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*Language learning and teaching  
in the context of twin cities*

Gilbert Dalgalian,  
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with Séverine Boulery, Aspasia Nanaki, Anita Vaivade



*European Centre for Modern Languages  
Centre européen pour les langues vivantes*

*Language learning and teaching in the context of twin cities*

In 1994, upon the initiative of Austria and the Netherlands, with special support from France, eight states founded the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) as an Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe. It was to become “a forum to discuss and seek solutions to the specific tasks and challenges that face them in the coming years and which will play a decisive role in the process of European integration”. At the time of writing, thirty-three states subscribe to the Partial Agreement. Following a successful initial trial period (1995-1998), the continuation of the activities of the Centre was confirmed by Resolution (98)11 of the Committee of Ministers.

The aim of the ECML is to offer – generally through international workshops, colloquies and research and development networks and other expert meetings – a platform and a meeting place for officials responsible for language policy, specialists in didactics and methodology, teacher trainers, textbook authors and other multipliers in the area of modern languages.

*Language learning and teaching in the context of twin cities* is published within the framework of the first medium-term programme of activities of the ECML (2000-2003).

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**Language learning and teaching  
in the context of twin cities**

*Survey of experiences and needs*

*Recommendations for the promotion of languages*

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Jacqueline Feuillet-Thieberger

Helena Kalve

*with*

Séverine Boulery

Aspasia Nanaki

Anita Vaivade

European Centre for Modern Languages

Council of Europe Publishing

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# 1. Preliminary remarks

## 1.1 Scope and limitations of the survey

The city twinning movement offers one of the best opportunities ever invented in modern times for establishing formal ties between fellow citizens. And yet the movement itself will only ever achieve its full potential if the issue of languages is given the necessary consideration.

It is also becoming increasingly clear that knowledge of languages will be crucial to professional mobility and the ability to make full use of training. In the new European and global context, knowledge of essential English will not be enough.

The present study forms part of the medium-term programme of activities of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). It is the result of research “to promote further the use of the potential provided by the context of twin cities for learning languages” (see description of Project 1.1.6).

After a workshop (No. 6/2000) held in Graz from 13 to 15 July 2000, which gathered together some fifteen experts, a core research team of six members was set up around the co-ordinator of Project 1.1.6: three researchers completing their higher education, chosen and headed by two research directors from Nantes University and the Riga Academy of Culture in Latvia.

The team carried out its activities between June 2001 and June 2003. Initially, it drew up a “preliminary questionnaire”, which it used to poll a small number of twin cities about the actual concept of the survey questionnaire itself, and then it finalised a definitive questionnaire (see *Appendix 2*), which it sent out to a large number of national associations of twin cities.

In so far as the questionnaire was passed on to the cities and municipalities themselves, the survey (*Appendix 2*) was the subject of considerable interest. The answers (which admittedly varied in number from one country to the next) were analysed and used in the research.

Does this mean the essential aspects of the defined contract – namely, “to conduct a survey of the experiences and needs of twin cities” – were fulfilled?

To answer this question it is necessary first to have a look at what was complied with in full:

- a. **The survey questionnaire** – after a test version and several improvements in its presentation – proved that it was coherent and effective: the answers given were relatively precise, comprising figures and highly detailed qualitative remarks on the conditions, motivations, methods and evaluation of language exchanges between twin cities.

- b. On the whole it was clear that **the municipalities that took part in the survey were committed**, as seen from the quality of the answers given to the questionnaire and the quality of the respondents chosen by the mayor or municipality – in general, these were either twinning officers or competent deputies who could often remember the history of the twinning from its very beginning. Also many of the towns responded to the questionnaire are among the towns and municipalities most active in the twinning programme; they are among those with a great deal of experience and acquired knowledge to their credit.
- c. The **seriousness and commitment of the two teams of research students** who, under the guidance of their research directors in Nantes and Riga, proceeded with the protracted tasks of revising and distributing the questionnaire, collating and analysing responses, and structuring results; a process that needed to be completed several times. Email exchanges between Nantes and Riga, and also with the respective project co-ordinator, were sometimes long and difficult but nevertheless rewarding in terms of results.

These positive aspects ensure that the research indicates very clear trends.

Below is a list of the elements which can be considered less than satisfactory:

- a. **The sample of towns that took part in the survey** was limited to eighty one twinned towns or municipalities in Europe. However, these 81 towns or municipalities (see *Appendix 1*) alone represent 328 twinings throughout Europe and the rest of the world.
- b. **The unequal representation of countries in the sample** resulted from the limited nature of the sample and, upsetting the balance of responses from the different countries, magnifies the inadequate representativeness of the sample, even if here again the large number of twinings (328) covered by the sample in part rectifies the imbalance.
- c. **Certain countries were absent from the sample.** Initially, the survey questionnaire was to be sent out to 37 countries (earmarked when the questionnaire was sent out), all members of the Council of Europe; however, not every country benefited from a (national or other) point of contact so as to enable the survey to be distributed to individual cities. Consequently, only sixteen countries, large and small, took part in the survey.

Ultimately, it proved impossible to consider the sample obtained as qualitatively inadequate: firstly, that would have meant unnecessarily devaluing the important work already completed and, secondly, the research provided some very clear findings, which shall be discussed below. While these trend indications can be considered as important in themselves, they may also incite the institutions concerned (the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), as well as the European Union and the Council of

Europe) to continue and extend this research to an even more representative sample of twinned cities in Europe.

## **1.2 Aims and objectives of the research**

The initial aim of Project 1.1.6 was to “provide tools, procedures and methods well adapted” to exchanges and language communication between cities and to their (adult) language courses and school exchange programmes in particular.

To this end, the project aimed to develop:

- “a survey of experiences and needs of twin cities”;
- “an analysis and typology of these experiences and needs in order to establish a series of varied examples of situations and possibilities in language learning in the context of twin cities”;
- “recommendations for twinning officers as well as others concerned”.

Once the work was completed and with the benefit of the responses received, the following was decided:

- the survey will comprise the analysis and be the object of the present publication;
- the recommendations will be the logical conclusion of the survey and its final part;
- two appendices and three reference documents (available separately and online) are to be added to the survey: they will provide details of the collating and processing phases.

## **1.3 Assumptions about the twin cities context**

A number of assumptions were established during Workshop 6/2000 of July 2000 and a second expert meeting in 2001, involving representatives of the CEMR and CLRAE:

- Assumption 1: “the knowledge of languages is an essential factor in the promotion and realisation of democratic European citizenship”;
- Assumption 2: “the language question, always an issue in the framework of twin cities, rarely finds a satisfactory answer; the potential offered by this context is not sufficiently used for language learning”;
- Assumption 3: “learning the partner’s language is rarely a priority”;

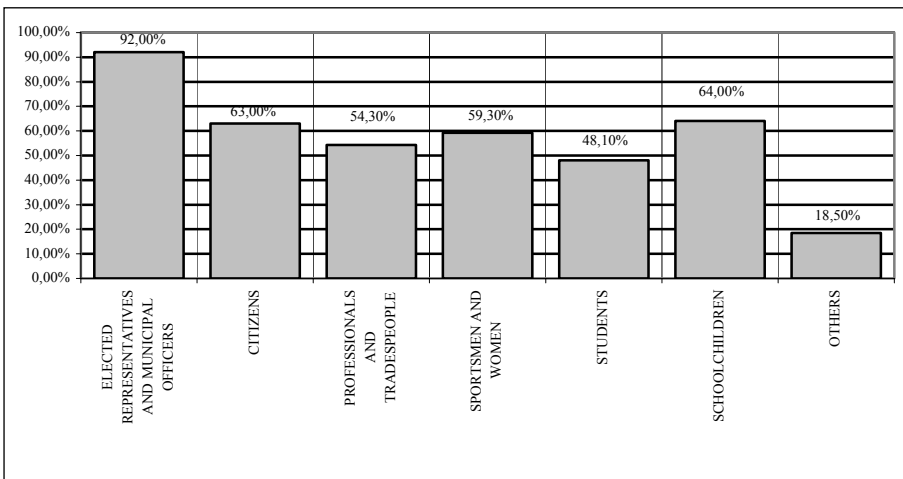
- Assumption 4: “school and university twinings only rarely coincide with the twinings of their respective cities and – Assumption 5 – are not fully exploited from an educational (intercultural) and linguistic point of view”;
- Assumption 6: “city twinings offer a remarkable potential for the promotion and learning of languages”.

