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Think tank “Transversal competences in foreign language education”
within the framework of the ECML’s [medium-term programme of activities 2020-2023](#)
8-9 February 2022

- Venue:** ECML, Graz, Austria (sanitary crisis permitting). If travel is not possible the workshop will take place online. If the pandemic allows for some participants to travel to Graz a hybrid event may be envisaged.
- Participants:** 1 delegate per member state, to be nominated by the [national nominating authorities](#)
- Working languages:** The working languages will be **English and German** with simultaneous interpretation between these two languages.

1. Short description of the Think Tank

Transversal competences (TCs) refer to ‘knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners need to fulfil their potential and contribute to the well-being of their communities’ (OECD’S Learning Compass 2030). Various other terms, such as ‘soft skills’, ‘interdisciplinary skills’, ‘life skills’, ‘21st century skills’ etc. are used to describe the same or a similar range of competences. In many education systems, the development of learners’ transversal competences, such as co-operation, problem solving, critical thinking, and digital literacy, has become an important focus of policy.

TCs do not relate specifically to the learning of languages or any school subject but are relevant across the spectrum of all subjects in school curricula. Together with the foregrounding of plurilingual approaches and mediation arising from the Council of Europe initiatives, this focus on TCs is having an impact on school curricula for a range of different subjects, including foreign language education.

The Think Tank will bring together language professionals working in this area to review and explore ways in which learners’ TCs may be developed as part of foreign language education and how teachers and future teachers can be supported in this task. Participants will also be invited to suggest ways in which these ideas may be channelled into a follow-up project.

2. Aims of the event

- to explore together ways in which learners' transversal competences are being - and could be - developed as part of (foreign) language education;
- to consider the role played by teacher education in supporting the implementation of TCs;
- to examine the role of TCs in language policy and curriculum design in member states;
- to collect examples of good practice relating to TCs in language teaching and teacher education;
- to consider how existing competence frameworks (Council of Europe's RFCDC, EU Framework, UN Agenda 2030, OECD Agenda 2030, UNESCO etc.) might assist language professionals in selecting TCs and incorporating them in the design of curricula, the development of pedagogies and the creation of teaching materials;
- to explore, and find solutions to, the challenges of incorporating TCs in language education.

3. Expected outputs of the Think Tank

- an overview of current educational policy and practice in this area in member states;
- examples of classroom activities for incorporating TCs;
- some guidelines for language teachers and teacher educators to help them incorporate transversal competences in foreign language education;
- suggestions for key areas to be the focus of a follow-up project.

4. Expected outcomes of the Think Tank for the participants

- increased competence in incorporating TCs into (foreign) language pedagogy and teacher education including development of teaching materials;
- a better understanding about which TCs are addressed in some national curricula and why, and how the selection is made, including the usefulness of competence frameworks;
- identification of the professional learning and other needs of teachers and teacher educators in this area, and how these needs could be met;
- a network of teachers and teacher educators working in this area.

5. Profile of participants:

a. Professional background

Nominees should correspond to one or more of the following categories:

- language teachers working in the area of TCs in language education and who have a multiplier capacity (or have the potential to take on such a role);
- language teacher educators working in initial (language) teacher education and/or the professional development of language teachers;
- people involved in designing or reforming (foreign) language curricula who have knowledge and experience of working at policy level with reference frameworks.

b. Experience, competences required

All nominated participants should have some experience with addressing TCs in (foreign) language education – approaches, materials, curricula etc. – and should have a knowledge of TC reference frameworks. It would be an advantage if they can contribute information about national experiences of incorporating TCs in language education.

The working languages of the Think Tank will be English and German. Participants should have at least C1 competence in one of these languages. Interpretation between the languages will be provided.

6. Expected involvement/ tasks before and during the event

Before:

Nominees will be requested to:

- familiarise themselves with documents provided by the organising team;
- collect basic information about whether - and if so how - transversal competences in (language) education are referred to in national/regional policy, curriculum documents and/or implemented in language education;
- summarise in written form their own experience of working on transversal competences with language learners and/or with (future) teachers etc;
- share this information electronically with other participants prior to the think tank.

During:

Nominees will be required to engage in discussion relating to the topic and to share examples and insights from their own and/or colleagues' experience of working on transversal competences. Selected participants may be invited to hold brief presentations of their experiences.

After:

Nominees will be expected to disseminate the outputs and outcomes of the Think Tank in their country and to join a network of professionals who are interested in participating in follow-up work. They may also be invited to contribute in some way to the proposed call for (a) possible follow-up project(s).