other tools designed to enhance the quality of language education.

While work has until recently concentrated mainly on foreign/second language learning and teaching, and the education of minorities, the languages of school education are now becoming a major focus both in their own right and as part of the Council's goal to promote a global, coherent approach to language policy in education.

This academic conference is the first major event that the Council of Europe has organised on these languages, and it will be followed by an intergovernmental conference in Strasbourg in October to which the representatives of Ministries of Education will be invited. It is intended to develop work in this area initially within the current medium term

project (2006 – 2009), and in particular to explore the feasibility of elaborating a common European framework of reference. In the spirit of the Council of Europe’s principles, such an instrument would be descriptive and not prescriptive. It would offer a common basis for reflecting on and planning syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, textbooks, examinations etc. across Europe. The conference will help to clarify basic concepts and issues that will need to be considered in the development of this new project.

Mike Byram

Durham University, United Kingdom (Adviser to the Language Policy Division, Council of Europe)

## INTRODUCTION TO THE CONFERENCE

### *Towards a common European framework of reference for language(s) of school education – a project in the context of the Council of Europe work on language education*

The Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg has launched a project to examine the feasibility of producing a common European framework of reference for languages of school education.

This work builds upon the success of the *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)* for modern/foreign languages which is widely used in curriculum development, textbook writing, promoting new approaches to teaching and learning, examinations and so on. The main principle of the *CEFR* is to promote plurilingualism and this has recently led to the production of a *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* in which it is shown *inter alia* how the principle of plurilingualism includes the teaching and learning of the language(s) of education systems, which are often designated as ‘mother tongues’ or ‘national languages’. The new project focuses on these languages.

The project is in its initial stage. Three expert meetings have been held already, defining the scope of the project and suggesting the working

methods. One of the outputs of the expert work so far has been to organise this international conference to examine the views on the topic as presented by the broader academic audience in Europe. It is anticipated that the conference will produce useful reflections on the relationship between terms, concepts, understandings and practices of the educational and academic fields in question. For example, it is important to discuss the differences between concepts such as Mother Tongue Education, Standard Language Education, Key Language, Language of Instruction, First Language Education, Home Language, National Language, State Language Education, etc. Our aim is not to try to objectify definitions, but to try to understand the nature of the different national, cultural and academic perceptions of such terms when working internationally.

Another issue which the conference will address is that of specialisation in language education. It is not easy to find professionals who are work on the whole spectrum of languages in education, including foreign languages, second languages, minority and regional languages, state and national languages, languages and their regional or social varieties. All of which need to be taken into account in the education of young people in compulsory schooling. There is a trend to specialisation, with the result that there is a lack of contact between for example those dealing with foreign/second language education and those specialising in mother/first/official/national language – as well as between those specialising in teaching literature and those interested in teaching language itself.

Our goal is to look for convergences between these areas, since they all relate to the same area of reflection: language use and language users. In developing a new framework, we hope to counter further fragmentation and stimulate critical discussion and analysis, examining to which degree and in which ways more coherence in curricula is achievable both in practical, academic, and political terms.

In this introductory session we will trace the development of the CEFR and related documents and instruments and then outline what we hope will be the directions taken in the production of a new framework for the language(s) of education. This will include an explanation of the purpose and functions of such a document, the ways in which it might relate to the existing CEFR, the implications for convergences among the different types of language teaching and learning, and the vision of the language learner and user which might lie behind it.

The three main inter-related content areas of the conference are:

1. Theoretical Approaches and Analytical Descriptions
  - a. General analysis of current national curricula/policies in Language of School Education / Mother Tongue Education
  - b. Analysis of the role of major sub-disciplines such as writing, reading, literature, culture, etc in the national curricula/policies of Language of School Education / Mother Tongue Education
  - c. Innovative and controversial approaches – especially those of interest from an international/European perspective
2. Proficiency descriptors and assessment issues
  - a. Descriptors defining proficiency in Language of School Education / Mother Tongue Education
  - b. Levels of proficiency in Language of School Education / Mother Tongue Education
3. Mother Tongue Education vs. Foreign Language Education – comparative studies
  - a. convergences
  - b. divergences

### References:

- Beacco, J.-C. and Byram, M. (ed.) (2007). *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe: from linguistic diversity to plurilingual education*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.
- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.



Mike Byram

Durham University, United Kingdom (Adviser to the Language Policy Division, Council of Europe)

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

### *Towards a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of School Education? – notes on a conference*

#### **Pre-conference: identifying the issues and creating a common discourse**

The purpose of the conference was to call on the academic community to help the Council of Europe to identify the issues to be taken into consideration in the development of a Framework for Language(s) of School Education. In order to facilitate the exchange of ideas the following points were offered initially to clarify the origins and purposes of such a framework.