Those were the assumptions that our survey was to invalidate, confirm or qualify while answering other questions which had previously not been addressed or badly formulated. The following pages will show that the spectrum of language exchanges between cities seems far more dynamic and more subtle than was credited in the formulation of the assumptions.

If the prime objective of twinning is to get citizens to adhere to the process of European integration, the study will reveal the extent to which twinning programmes are a unique instrument for mutual acquaintance and rapprochement. And how the language barrier, *de facto* the ultimate European frontier, is simply waiting to be broken through.

## 2. Language communication between twin cities

Language communication between twin cities was the first point earmarked for the questionnaire (see *Appendix 2*). First of all, it was felt particularly relevant to know how exchanges between twin cities generally take place. The exchange was defined according to the following criteria: Who are the participants? What is or what are the language(s) used? How long do the visits last and what modes of communication are used? This initial approach required a more in-depth examination, namely a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the exchanges and an assessment of past experiences and a tentative look at future prospects. From the answers received, the following facts were extracted: language communication between twin cities, whatever the category of participants and their mother tongues, remains an important and firm motivation for exchanges, hence the need to encourage and prepare the exchange well ahead of the participants' visits.



*Percentage of participants by category*

### 2.1 Exchange intensity by target group

From the very outset the questionnaire defined six categories of target groups: elected representatives and municipal officials; citizens; professionals and tradespeople; sportsmen and women; students; and schoolchildren. The table above shows the distribution of participants by category based on the sample of analysed answers:

The aforementioned data allows us to draw the following initial conclusions:

- the categories most represented here would appear to be the categories “elected representatives/municipal officials” (92%), “schoolchildren” (64%) and “citizens” (63%);
- while the categories “professionals/tradespeople” (54.3%) and “students” (48.1%) appear to be the target groups least represented in the exchanges.

This initial observation needs to be qualified somewhat:

- Firstly, the questionnaires were sent either to twinning officers (twinning committee) or directly to the town hall, which explains the strong showing of elected representatives and municipal officials. In any case, given their function and number, they remain a key target group in the organisation of exchanges.
- Professionals and tradespeople – who are among those least represented in the sample – appear not to want to commit a great deal to exchanges. Through a lack of time (very low frequency of visits combined with a very limited duration) and also of personal investment, they appear not always to appreciate the professional impact such exchanges might have (for example, exports of their products and services to the twinned city).
- Sportsmen and women appear to be the major beneficiaries of exchanges between twin cities, with strong participation in terms of both frequency and duration of visits. Their activities are directly linked to twinnings: tournaments, matches, competitions, races, etc.
- As for the low participation of students, the sample did not allow an objective analysis due to the small number of university towns represented in the survey. However, this target group is usually the category that makes the most frequent and longest stays, and as a result is in a position to promote best language communication between towns and cities.
- Finally, schoolchildren participate actively in exchanges between twin cities. However, most of the visits are relatively short (one to seven days). They remain none the less the most dynamic target group when it comes to preparing the visit (essentially correspondence) and also the most active in establishing lasting links (links between families, pen-pals, etc.).

## **2.2 Choice of languages used**

The questionnaire allowed a distinction to be made between the different language choices during exchanges: use of the national language, of the partner’s language, of both languages or of another language altogether.

Although the analysis of the sample reveals a clear trend that confirms the predominance of English in exchanges, another trend does appear to emerge: namely, a determination to diversify the languages used; indeed, depending on the countries and the target groups concerned, English is not the universal language of choice, and the languages used do differ.

There were also many instances where interpreters were used.

### **2.2.1 Language(s) used according to the country participating in the twinning**

The choice of languages used is based first and foremost on the countries' linguistic traditions and the way in which they are currently practised. It was noted for instance that in plurilingual countries or countries in which English was firmly established, in particular Luxembourg, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Bulgaria and Malta, there was a very strong drive for linguistic diversity. While certain cities stated that they often use English, others insist on practising or favouring diversity by giving preference to their hosts' languages, the languages of the two twin cities or even a third foreign language other than English. So it would seem that organising twinning projects tends to strengthen diversification of languages.

Countries that have always given preference to a single partner (Greece in the case of Cyprus) or the use of a single foreign language (French in the case of Romania and Bulgaria, English in the case of Sweden and Denmark, and German in the case of the Czech Republic) continue to give preference to the partner's language and their mother tongue in exchanges. Here, twinings therefore tend to consolidate established linguistic practices.

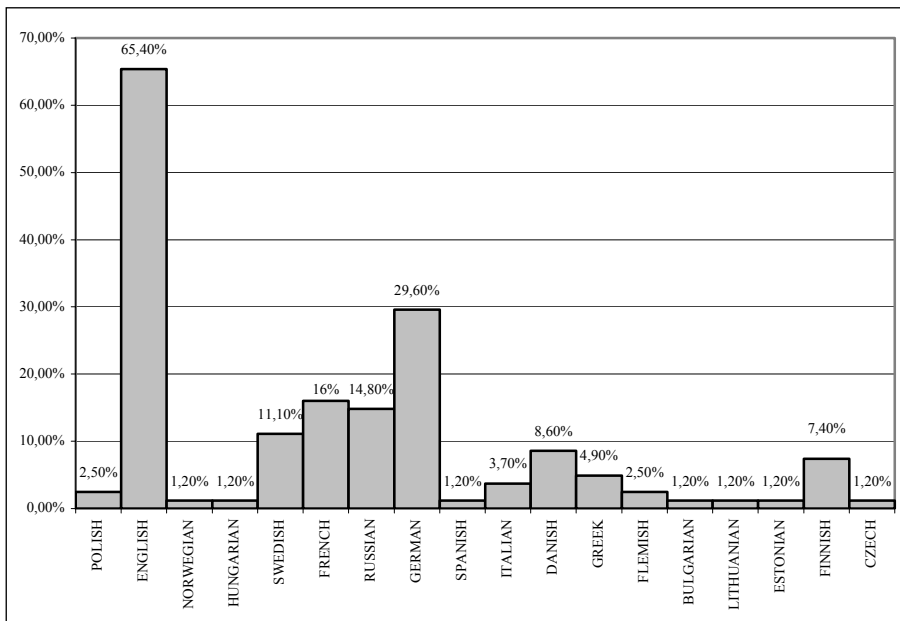
In the case of countries with a widely spoken national language (Germany, Austria, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom), there is a noticeable effort towards diversity even if English appears to be the language that predominates in exchanges. The choice of languages is in fact highly diversified: for example, the use of Portuguese in Plaisir (France), Romanian in Boquého (France), Croatian and Slovenian in Graz (Austria), and Hungarian in Saint-Sébastien-sur-Loire (France).

With English as the predominant language, a solution could simply be to adopt one and the same language for everyone, as the town of Alytus (Lithuania) proposes: "Since English is the *lingua franca par excellence* throughout the world, it would be easier for all partners to use a common language". However, it is easy to see why this proposal is not tenable. Firstly, it would sound the death knell for many foreign languages and, secondly, it would not improve communications. Indeed Marijampole, another Lithuanian town, remarks that "it is very important to maintain contacts with partners in order to get to know them better and, to do that, we need to use foreign languages and encourage reciprocal visits". As will be seen later in the study, understanding a partner's language plays a key role in the success of the exchange.

As for the use of interpreters, it is based essentially on a criterion of ease, “To make communication easier, we always provide interpreters” (Wattrelos, France), or linguistic necessity, “If necessary, there are interpreters as Finnish is not a widely spoken language” (Jyväskylä, Finland). And yet this solution is not always satisfactory: “Meetings that involve the use of interpreters are awkward” (Torva, Estonia). However, interpreters are used only when there are major communication problems and more noticeably so in exchanges between adults than between young people: “Older generations very rarely speak foreign languages and therefore need an interpreter. Younger ones manage without” (Joensuu, Lithuania).

### 2.2.2 Language(s) spoken by target group

Besides the generational problem mentioned above, the language(s) used among elected representatives and municipal officials – namely, the most represented category – will be looked at more closely here.

