ECML PROGRAMME 2016-2019
PROGRAMME 2016-2019 DU CELV
PROGRAMM 2016-2019 DES EFSZ

LANGUAGES AT THE HEART OF LEARNING
LES LANGUES AU CŒUR DES APPRENTISSAGES
SPRACHEN ALS HERZSTÜCK DES LERNENS

'Towards a Common European Framework for Language Teachers':

latest developments

(February 2017)

Exploring the universe of teacher competences

The unique project entitled 'Towards a Common European Framework for Language Teachers' reached a first landmark in September when a Network Meeting took place that brought together a diverse group of 22 specialists from 14 countries. The vigorous discussions of questions such as 'what do we mean by competence in the case of teachers?', 'how can the different dimensions of teacher competence best be organised graphically?', and 'how can one compile an accessible directory of the many frameworks of teacher competences that already exist?' engaged participants fully for the two days and provided plenty of food for thought for the project team members, who were very grateful for the feedback received on their work, and the constructive debate, as they move forward with their ambitious work programme. They hope to engage in many more exchanges with those who participated and other interested parties in the three remaining years of the project, as they gradually work towards achieving the objectives.

50 frameworks and counting

So far, in its preparation for delivering the first of the project's outputs, a guide to the many existing frameworks, the project team have identified and analysed nearly 40 instruments that set out various kinds of competences for differing groups of language teachers, ranging from student teachers to specialists in CLIL – see the complete list here. Some of these are the products of previous ECML projects, while others result from EU-funded, national or local initiatives. In addition, a further dozen frameworks or standards developed for teachers of all subjects have been reviewed, along with a range of documents focusing on languages in education published by the Council of Europe and other international bodies. The resulting analyses will provide the raw material for building a comprehensive guide to the work already done on specifying teacher competences relevant to language education, which will be available via a website by the end of 2017. The guide will enable teachers and teacher trainers to scan the array of work that already exists, and to identify the frameworks and descriptors that they may need at any given time.

Towards an overview of teacher competences and other attributes

Equally importantly, the analysis work done in order to create the proposed guide should enable the project team to develop an overview of 'what teachers need to know, be able to do, and to care about', as one of the background papers reviewed describes it. Work has already begun on various alternative ways of graphically presenting such an overview, and this and an associated inventory will eventually form part of the website. But the project members do not view the task as simply putting together a taxonomy. They believe that both teachers and teacher trainers need at the same time to be able to identify measures that will help teachers to acquire or further develop the competences and other attributes they need. This means somehow relating the descriptions of competences to relevant professional development opportunities and experiences that, depending on the context in which they are, or will be working, teachers should be able to access in order to continue growing professionally.

Developing existing frameworks

Meanwhile, since the project brings together teams that have been involved in developing four of the frameworks that have been analysed, the project is being used as a stimulus to do further work on these. Plans are in place for the Swiss *Profession-related Language Competence Profiles*, the *Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches* (FREPA), the *European Profiling Grid* (EPG), and *the Eaquals Framework* each to be extended or supplemented in order to add to their respective impact.

Further information about the project can be found here. The project team look forward to hearing from anyone who is interested in getting involved in some way with this ground-breaking work.

The project team:

- Lukas BLEICHENBACHER, ECML project coordinator, Swiss profiles consortium / Leading house Pädagogische Hochschule des Kantons St.Gallen, Switzerland
- Francis GOULLIER, Ministère de l'Education Nationale, France
- Anna SCHRÖDER-SURA, Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, Germany
- Richard ROSSNER, EAQUALS (Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality in Language Services), United Kingdom