#### **1. Language education is part of social policy – so far focused on foreign languages, but also applicable to Languages of School Education**

It is first of all important to state that a possible Framework for Language(s) of School Education will be a further realisation of Council of Europe language policy, already encapsulated in several documents and instruments such as the *Common European Framework of Reference*

*for Languages (CEFR), the European Language Portfolio (ELP), both focused on ‘modern languages’/foreign languages, the Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies, and the activity of producing Language Education Profiles for member states. All of these are founded on the belief that language education and language education policy cannot be separated from social policy, and this is embodied in a succinct form in the following policy statement:*

**“Council of Europe language education policies aim to promote:**

**PLURILINGUALISM:** all are entitled to develop a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages over their lifetime in accordance with their needs;

**LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY:** Europe is multilingual and all its languages are equally valuable modes of communication and expressions of identity; the right to use and to learn one’s language(s) is protected in Council of Europe Conventions;

**MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING:** the opportunity to learn other languages is an essential condition for intercultural communication and acceptance of cultural differences;

**DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP:** participation in democratic and social processes in multilingual societies is facilitated by the plurilingual competence of individuals;

**SOCIAL COHESION:** equality of opportunity for personal development, education, employment, mobility, access to information and cultural enrichment depends on access to language learning throughout life.”

(Council of Europe 2006: 4)

Attention is drawn to the final element in particular, the importance of social cohesion and inclusion. It is the expectation that a Framework for Language(s) of School Education will be of importance in this respect because of the problems of being included in a society experienced by those learners who fail to attain satisfactory competence in the language(s) of education. Without that competence, learners do not acquire the qualities and qualifications which are crucial for membership of society. Those most at risk are ‘disadvantaged learners’, i.e. those who are disadvantaged by not acquiring in the home and primary socialisation the same language/variety as the languages used

for learning at school and lifelong. There are two major groups of such learners:

- immigrants or the children of immigrants with low educational attainment
- others of low socio-economic status whatever their origins.

## 2. Why ‘Languages of School Education’?

Terminology is difficult but important. Given the range of circumstances in member states of the Council of Europe it is not possible to use the terms national language / official language / mother tongue. Even if these are used in the plural to acknowledge that some states have several national languages, or official languages and some learners have more than one mother tongue, the terminology is inevitably inappropriate in some circumstances. Some states do not have official languages, in others the concept of national language is not appropriate and to use the phrase mother tongue for the language(s) in question is to ignore the fact that for many children the language(s) of education are not mother tongues.

It has been decided therefore to use the term *Languages of School Education* (**LE**) to include:

1. The languages as subjects taught in schools (e.g. French taught in French schools). Terms to be used: *language as subject* (**LS**);
2. The languages used as media of teaching and learning of other subjects in schools (and of lifelong learning). Terms to be used: *language(es) across the curriculum* (**LAC**);
3. The languages which are part of a holistic language curriculum which embraces all the languages a learner meets (e.g. a learner in France might meet French as the official language taught as a subject, Arabic as their language of the home taught as a subject, English and/or German and/or Spanish as a foreign language taught as a subject [**FL**]); a holistic concept of the language curriculum treats these as related aspects of the learner’s plurilingualism which in turn has consequences for curriculum planning. Terms to be used: *the language curriculum*.

The project will focus on the languages of school education, although not to the exclusion of languages in pre-school institutions or in institutions of education after the period of official or de facto compulsory

education. The main reason for this is that, because language education policy has to be seen in the context of other social policies, it is during the period when all children and young people are using the language(s) of education – i.e. during obligatory schooling – that language education is crucial.

### 3. The purpose of a Framework for LE

A framework document for languages of school education will have as its major purpose the facilitation of discussion of and communication about languages in education in general and the specific areas of LS and LAC. In this respect it will have a similar purpose to the *Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR)*, where the importance of communication is stressed:

*“The Common European Framework (for modern languages) provides a **common basis** for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. (...) The Common European Framework is intended to **overcome the barriers to communication among professionals** working in the field of modern languages arising from the **different educational systems** in Europe. (...)*

*By providing a common basis for the explicit description of objectives, content and methods, the Framework will **enhance the transparency of courses, syllabuses and qualifications**, thus promoting **international co-operation** in the field of modern languages. The provision of objective criteria for describing language proficiency will **facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications** gained in different learning contexts, and accordingly will aid European mobility.”*

(Council of Europe 2001: 1)

The emphasis in this document on *international* communication will need to be complemented by a similar attention to *intranational* communication among teachers/professionals of LS, teachers/

professionals of modern foreign languages and all other teachers/professionals since the latter are inevitably using language for instruction.