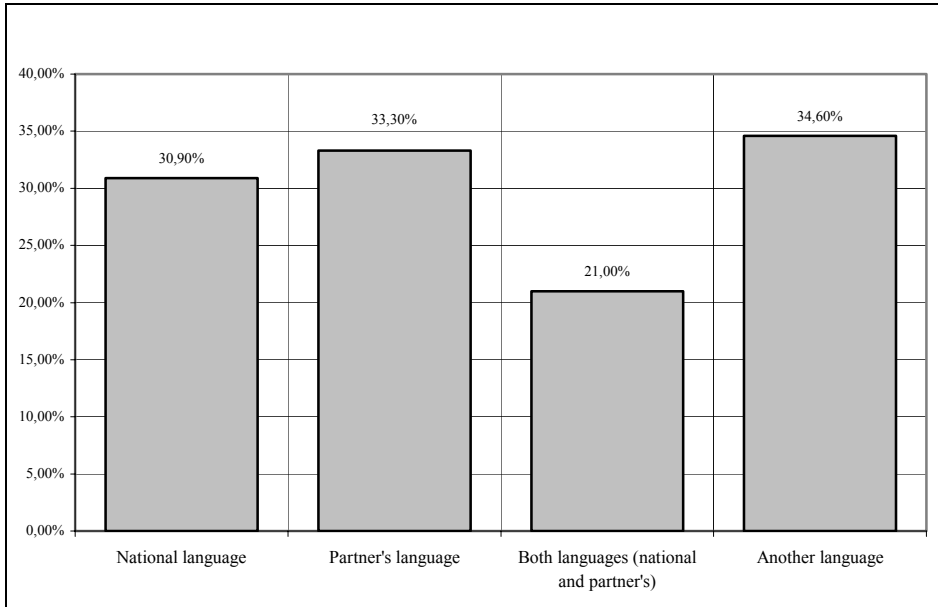


*The use of languages among elected representatives and municipal officials*

The table above allows the following conclusions to be drawn: the use of English predominates even though an analysis of the sample shows that the national language and the partner’s language (or both) are very widely used (most elected representatives and municipal officials use their national language, the partner’s language or both – see



table below). It should also be noted that there were no English-speaking countries in the sample.



*The use of languages among elected representatives and municipal officials*

### **2.3 Modes of communication and importance of verbal communication**

The questionnaire defined three different modes of communication: correspondence, reciprocal visits and e-mails. An analysis of the sample shows the following distribution:

Modes	Elected representatives and municipal officials	Citizens	Professionals/tradespeople	Sportsmen and women	Students	School-children
Correspondence	20%	16%	18%	16%	18%	20%
Reciprocal visits	98%	28%	22%	22%	20%	24%
Emails	28%	18%	20%	14%	16%	16%

This shows how important correspondence is in preparing visits since it is predominant whether it precedes or follows visits. Reciprocal visits, namely meetings between participants during exchanges, none the less take first place across all target groups. So even if the frequency and duration vary (see Reference Document No. 1) direct verbal communication still plays an essential role in realising the exchange.

In any case, “exchanges are a good means of speaking languages directly” (Brno, Czech Republic).

Mutual understanding is therefore the very foundation of an exchange’s success. And while the use of interpreters can be a solution, the quality of the communication will never be the same:

- “The people who work at Cesis (Latvia) and its twin towns and those aged 40 and over generally do not understand English, so interpreters have to be used, which always greatly complicates matters” (Cesis).
- “Although the level of English has improved considerably, many people are not sufficiently skilled to talk freely at informal moments [...]. Ideally everyone should be able to communicate without the help of third persons” (Ogre, Latvia).

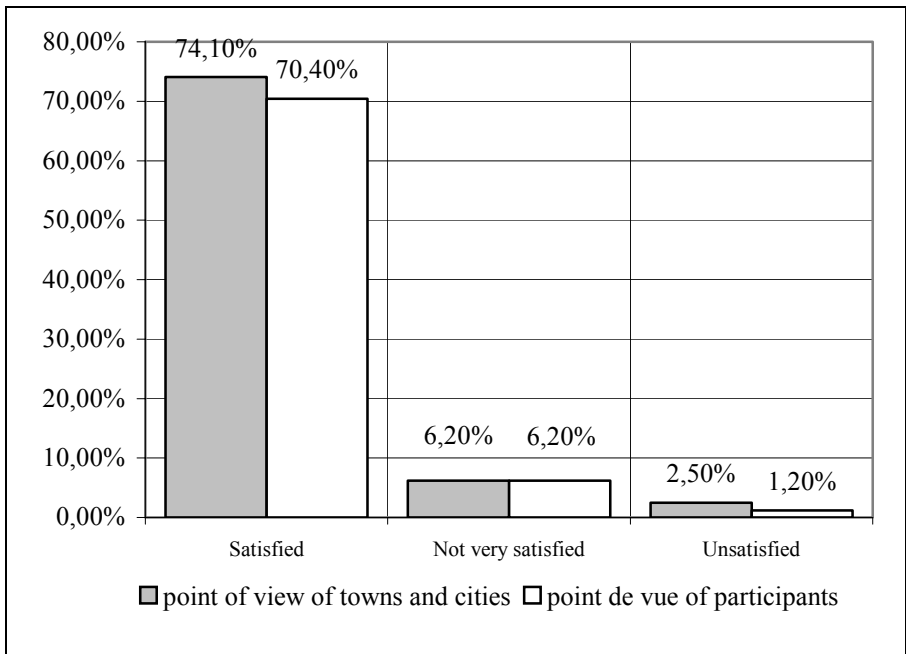
So knowledge of the twin city’s national language is a prerequisite for the success of an exchange, as the town of Graz (Austria) emphasises: “Twinning benefit from a better knowledge of Slovenian, Croatian and Hungarian” or Birstonas (Lithuania): “Using the national language makes things easier and contributes towards learning the partner’s language.”

There are also instances of a third communication language common to two twin cities. In Lahti (Finland), for instance: “we try and find a common language for everyone so that we don’t have to use interpreters”. The objective in any case is to ensure that the language does not become a barrier, an obstacle that impedes the participants’ understanding.

In conclusion poor communication can result in inadequacies and misunderstandings, and may even consolidate existing prejudices and sometimes cause the failure of a twinning project. It is important to prevent these language problems, which, as the town of Rønne (Denmark) remarks: “[are] responsible for the lack of contact”, hence the conclusion drawn by that same town, namely that “it is essential to prepare the encounter”.

## **2.4 Evaluation of the exchanges**

As the following results show, sixty towns and cities (74.1%) and fifty-seven participants (70.4%) said they were satisfied with language communications during exchanges.



*Evaluation of the exchanges with regard to language communication*

It would seem, then, that the language barrier is not an insurmountable obstacle to communication. The town of Lorient (France) confirms this view by stating that “until now language communication has not been an obstacle. The participants are very happy [...] to use foreign languages”.

But does this mean that the exchange leads to progress in language skills? According to the Finnish town of Haukipudas, “stays abroad have enabled participants to improve their knowledge of English, Russian and Swedish”. However, this situation does not always hold true.

On the one hand, as has been seen, comprehension is often complicated by the presence of an additional intermediary, namely, an interpreter, who reformulates the information more succinctly and therefore partially. While the exchange still exists in such cases, it is reduced and remains anonymous, not to say superficial, as it does not allow in-depth discussions and prevents a direct and genuine knowledge of the partner.

On the other hand, the frequent use of English tends to standardise the exchange. Participants “struggle through with English” (Rhodes, Greece), which confirms again that such discussions can be neither personal nor intimate. Using English will never result in an improvement in the languages of the twin cities as neither of the two languages is spoken (unless of course one of the partners happens to be an English-speaking country).

With target groups that hold regular exchanges and rarely use interpreters, namely schoolchildren and sportsmen and women, the crucial question is whether they genuinely benefit from the visits and whether the twinning favourably affects their language skills. This point will be examined in the section on school exchange programmes.

So, even if overall the evaluation remains positive, important obstacles remain, impeding both the personal and linguistic success of the exchange. However, the wishes expressed below might indicate possible developments.

## **2.5 Wishes and prospects**

Several wishes were expressed with regard to improving the quality of the exchanges:

- that language courses be continued or organised either directly by the twinning committee, the university or the language schools;
- that languages be diversified with a view to new twinning projects (for example, the Swedish town of Nyköping is preparing a new exchange project with the Russian town of Viborg for students of Russian; and the Czech town of Karlovy Vary is planning to organise German courses for politicians and municipal employees);
- that not only the language but also the culture be learnt (“We are trying to promote inter-Scandinavian communication to establish a genuine cultural exchange at every level”, Randers, Denmark);
- that the Internet be used as a tool;
- that exchanges be broadened to a wide and varied range of target groups (Lovech, Bulgaria).

