

## The role of the ECML

Sitting as it does at the interface between policy, research, teacher education and practice, the ECML is in a unique position to support member states in implementing such quality language education and in raising awareness of the overall benefits of lifelong language learning through initiatives such as the European Day of Languages.

The ECML recognises the importance of valuing all those working in the field, and of contributing to their professionalisation through access to innovative resources and to sustainable opportunities for development. Within a holistic vision of language education which is inclusive, plurilingual and intercultural, it recognises the need for pedagogical approaches which are differentiated according to learner needs and to specific language contexts (home/first, second, foreign, regional, of migration, in subjects etc.).

## Purpose of this Declaration

The time is ripe to raise awareness of the political importance of language education and to address the need for sustained and strengthened support for its professionalisation across Europe. This Declaration highlights nine ECML cornerstones and the specific ways in which these contribute to ensuring that plurilingual and intercultural education becomes a reality in member states. By signing this declaration, the ECML and language professionals pledge to work together in pursuit of a common vision.

## Next steps: Towards a Policy Recommendation

The ECML welcomes the wider Council of Europe's initiative to propose a new policy recommendation in the area of plurilingual education. It proposes that the text of this Anniversary Declaration be drawn upon in the development of such a recommendation.

## ECML 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Declaration

# QUALITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALY COHESIVE EUROPE: NINE ECML CORNERSTONES

The past 25 years have witnessed a surge of interest in language education, evidenced by the sharp increase in language-related research, in innovative pedagogies such as communicative methodology, competence-based teaching and autonomous learning and in the influential publications of the Council of Europe. This has led to a raising of standards in many areas of language education and a broadening of the aims of language education to embrace areas such as plurilingual, cultural and cognitive competences.

Nevertheless, far-reaching societal changes require language professionals and stakeholders to connect and reconsider language education to meet the challenges that have arisen. At a societal level, demographic changes coupled with growing intolerance and xenophobia towards other people, cultures and the languages they speak bring challenges that need to be addressed not only in society but in educational institutions, where a stronger focus on human rights and democratic citizenship is a matter of great urgency. At a school level, misconceptions around home languages, which are often seen as a hindrance to integration, and the loss of interest in neighbouring and less widely spoken languages are issues which merit close attention. There is a need to diversify the offer of languages taught in educational institutions which must embrace a plurilingual rationale which makes visible and uses the home languages of learners as a resource. Professional development opportunities must be created for teachers of all languages and subjects, supporting them to cooperate within the framework of a whole-school curriculum.





Supporting teachers and learners to develop values, attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to acquire linguistic, communicative, cultural and plurilingual competences in order to participate in and make a positive contribution to culturally diverse societies. Facilitating the use of innovative pedagogies appropriate to the context and aims of specific competences, thus enhancing and optimising their acquisition.



Committing to a central objective of language education to foster the favourable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture. Promoting democratic citizenship through mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity. Implementing plurilingual education so that learners develop a language repertoire, in which all linguistic abilities have a place.



Developing and providing access to a range of support materials and training modules which encourage teachers to embrace age-appropriate communicative and interactive pedagogies. Fostering favourable attitudes toward other languages and other cultures, thus setting the scene for openness, tolerance and respect for diversity.

## 9 cornerstones



Contributing to the development of linguistic and cultural literacies, while supporting a pluriliteracies agenda where young people become literate across languages and disciplines. Enhancing the quality not only of the language itself but of the depth of conceptual understanding in different subjects and thereby developing autonomous, analytical and critical-thinking skills.



Assisting in the development of materials that will benefit teachers of sign languages. Fostering an inclusive, holistic approach to language education which recognises, on the one hand, that sign languages are part of the collective cultural and linguistic capital of their users and, on the other, ensures that signers are afforded access to the same range of educational opportunity as their speaking counterparts.



Facilitating the use by teachers and examination bodies of formative and summative assessment procedures, where appropriate linked to the CEFR, which are based on valid criteria and graded reliability. Enhancing autonomous learning by means of formative evaluation tools such as the ELP or focused feedback. Raising awareness that language performance is as an integral part of a student's ability to function in a plurilingual society in which citizens are social agents, free and able to use the languages of their choice.



Recognising that support for migrants to acquire the language of the host country is a crucial element in their linguistic and social integration and an issue of human rights, social justice and cohesion, as well as an economic benefit for Europe. At the same time, recognising that the safeguarding of migrants' own languages of origin and their cultural values is an essential factor for harmonious integration. Facilitating access to the labour market by supporting the acquisition of language for professional purposes and work-related knowledge and know-how.



Supporting all students in the development of competence in the language(s) of schooling as an essential means of ensuring the right to education. Encouraging schools to engage with and adopt a whole-school approach to the plurality of languages and cultures of their students. On an individual level, creating an environment where plurilingual learners can enrich their cultural and linguistic experience by drawing on and valuing all the languages which make up their linguistic repertoire.



Encouraging teachers to shift their mindset towards interconnected and global education models in order to find innovative ways to use new opportunities to make language learning and teaching more effective. Developing the digital literacy of learners through a pedagogy which is inquiry-based, collaborative, inclusive, experiential and community-based. Ensuring that technology is used for the benefit of society by helping learners to become responsible and critical users of media.