It is important to note that the form of this common basis of communication is created in the CEFR by presenting discussions of issues, posing the questions which these raise and suggesting the form of reflection and communication which might ensue. Neither the CEFR nor the planned Framework for LE provides prescriptions or answers to the questions raised, as the following extracts make clear:

### **Asking questions:**

*6.4.3 What part should be played by **texts** in language learning and teaching?*

*6.4.3.1 How may learners be expected or required to learn from spoken and written texts?*

*a) by simple exposure;*

*b) by simple exposure, but ensuring that new material is intelligible by inferencing from verbal context, visual support, etc.;  
(...)*

*6.4.4 How far should learners be expected or required to learn from tasks and activities:*

*a) by simple participation in spontaneous activities?*

*b) by simple participation in tasks and activities planned as to type, goals, input, outcomes, participant roles and activities, etc.?*

(Council of Europe 2001: 145)

### **Suggestions for reflection, not prescriptions:**

*Users of the Framework may wish to consider and where appropriate state the place of texts (spoken and written) in their learning/teaching programme and exploitation activities: e.g.*

- according to what principles texts are selected, adapted or composed, ordered and presented;*
- whether texts are graded;*

• *whether learners are a) expected b) helped to differentiate text types and to develop different listening and reading styles as appropriate to text type and to listen or read in detail or for gist, for specific points, etc.*

(Council of Europe 2001: 147)

#### 4. What could a Framework for LE contain?

If a Framework for LE were modeled on the CEFR for modern languages, it might contain chapters with the following themes:

- Language as an activity (and an instrument for learning – in school and throughout life)
- Defining competences in language for activity, and the domains in which the language is used
- Defining levels of proficiency in language
- Discussing possible methodologies of teaching and learning
- Discussing assessment procedures and criteria for good assessment

This appears feasible if the focus were only on LAC where language(s) is/are acquired and developed as instruments for learning.

On the other hand, consideration of language(s) in LS suggests that there are other dimensions which are more complex and could not be accounted for in the themes mentioned above. LS and language in LS includes attention to the teaching of literature (and other kinds of text). Traditions of literature teaching usually include at least the following activities which go beyond the themes mentioned above:

- teaching the canon and ‘national literature’
- developing the imagination and literary competence
- providing experience of (one of) the richest sources of language use
- stimulating reflection on language (as a system/grammar, its history etc.)

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that a Framework for LE must also be part of a reflection on the language(s) curriculum as a whole, that it must include reference to the teaching of second/foreign/modern languages in order to create a holistic vision of the language curriculum.

## 5. Preliminary reflections at the close of the conference

The work of IMEN (International Mother Tongue Education Network) reported during the conference on comparative studies of LS in several countries (Ongstad, Smidt, Van de Ven, this volume) brought to the fore the need to distinguish between *etic* and *emic* levels of description and analysis. An *etic* level of description – and the terms and discourse needed for this – provides the means of analysing and reflecting on any education system and the language curriculum within it, whereas an *emic* level focuses on the meaning of particular activities within a particular education system.

The existing CEFR is an etic framework which encourages professionals in any given education system to reflect on and analyse the significance of issues and activities at an emic level, within their own education system.

Issues raised during the conference which will need consideration in the production of a framework document for LE included the following:

- What the readership will be: professionals of LSs, of LAC (i.e. all teachers), and of FLs?
- In particular will the intention to realise the ‘convergences’ between LS, LAC and modern/foreign languages mean a review of the position of MFLs in a holistic curriculum – and a review of the existing CEFR?
- The age factor: the existing CEFR focuses mainly on (young) adults, whereas the LE framework will need to specifically address the development of language competence in all age groups
- The social status factor: LS and in particular LAC needs to be considered in relation to disadvantage whether caused by being (a child of) an immigrant or poverty-stricken people, and if and how that disadvantage can be overcome by ‘engagement’
- Language and identity: more than in MFL education, LS and LAC bring to the fore the strong relationship between language and identity, whether national or other; the question of a European identity (perhaps fostered by a European literary canon and European values/universal values) was one manifestation of this relationship made evident in some conference papers and discussions
- Language in LS and LAC also makes more evident than is the case in MFL education the relationship between (language)

education and cultural (and social) capital, language as economic capital (and language education as part of the creation of human capital for societies) – and language education (especially in LS) as ‘*Bildung*’<sup>1</sup>