Such commitment by towns and cities clearly shows that they realise the extent to which understanding the partner’s language can play a decisive role in the success and continuation of the exchange. The Greek town of Kolindros even mentions that poor knowledge of the partners’ languages can “result in misunderstandings” and that this is “the reason why the learning of several languages should be promoted in order to facilitate contacts with twin cities”.

Some towns insist that exchanges be based on a good command of English: “English has to be taught to those who take part in international exchanges” (Alytus, Lithuania) since, according to the town of Odense (Denmark), “[English] is set to become the dominant working language in the organisation of twinings.”

In certain countries there are still problems with promoting the partner's language, due essentially to a lack of financial resources but also to a lack of commitment by participants (lack of time).

None the less, the wishes and projects as a whole (see Reference Document No. 2) would seem to indicate that knowledge of language and culture will be taken into account more effectively in future – as will interpersonal skills to be acquired prior to the visit to the partner city – in order to improve exchanges. Finally, it can be argued that greater commitment on the part of participants, which is always a plus, depends on the financial support provided by the municipalities concerned.



### 3. Organisation of adult language courses

Over the years, the category of adult learners outside the school and university setting has become a new target group that differs from other professional target groups as a whole (for example, the business target group).<sup>1</sup> Indeed there have been many instances where language courses have been set up in municipalities as a result of twinning programmes. While demand has been – and still is – strong in various countries and cities, it also varies depending on a number of factors, foremost among them being the number and quality of the twinings and the ensuing activities.

Specific language needs are determined by a desire to improve contacts and encounters with partners, to discover their country, their culture and their way of life. It is of interest to find out how these needs are represented, both on the part of individuals and of the official representatives of the towns or cities. Overall it can be seen that, for the players involved in twinning activities, it is a matter of being able to talk and communicate with their partners. Perfection is not the aim; indeed it is not even necessary since the main objective is understanding. However, more often than not, language skills are the very foundations on which the smooth running of twinning programmes are based, which is why the language barrier, which definitely exists, has to be overcome. That is very much the view of official representatives and citizens alike, who are in favour of learning languages using courses specifically adapted to their needs.

The considerations featured in Chapter 3 refer to the second part (Part II) of the questionnaire (see *Appendix 2*). They are based on the answers given to Questions II.1 to II.8 and on the “Concluding remarks” requested at the end of the questionnaire (see also Reference Document No. 2: “Qualitative analysis”). It should be noted that these open questions enabled municipal representatives to answer in a more personalised and subtle way, as they required that respondents express opinions by means other than “yes” or “no”, keywords or simply a figure.

It is perhaps regrettable that there were not more qualitative answers to open questions as the findings would have been even more rewarding.<sup>2</sup>

The aim here is to filter out the main terms and conditions under which the courses are organised: how frequently they are held; the past, current or anticipated situation; the teaching aids used; the languages taught; and, finally, an evaluation of language learning/teaching. From the answers given, significant conclusions could be drawn.

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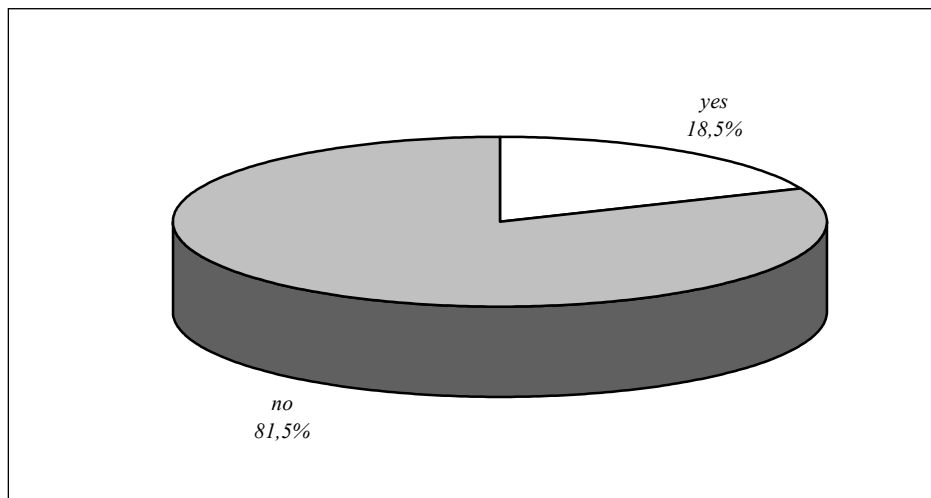
1 Due no doubt to the fact that a certain number of municipal twinings are aimed simply at mutual understanding and friendship between countries.

2 It would be interesting to examine why, depending on the countries represented, some people provided detailed views and comments and why others remained remarkably silent.

### 3.1 Organisation of courses

Only seven countries (fifteen towns) gave a positive answer to the question as to whether they were currently organising language courses: Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany and Sweden.

The overall situation is as follows:



*Current organisation of language courses*

Of the eighty-one towns and cities represented in the questionnaire, only twenty stated that they had organised language courses in the past, and fifteen that they were currently organising courses.

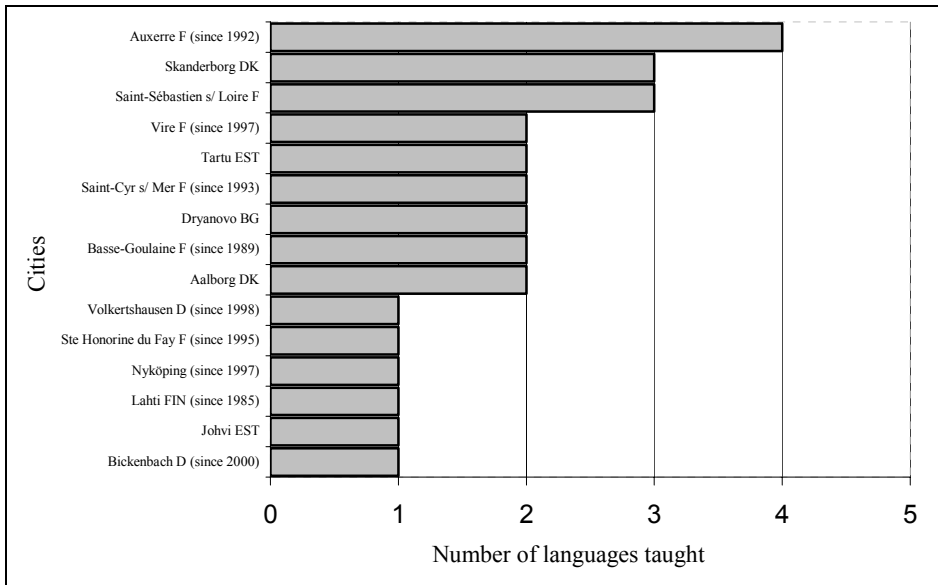
Given the limited number of cities represented, general conclusions cannot be drawn, especially since the situation varies depending on the habits and linguistic traditions of the countries concerned. There are, however, several reasons why municipalities fail to organise language courses (see Section 3.3).

Which towns and cities are currently organising adult language courses? For how many languages? Since when?<sup>1</sup>

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1 The year in which the courses began was not always specified.





*Language courses in view of twinning projects*

- Generally speaking, courses are organised by the municipality (35% of answers) or by the twinning committee (26% of answers); in some cases the municipalities delegate the organisation to other bodies or to outside persons (private teachers, language schools, universities, etc.).
- Courses consist of three or more sessions a week (63% of answers) or one or two sessions a week (37% of answers).
- The number of course participants varies, depending on the town or city, from forty-one or more (43% of answers), thirty-one to forty (14% of answers), twenty-one to thirty (21% of answers), and to fewer than twenty (21% of answers). They tend to take part in courses out of personal interest or an interest in the language rather than out of professional interest.

NB: The percentage of answers received is very low for questions relating to the frequency of courses, the number of participants and their motivations.

- The language courses themselves are taught using existing language books (56.5% of answers received) as well as media and original documents compiled by the teachers (newspapers, magazines, etc.).

NB: The questionnaire distributed did not provide much scope for commenting on teaching methodology. It would have been interesting to find out more about the didactic approaches adopted in the adult courses and about the opinions and wishes of

the course participants on this point. One answer did, however, reflect these considerations:

“We regretted that there was not a second volume to the book *Herzlich willkommen in Frankreich!* We were forced to use another book which, in our opinion, was a little too school-like for adults keen to learn a language but who have trouble with grammar and difficult phrases” (ICL<sup>1</sup> Val Orne Ajon, France).

