



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
Directorate-General for Education and Culture

Lifelong learning: horizontal policy issues and 2020 strategy  
**Multilingualism policy**

Brussels, 11/4/2014  
DG EAC A3.002/MP

**MINUTES**

**OF THE MEETING OF THE**

**EUROPEAN LANGUAGE LABEL WORKING GROUP**

**HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2014**

**PARTICIPANTS**

Commission: Ana Carla Pereira (head of the Skills and Qualifications; Multilingualism policy unit and chair of the morning session), Kristina Cunningham (head of the Multilingualism policy sector), Manola Peschieri (EC coordinator of the European Language Label and chair of the afternoon session), Anita Pelechowicz (in charge of meeting logistics and reimbursement), Sophie Bellieni (on behalf of the Erasmus+ coordination unit).

29 representatives of the following countries: Austria, Belgium (FR, 3), Belgium (NL, 2), Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain (2) and Switzerland.

The European Commission (**COM**) welcomes the attendees in Brussels and anticipates the agenda of the day. No further points are added. The minutes of last year's meeting are officially approved.

The floor is given to the ELL Working Group for a brief introduction, where each member also mentions how their NAs intend to pursue the ELL initiative in the new programme and what their plans are as of 2014. To be observed is the general, positive trend that the ELL will be pursued in the participating countries: some will organise it already in 2014, some may have to wait until 2015 to allow for the achievement of the restructuring taking place in the NAs following the introduction of Erasmus+, some may organise the contest only biannually, while Belgium (NL) already decided to move from a biannual organisation of the ELL to an annual one.

**COM** gives an overview of the main activities in the field of multilingualism. First and foremost there is the **COM** proposal of a **Benchmark on language competences** made in the Rethinking Education package. The benchmark involves two indicators relating to first and second foreign languages respectively, which are linked to two objectives in lower secondary education to be achieved by 2020: a) at least 50% of pupils reach a B1/B2 level (Independent User) in the first foreign language (first indicator) and b) at least 75% of pupils reach an A1/A2 level (Basic User) in a second foreign language (second indicator). Negotiations about the adoption of the proposal by the Council started in the Education Committee in January and are ongoing. The Greek Presidency aims to get the benchmark approved by May 2014 in the form of Council Conclusions.

Secondly, the **Cooperation with the Thematic Working Group on Languages in Education and Training**. Reports are being prepared in which **COM** aims to better understand the efficiency of language teaching and learning in schools. What can already be recovered from these reports is that access to language learning has increased to appropriate levels in most MS, but the results of language teaching are not necessarily proportionate to the number of hours of teaching provided.

Thirdly, **the International dimension**. **COM** is conducting policy dialogues with a number of countries in the world. Worth mentioning is especially the close policy dialogue **COM** has been conducting with China, within which a language initiative was carried out in July and August 2013 in EU universities to enrich the professional development of Chinese foreign language teachers. **COM** identified a pool of EU universities which could provide high-level training in the form of specialised immersion courses to the Chinese teachers. The languages selected for training were

French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish and the Chinese authorities nominated 18 teachers of these languages for participation. The feedback provided both from EU universities and Chinese teachers was very positive. A follow-up to this exchange will likely be discussed in the EU-China Conference which will take place in Beijing next May, where there will be a focus on multilingualism.

Fourthly, the **European Day of Languages. COM will** organise a 2-day conference (25/26 September) to celebrate this day for the fourteenth time and discuss issues related to the multilingualism policy. It will be held in Florence during the Italian Presidency of the European Council. Among the topics of the event, focus will be on the launch of on-line linguistic support in Erasmus+. NAs will receive an invitation.

**COM** gives also an overview of the future: in 2014 there will be a new Commission and new Commissioners shall be appointed. Among the priorities that will be submitted to the incoming Commission, there will certainly be **Language learning in compulsory education**. The ELL could be related to this priority, given its successful story in promoting language teaching and learning in the past 15 years. The ELL already enjoys a good level of visibility, it would now be important to link it to a broader political aspect.

**Poland** intervenes saying that, in relation to the benchmark, they had proposed an addition in the second version of the Council conclusions where they mentioned the ELL as best practice example. This had however been removed in subsequent versions. **COM** will try to make sure that in the latest version of the Council conclusions this addition is restored.