- Use of existing CEFR levels for assessment of LE – and culture: papers in the conference reported on several attempts to use the existing descriptors and levels in the CEFR, and the appropriacy of this was much debated, with the implication that there is an urgent need for descriptors and levels for LE
- ‘Literature’ and ‘literary competence’ versus ‘text’ and ‘text competence’ (AND other semiotic systems and competence in them): papers emphasised the debate on the relationship of the (special?) nature of literary text and the competences needed to engage with them and other types of text and associated competence; other papers emphasised the changing nature of communication and the reliance on other semiotic systems than language of many young people – and the implications this has for the nature and content of LS (and of LAC)
- Pedagogy and convergences – task driven approach to teaching and assessment – links with cognition: papers which dealt with pedagogy, pedagogical traditions and purposes suggested that the range within LS might be greater than that within MFL education and also that in some varieties of pedagogy and didactics there are more convergences with MFLs than in others – an LE document would have to refer to this in depth
- Importance of identifying domains – including classroom discourse as a domain: domains of language use are part of the etic level of analysis and domains for MFLs are identified in the CEFR; a similar process is needed for the new document and in particular the domain of LAC will need further analysis
- Plurilingualism of the learners – and all teachers as teachers/users of language(s) for instruction: a holistic approach to the curriculum relating LS, LAC and MFLs is inseparable from a serious consideration of plurilingualism (as defined in the CEFR) which

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<sup>1</sup> ‘*Bildung*’ (in German) means to develop and bring out the full potential of a human being, based on his/her nature, but stimulated and structured by education (nurture). This dynamic concept encompasses the product or relative state reached by a human being as well as the process of becoming educated/becoming one’s own self. During this process the mental, cultural and practical capacities as much as the personal and social competencies are being developed and continuously widened in a holistic way.

places emphasis on L1 as well as on other languages in the individual's repertoire

- Models/definitions of competences: after a clarification of the nature of the concept of competence and its usefulness (and how it may be used), papers referred to different competence models – of which the definition of plurilingualism is one – and a document on LE will need to address the issue of competence and competence models at an etic level to stimulate reflection on existing and future models and their character
- Historical perspectives: a number of papers referred to the evolution of didactics, methods in LS teaching, and it may be useful for readers of the document to be able to place themselves in the historical context and in relation to others in other countries

## 6. Contents of an LE Framework<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the conference some possible themes and contents of a document, referred to above, had been identified. Further themes which the document would need to address arising from the conference include (in no order of significance):

- Curriculum
  - ◀ same for all (eg. for socially advantaged and disadvantaged learners) ?
  - ◀ holistic (i.e. LS, LAC, FL / SL 1, 2,...)
- LS and '*Bildung*' and identity
- LS and culture ('Culture' and canons and/or 'culture' and all text types)
- Relationship with FLs and the existing CEFR
- Competences – knowledge about language and communicative skills AND communication in other semiotic systems

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'Framework', it was suggested in the closing session, may be problematic in that it seems to (too readily) connote the grids of levels and descriptors which are to be found in the CEFR but which are only a part of the CEFR and distract from the other components; there may be an argument for referring to the LE document as a 'handbook' to refer to its function as a reference instrument.

- Assessment of competences
- Literature – or ‘texts’ (and competences )
- Chapters on reading/writing/oral interaction
- Pedagogy and Didactics (at etic level)
- LAC and types of language competence
- LS and LAC and disadvantage (as a consequence of belonging to a stigmatised group or one with low social status)
- Bilingualism and bilingual education
  - ◀ education for minorities where children may have two (or more) first languages

## 7. Other points

a) There may be a need for Threshold-type descriptions of Languages of School Education. In particular this might be an approach to LAC – a description of the language and language competence, at different points in the educational career, needed for success in LAC and in education itself.

b) The form of an LE document might need to take into consideration the developmental/age factor:

- to discuss the issues as they are seen for learners at different ages;
- to address the different groups of professionals whose focus is on different age groups (‘primary’, ‘lower secondary’, ‘upper secondary’ for example although these are institutional rather than developmental divisions of the educational career).

c) Given the problem of how to ensure a consideration of the document as a whole rather than just levels and descriptors, it might be necessary to place any discussion of levels and descriptors in an appendix (as was the original intention for the CEFR for Modern Languages).

d) Furthermore, given the long-term work need to develop such levels and descriptors (particularly if it is agreed that an adaptation of CEFR indicators and levels is not appropriate), it may be advisable to produce an LE document which addresses some or all of the issues raised above rather than await the outcome of a long-term project on descriptors and levels.

## References:

- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe (2006). *Plurilingual Education in Europe. 50 Years of international co-operation*. Language Policy Division, Strasbourg.