This response addresses a fundamental teaching issue raised in part by the lack of books and other media adapted to the age of the target group concerned, its motivations and its specific objectives, and in part by the lack of training and recognition of teachers who would be specially trained to meet the communication requirements specific to an exchange situation<sup>2</sup> (see Section 6 below).

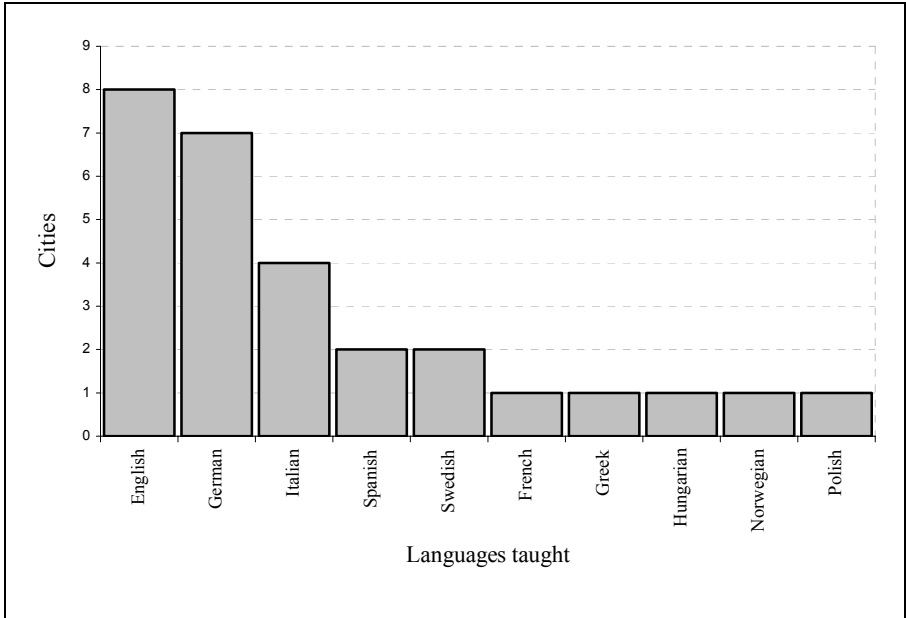
## 3.2 Languages taught

The languages taught in the fifteen municipalities that currently organise adult courses in connection with twinning projects are, in decreasing order of frequency: English, German, Italian, Spanish and Swedish (equally), French, Greek, Hungarian, Norwegian and Polish (equally).

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1 Association comprising nine municipalities in Calvados, France.

2 In this connection one has to commend the activities of the Office franco-allemand pour la jeunesse (OFAJ) in training teachers (preferably outside the usual school framework) for adult courses, specifically as part of municipal twinning projects.



*Adult language courses*

The table highlights the predominance of English and the interest in other languages. There is indeed a need for change, renewal and innovation, which is undoubtedly understandable:

- “Hungarian courses are appealing, despite the difficulty. The English conversation club draws a large and loyal audience. Hungary is very popular with our town at the moment while German courses are (unfortunately!) losing ground. German needs innovative ideas if it is to endure” (Saint-Sébastien-sur-Loire, France).<sup>1</sup>

The town of Saint-Sébastien-sur-Loire has one of the oldest French-German twinning projects, with a multitude of varied and successful exchanges between the two countries. None the less, the current trend towards cross-border mobility, with all the opportunities that arise from it, and a certain – all too human – inclination towards the “exotic” are two (closely linked) factors that go some way towards explaining the evolution of citizens choice regarding geographic regions and languages.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this town has been twinned with Glinde (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany) for more than three decades.

### **3.3 Reasons why languages courses are not available or discontinued**

#### **3.3.1 Lack of courses**

The survey shows that in some countries the municipality does not organise language courses either because of the country's bilingual/multilingual situation or because such courses are provided by other agencies or bodies:

- “There are no courses because of our country's multilingual situation: the languages required are taught at primary school (French and German) and post-primary schools (English), with another language sometimes added later on: Italian or Portuguese” (Luxembourg).
- “Our schools teach English and German; many students learn Swedish and we have also had Finnish” (Marjamaa, Estonia).
- “People who want to improve their foreign language skills can attend language courses in their town (university, schools, private firms, etc.)” (Tartu, Estonia).
- “Municipal employees, if they're motivated and if the funds are available, can attend outside courses. There are many possibilities” (Lahti, Finland).
- “(...) inasmuch as the Municipal Office for Continuing Education offers foreign language courses for adults” (Wattrelos, France).
- “There are several possibilities for attending outside language courses” (towns in Greece).

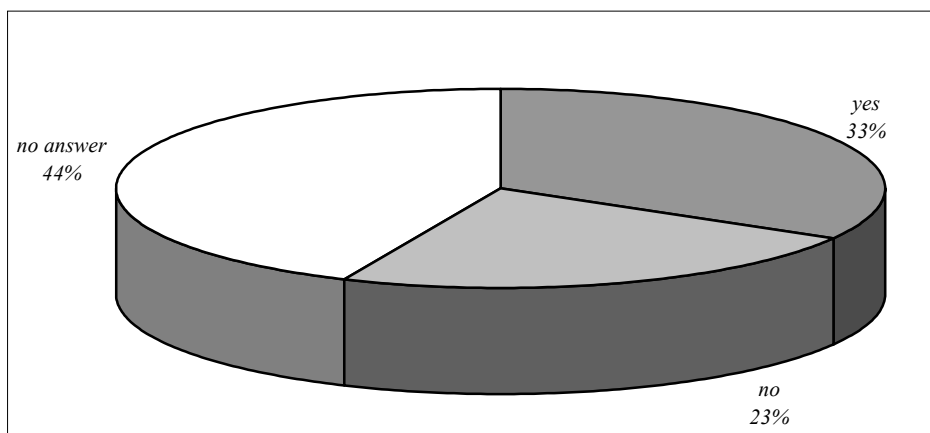
#### **3.3.2 Other reasons why courses are discontinued**

- The lack of budget resources for the excessively high costs incurred: “German courses have been cancelled: cost to the town too high” (Plaisir, France).
- Courses are not always a priority for the municipality: “Adult courses are a matter for each individual” (Plaisir, France).
- Also the predominant use of English sometimes eliminates the need for other languages: “During the first visits, language courses were included in the preparatory phase; due to the improvement in language skills in English, the courses will no longer be held” (Ogre, Latvia); and “There is no motivation to learn the partner's language. English is the language of communication” (Siauliai, Lithuania).
- Reasons associated with teaching methodology: slow progress made/too much effort involved (factors mentioned here include age and lack of time of those in gainful employment), disparate language levels, excessively diverging motivations and objectives on the part of the mature students, a reduction in teaching personnel

and difficulties in finding teachers for adult language courses: “The year the twinning scheme was set up, forty people enrolled in the German courses; by the end of the year there were still some twenty people taking part in the courses; the following year numbers dropped again and have done each year as the amount of work involved in learning languages is considerable for adults who are still in gainful employment” (Basse-Goulaine, France); “Some of the exchange participants started attending French courses but gave up due to lack of time” (Ventspils, Latvia); and “[...] what’s more, adults do not really feel like learning languages” (Siauliai, Lithuania).

### 3.4 Prospects

Overall and in spite of inevitable obstacles, there is a definite interest in and a strong determination to organise adult language courses in connection with twinning projects:



*Demand for organising language courses*

### **3.4.1 Answers that illustrate the desire to maintain existing courses and/or organise others**

- “The results are positive. After a year of German, adult participants are able to understand everyday phrases [...]. Some participants [...] remain hooked. Many of them have been attending courses since 1995” (Sainte-Honorine-du-Fay, France).
- “Among those interested in the twinning project there is a craze to learn foreign languages” (Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer, France).
- “Learning a language is trying but the encounters encourage people to keep up their efforts” (Saint-Sébastien-sur-Loire, France).
- “Language courses allow members to communicate more effectively with partners and to gain a better understanding of the other’s culture” (Auxerre, France).
- “The twinning projects contribute considerably to the improvement in language levels [...]. They help to make people aware of the need to know foreign languages and prove that the language can be used in practice” (Ogre, Latvia).
- “Language courses must be promoted for those who are interested since language learning opens up new opportunities nowadays. We do our utmost to support them” (Birstonas, Lithuania).
- “Future projects do not exclude renewing specially targeted language courses” (Ventspils, Latvia).