**COM** moves over to Languages in Erasmus+ Programme. Language learning and linguistic diversity is one of six over-arching strategic priorities of the new programme. Firstly an important budget has been earmarked for linguistic support for long term mobility under Key Action 1. The service provider will be selected on the basis of a recently closed open call for tenders. Secondly National Agencies are encouraged to promote language teaching and learning as the aim of Strategic Partnerships submitted by stakeholders under Key Action 2. Thirdly, under Key Action 3, **COM** has recently launched a centrally managed call for proposals for public authorities in Member States, where one of the priority themes is the assessment of transversal skills, including languages. Key Action 3 will also provide funding for a number of awareness raising initiatives organised by COM.



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With regard to the awareness-raising activities for the promotion of languages (KA3), **COM** informs the attendees of two incoming events taking place in Brussels: DGT/SCIC Conference "Translating and interpreting for our citizens", in the framework of the European Master's in Translation (EMT) Network (27/28 March) and the "Juvenes Translatores" Award Ceremony (8<sup>th</sup> April), which can be followed via web-streaming. The links will be timely sent to the Working Group.

Subsequently **COM** provides information on the **Erasmus+ Dissemination Platform**, the new on-line tool that replaces the former EVE Platform and will contain all the Erasmus+ projects. This new Platform is part of a dissemination strategy that accompanies Erasmus+. A note was recently sent to NAs where they were requested to provide feedback on the platform. At DG level, a Steering Group will be created, which will define guidance notably to NA on the implementation on the Erasmus+ dissemination strategy which will include i.a. a selection of projects that will be flagged as best practices in the Dissemination Platform. This selection shall occur on an annual basis and will be accompanied by annual targets and common criteria. Where Erasmus+ co-funded projects are awarded the ELL, a dedicated ELL flag will be established in the Erasmus+ Dissemination Platform. A presentation on the Erasmus+ Dissemination strategy is available through this [link](#).

**COM** presents the **new Guidelines for Implementation of the European Language Label** (available in this [webpage](#)), underlining that they were the result of a team work with the two units of DG EAC in charge of coordination of the National Agencies and the Erasmus+ programme respectively. **COM** stresses in particular the fact that our main objective has been to preserve one of the prerogatives of the ELL initiative that has marked its success in the 15 years of its existence:

to promote language teaching and learning in innovative ways without necessarily having budgets available. The fact that the ELL is not considered a minimum requirement but is strongly encouraged should therefore be seen in a positive light. A lively discussion follows with several comments and input from different members, who also intervene more than once. Among them: **Portugal** proposes to couple the ELL with E-Twinning and/or Europass and the Council of Europe for more sustainability; **Belgium (NL)** suggests keeping the yearly report related to the ELL in the new Erasmus+ template. **COM** will explore this possibility while this template is still not final.

In the afternoon session, discussion focusses on **the Electronic publication "7-year European Language Label innovative projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)"**. While we are entering a new phase with Erasmus+, it is good to take stock of the just expired LLP in relation to the ELL. In December 2013, the participating countries were invited to select up to 4 ELL-awarded projects applying each one of the 8 European priorities that were defined for the Label campaigns 2006/2007 to 2012/2013. **The participants** briefly present their project/s and **MP** complements the information where missing and provides it on behalf of the participating countries that are not represented in the meeting.

AT	BE (FR)	BE (NL)	BG	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	HU	IE	IS	IT	LT	LU	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	SK	SI	SV
4	4(+3)	4	2	4	2	3	1	4	4	2	4	3	4	1	4	2	3	1	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	1

(**EL** cannot present the projects they mean to select because they have to be approved by the EL Ministry first).

An official deadline was set (mid-March 2014), which could however not be respected by all participating countries due to the many new activities brought about at NA level by the introduction of the new programme. **COM** has already derogated and granted new deadlines to those who could not send any projects yet, the main objective being to collect from as many participating countries as possible good projects that will be included in the publication. The participants are reminded of the need to provide **COM** with a written confirmation that it is authorised to publish pictures where people are featured.

**COM** thanks all participants for coming to Brussels and looks forward to continued, good cooperation during the year until the next yearly meeting of the ELL Working Group in 2015.