### **3.4.2 Representatives of other towns are in favour of language learning or are considering providing courses**

- “Projects are currently underway to help finance language courses for the officials of the two twin towns” (Marijampole, Lithuania).
- “The language aspect is very important for communication. If we had more resources we could organise language courses. Language courses would be very useful to us, especially with regard to the twin cities with which we are in regular contact” (Vilnius, Lithuania).
- “Project to provide German courses through the university for politicians and municipal employees” (Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic).
- “It is essential to learn languages and to discover foreign cultures and lifestyles, especially as part of twinning projects” (Viborg, Denmark).
- “Knowledge of foreign languages has to be improved as language can be a barrier and an obstacle to co-operation between towns. There is a need for language courses for municipal councillors and officials, especially in English and Swedish. Most young people in Finland speak English fluently but we need to improve their knowledge of other languages” (Jyväskylä, Finland).

The last sentence in this answer deserves to be highlighted: even though English is widely spoken in Finland, there is also interest in other languages. There is a desire for a genuine diversification of languages. For speakers of less widely used languages this opinion is based on – among others – the need to be able to communicate with people from other countries.

Moreover, new needs have been triggered by the imminent accession to the European Union of certain countries of Eastern Europe:

- “It will be useful to provide such language courses for adults. Given that Estonia is about to join the European Union<sup>1</sup>, foreign language skills could broaden people’s employment opportunities” (Narva, Estonia).

Finally the following statement can be seen as proof of the usefulness, not to say necessity, of consultancy support with regard to the organisation of language courses by the municipality:

- “Your questionnaire has helped our politicians with the decision to set up language courses” (Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic).

### **3.5 In conclusion**

Language learning by adults as part of twinning projects appeals to various categories of the population: official representatives, municipal employees, persons involved in twinning activities, sportsmen and women, professionals, parents and grandparents of pupils learning languages at school (so they can be of assistance to them), etc. This diversity explains the broad spectrum of (internal and external) motivations behind learning a language (or several languages): they can be political, economic (motivations which are often linked) or professional (town halls, administrations, sports – football, rowing, etc.); and they can also sometimes be due to organised leisure activities (event committees, orchestras, carnivals, etc.).

No matter how varied the needs and motivations for learning languages, the underlying objective is always the need to understand and be able to communicate. These two skills are essential in ensuring the proper functioning of European and international twinning schemes. The analysis conducted as part of Project 1.1.6 shows that in twinning activities the partner country’s language is often the focal point of concerns and that twinning projects provide an incentive to learn that language, even outside the conventional educational framework. Indeed, adults are particularly well motivated. Although English is the predominant language and is so often considered as sufficient, it has not yet quashed the motivation to learn other languages, even among the “not so young”. It is important therefore to continue meeting this demand from adult target groups by taking account of their specific needs in the light of the exchanges.

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1 The original version of the book was published in French in 2003.





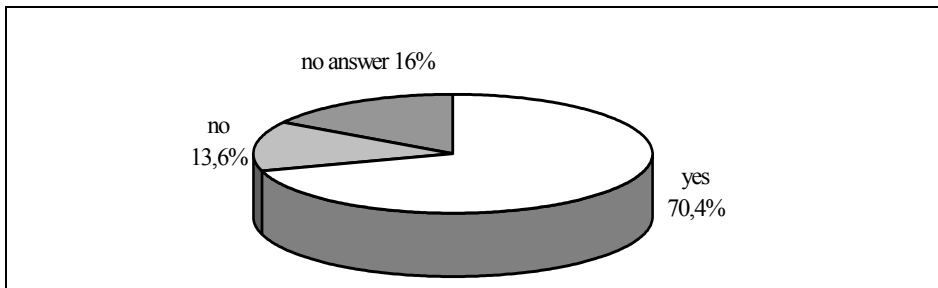
## 4. School exchange programmes as part of twinning

Any exchange implies a relation between two cultures. Learning languages for and through school exchange programmes as part of a municipal twinning scheme is one of the ways of making young people aware of and open towards the diversity of other languages and cultures as part of the education system. Personal, direct experiences outside the context of daily routine help to promote an understanding of the diversity of cultures and the complexity of the world. Organising school interactions outside the classroom adds a new dimension to language learning, one whose educational potential has not yet been adequately appreciated. School exchange programmes and the survey of how they are implemented in practice enable us to assess more accurately the challenges of language learning and teaching within the framework of European language policies.

The present survey – conducted albeit on a limited sample – aims to respond to those needs and allows us to identify the problems and obstacles encountered in school systems.

### 4.1 Organisation of school exchange programmes

First a reminder that the survey covered sixteen countries with an unequal distribution of responding twin cities (eighty-one towns and cities). Some 70.4% of respondents to the questionnaire mentioned that school exchange programmes were implemented. Whilst 29.6% of towns and cities gave a negative or no answer, with the following distribution: 16% gave no answer at all, due probably to lack of data, and 13.6% gave a negative answer.



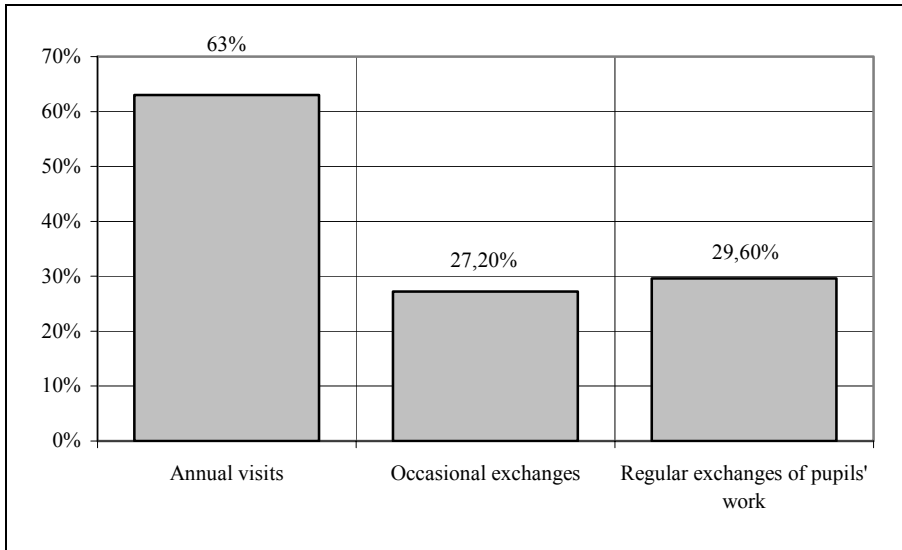
*Organisation of school exchange programmes. This chart comprises all the school exchange programmes mentioned in the survey, including those outside twin cities*

It should be noted that schoolchildren are very much a part of exchange programmes between twin cities. In response to the question concerning the number of schools involved in exchanges, 33.3% of answers mentioned up to three schools (see Reference

Document No. 1: “Quantitative analysis”); there are cities, however, where the number of schools involved varies between fifty-five and seventy-three educational establishments at college and *lycée* level (Riga, Latvia, mentions as many as seventy-three establishments). Given the diversity of school systems from one European country to the next it is difficult to give a complete overview according to school type and to define precisely the age and school level of the pupils.

#### 4.1.1 Exchange modes

Some 63% of answers mention annual visits, proving that the tradition of school twinning is well established. However, it is not always possible to know whether these exchanges take place only as part of municipal twinings, whether they began prior to twinning, or even if these school exchanges in fact resulted in the municipal twinings themselves.



*Modes of school exchange*

Some 27.2% are occasional exchanges. The twinning officer from the French town of Vire mentions the “difficulty of perpetuating exchanges as they are subject to the will of the educational establishment”. At the same time the Greek town of Preveza makes a positive evaluation of the institutional policy of educational establishments: “The persons in charge of the establishments are very favourable to any initiative and implementation of school exchange programme”. Mondorf-les-Bains (Luxembourg) adds that “it depends on the teachers and their projects”.

Some 29.6% of answers mention regular exchanges of pupils' work. The persons in charge also underline their establishments' participation in European projects (Socrates programme). Hradec Kralové (Czech Republic) refers to "regular exchanges of pupils' work (written work, audio work, drawings, etc.) aimed at preparing a brochure together with the other participating schools (Socrates programme)".

#### **4.1.2 Political aspects**

It is interesting to note that the answers provided by the municipal officials in charge have also been influenced by the political changes in Europe, the free circulation of people across the European territory and the accession of new member states to the European Union. The Czech town of Brno for instance mentions that "exchanges are advantageous due to the fact that the Czech Republic hopes to join the European Union" and for Vichy (France) school exchange programmes are "essential for the openness of young people towards Europe".

In the answers submitted by Scandinavian countries the idea of international co-operation and the internationalisation of teaching is a recurring one. The Finnish town of Haukipudas remarks that "exchanges are very important for international co-operation and learning the process of internationalisation" while the Swedish town of Nyköping states that "today, international exchanges are necessary for students and schools. They represent a good foundation for life and work in a society where relations between countries are developing more and more."

Candidate states to the European Union are discovering European education programmes: Ogre (Latvia), for example, recognises that "many student and teacher exchanges have taken place as well as individual visits with partner schools; most of these exchanges were enabled by the European programmes 'Youth for Europe', 'Youth' and 'Leonardo'".

#### **4.1.3 Institutional aspects**

The modes of school exchanges depend on municipal policy and the language teaching strategy. For instance, the person in charge at the Finnish town of Lahti replied: "School exchange programmes are very important for the municipality. There is a close co-operation with the school authorities who consider, as we do, that exchanges are beneficial from the earliest age."

From the answers received it is possible to conclude that the attitude of school directors varies from one establishment to the next. There are school officials who, instead of encouraging exchanges that help broaden the minds and shape young Europeans, sometimes curb extracurricular activities, including school exchange programmes between twin cities.

Certain municipalities also refer to the lack of motivation on the part of teachers. This is the case for Torva (Estonia): “Local authorities support activities between the schools of twin cities but very often the decisions adopted by the local authorities do not appeal to schools. The reason is unclear: each school seems preoccupied with its programme of studies.” Lorient (France) concurs: “Each year schools try and set up exchanges but it is sometimes difficult and depends on the motivation of teachers.” Vire (France) also adds: “Always very interesting but the evaluation is a burden and therefore not systematic. It is difficult to perpetuate the idea as exchanges depend on the will of the school.” At the same time the survey reveals examples of good practice, for instance at Plaisir (France), where “the persons in charge of the school are very positive and encourage exchanges”.

#### 4.1.4 Financial aspects

The questionnaire did not contain questions specific to the financial aspect of school exchange programmes as part of twinnings. None the less, several towns and cities mentioned this aspect in their answers to the questions on the frequency and number of school exchanges. The officer in charge in Riga (Latvia) wrote: “Exchanges could be more intense if financial resources were increased.”

The officer in charge at Aalborg (Denmark) commented: “There are exchanges with establishments abroad but it is difficult for the town to subsidise school twinning programmes given the large number of exchanges: indeed the town has twenty-six twinnings and thirty-eight schools are interested in international co-operation.”

However, the goodwill of the municipalities is highlighted by their officers. Nykobing (Denmark) adds that “it’s a very good opportunity for young people to discover foreign countries. Such stays abroad are financed by the municipal council”.

While it should be noted that municipalities have substantial resources for financing school exchange programmes it is also important to remember the European programmes mentioned above.

Exchange with a school:	Number of answers	Percentage
in the country whose language is being studied	33	40.7%
in another country	24	29.6%
as part of twin cities only	19	23.5%
others	9	11.1%

This table summarises the way in which school exchange programmes are structured. To a certain extent the data in the table reflects the conclusions we were able to draw

from the survey on school exchange programmes in the context of municipal twinning. It shows that the choice of partner is influenced by the language studied (40.7%), by interest in a neighbouring or other country (29.6%), and by the opportunities offered by the institutions, municipal council or educational establishment (23.5%). Siauliai (Lithuania) remarks that “most establishments choose partners abroad according to the schools and not the towns with which they are twinned”. The fourth option covers a family choice, friendly relations, etc.

## 4.2 Exchange initiative

There is no denying the reality of exchanges, which are one of the most widespread forms of learning languages under favourable conditions of total immersion in the country of the language studied, although it should be noted that more often than not the language in question is English or German. None the less at the workshop that preceded the study, one of the participants, Jana Kolmanova, a secondary school teacher in Prague, “participated actively in the twinning between her town of Prague and Nîmes (concurrent organisation of French courses in Prague and co-operation with a French-Czech class in Nîmes)”<sup>1</sup>.

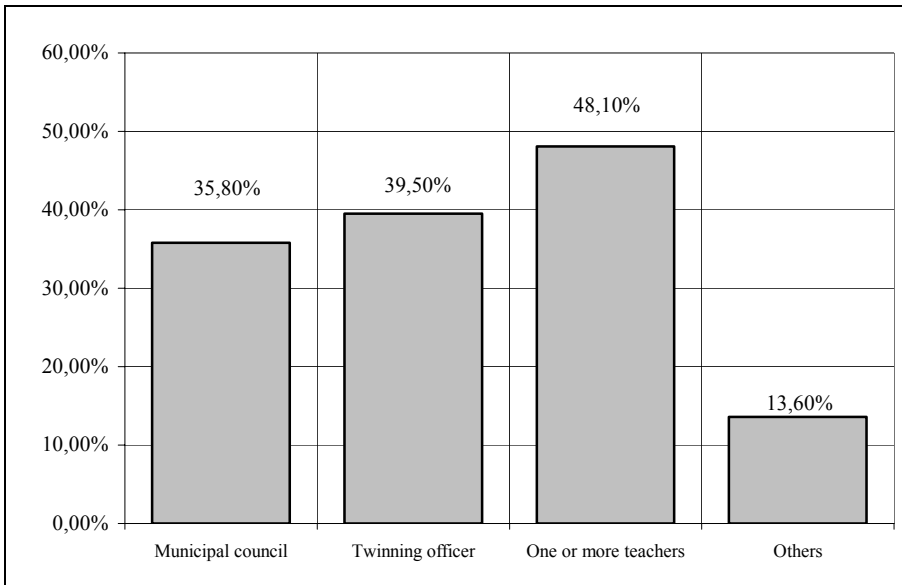
Some 35.8% of exchanges began on the initiative of the municipal council, 39.5% on the initiative of a twinning officer<sup>2</sup>, 48.1% on the initiative of one or more teachers and 13.6% referred to school exchange programmes without specifying which players took the initiative.

It is worth noting the financial support provided by municipalities to the school exchange programmes for which they have taken the initiative. For example, the officer in charge at Torva (Estonia) wrote: “Local authorities support the activities between schools and the twin cities” and the officer in the French town of Lorient said: “Exchanges [are] strongly encouraged by the municipality, which helps fund the travel costs to the twin cities.”

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1 “Language learning and teaching in the context of twin cities: Workshop report 6/2000’, Graz, Austria, 13 to 15 July 2000.

2 It would be interesting to examine whether these twinning officers are not also teachers, especially in the smaller municipalities.



*Initiative in the organisation of school exchange programmes*

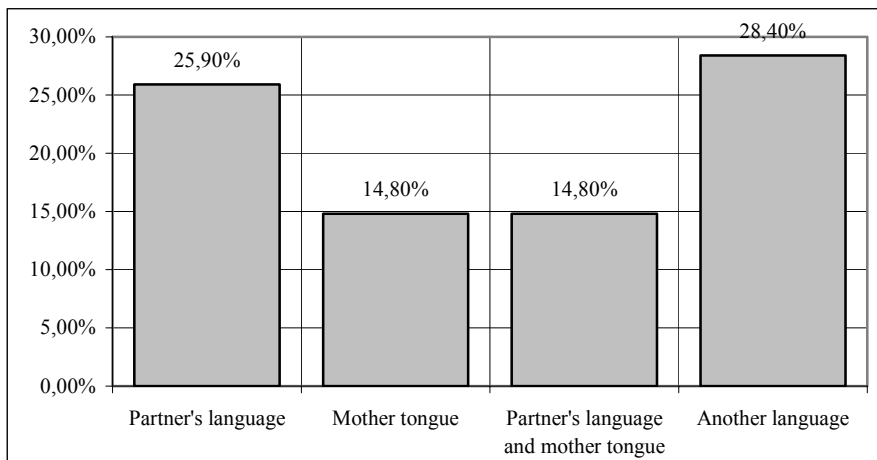
### **4.3 Languages used in school exchange programmes**

Which languages for which twinings? That is the question that was asked of an audience made up essentially of teachers at a Graz workshop in July 2000.<sup>1</sup> The answer was as follows: “Representatives of different countries whose language was not very widely spoken thought it was normal for twinning partners to be uninterested in learning it, whereas from their point of view, instruction in the other twin town’s ‘major language’ would be more in keeping with their interests.”

This common conception, which contradicts the plurilinguist policy proclaimed by the Council of Europe, could change as a result of school exchange programmes favouring the learning of the languages of neighbouring countries in the context of twinings.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Language learning and teaching in the context of twin cities: Workshop report 6/2000’, Graz, Austria, 13 to 15 July 2000.



*Languages used in school exchange programmes*

What is the reality that emerges from the survey, which gave a choice of four options (see table above)? The answers do not allow one to know what the partner's language actually is but it can be seen that 25.9% of answers mention the language of the partner in school exchange programmes. It would be interesting to take a closer look at this issue in a different survey to identify the partner's language and the motivation to learn it: cultural exchanges, institutional demand, importance of the language in one's future professional life, social life, individual contacts made during school exchange programmes, etc.

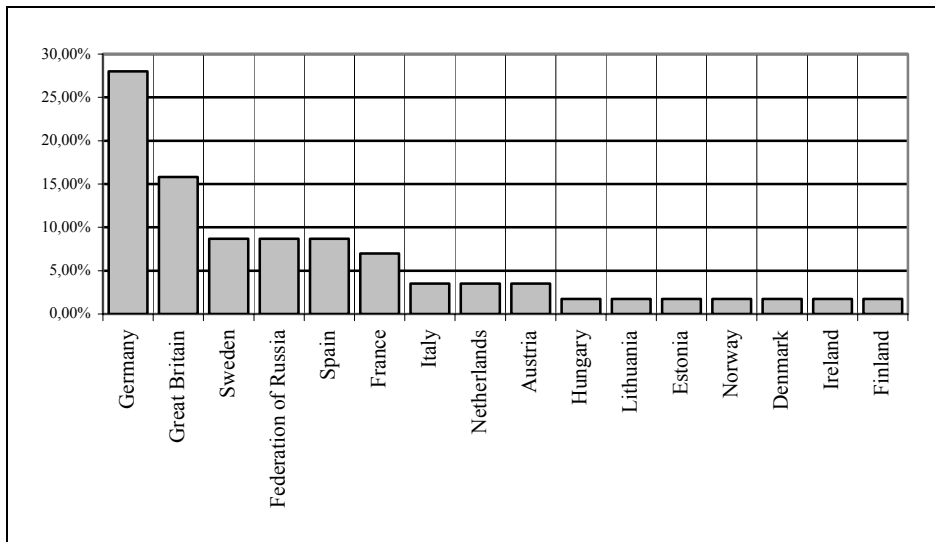
Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer (France): "Pupils choose the languages of the twin city so they can communicate better." For Alytus (Lithuania), "the exchange [is] very beneficial to the pupils of both countries both linguistically and culturally". And for Holstebro (Denmark), "school exchange programmes are an opportunity to gain new experiences and establish new friendships. They also enable pupils to improve their knowledge of languages".

These three answers reflect a strong trend towards learning languages as a way of finding a communication tool and, through it, establishing human ties, which represent the ultimate goal of the twinning movement and of school exchange programmes. It is not enough to know the language; that knowledge is a means of communicating and communication fosters understanding and helps to gain new experiences and forge new friendships.

There is a very interesting and striking balance between the use of one's own mother tongue only and the use of both languages (see table above). The use of both languages, one's mother tongue and the partner's language, is a fact that demonstrates mutual respect for the languages and cultures.

The choice of another language remains predominant in the answers from twin cities. The assumption that another language is studied by several partners of school exchange programmes seems interesting. Lorient (France) stated that: “English is the language most often requested by the children but twinnings have enabled many children to discover Germany and Spain, which is not without repercussions on the choice of languages they then learn.”

It is important to note that the tendency to favour dominant common languages is clear to see in the study; none the less, the table below illustrates the diversity in the choice of languages.



*Partners in school exchanges whose languages are studied*

The data contained in the table has to be put into perspective given the absence of certain countries in the survey. None the less, sixteen languages are represented in the sample, including such languages as Hungarian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Dutch and others. Even in this limited sample there is no denying the reality of a plurilingual Europe.

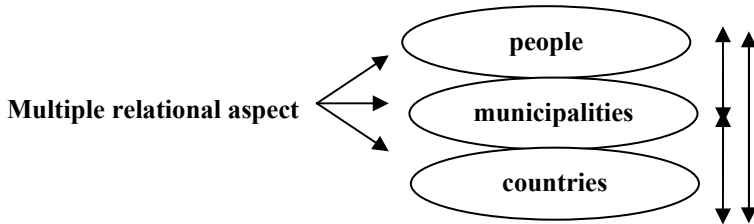
#### **4.4 Evaluation of school exchange programmes**

This section reflects the views of municipal officials, the players in school exchange programmes in the context of twin cities, and how they relate their favourable and less favourable experiences. The keywords of each section are highlighted as a summary chart.



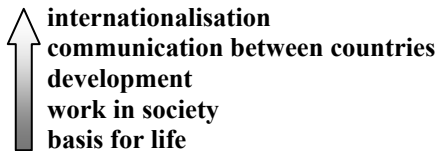
#### 4.4.1 Relational aspect

- “Exchanges are very important for international co-operation and for learning the process of internationalisation. It demands a lot of work but it’s work that’s rewarded” (Haukipudas, Finland).
- “Today international exchanges are necessary for both students and schools. They represent a good foundation for life and work in a society where relations between countries are developing more and more” (Nyköping, Sweden).
- “Very important as far as development and communication between countries are concerned, as well as personal relations between students” (Skandeborg, Denmark)
- “School exchange programmes are very important for the municipality” (Lahti, Finland).



- “Summary drawn up after each school exchange programme with the different partners involved in its organisation in order to make the changes necessary for the next exchange programmes” (Wattrelos, France).
- “Regular and rewarding exchanges to be encouraged” (Auxerre, France).
- “Very rewarding relations which lead to relations between families, who take a strong interest in their children” (Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer, France).
- “The exchanges are good but there is always room for improvement” (Birstonas, Lithuania).

**Contributions evaluated as:**



#### 4.4.2 Intercultural aspect

- “It’s a very good opportunity for young people to discover foreign countries” (Nykobing, Denmark).
- “The children find out about other cultures and learn to work as a team and to accept differences” (Lefkada, Greece).
- “Certainly very important for getting to know the customs of the country” (Basse-Goulaine, France).
- “Considered as very positive since children learn about new ways of life and become more open to other cultures and customs. Rewarding for exchanging points of view between different countries” (Kolindros, Greece).
- “The exchange [is] very beneficial to the pupils of both countries, both linguistically and culturally” (Alytus, Lithuania).

**These keywords reflect an entire educational approach:**

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| ⇒ <b>discovery</b> | ⇒ <b>teamwork</b>  |
| ⇒ <b>knowledge</b> | ⇒ <b>tolerance</b> |
| ⇒ <b>openness</b>  |                    |

#### 4.4.3 Involvement of educational establishments and teachers

- “Exchanges take place just as they did in the past. We have considered projects for teacher exchanges among twin cities as part of an international co-operation” (Jyväskylä, Finland).
- “Exchanges represent an important activity within the educational curriculum” (Viborg, Denmark).
- “The exchange went very well. However, we would like more contacts but it seems that teachers are a little reticent” (Rauma, Finland).
- “Local authorities support activities between the schools of twin cities but very often the decisions adopted by the local authorities are not appealing for schools. The reason is not clear: each school seems preoccupied with its programme of studies” (Torva, Denmark).

Highlighting of the role of exchanges as an **element of the school curriculum**

## 4.5 Linguistic impact

- “The linguistic impact is clearly one of the priorities” (Voru, Estonia).

### 4.5.1 An awakening to languages

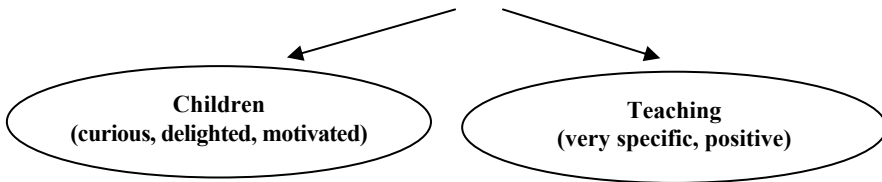
- “Exchanges stimulate the desire to learn foreign languages” (Kolindros, Greece).
- “Positive linguistic impact, which often leads to studies of the language, encouraged by contacts with the country through host families” (Plaisir, France).
- “School exchange programmes are enhanced by the desire to learn the language” (Ventspils, Latvia).
- “English is the language most often requested by the children but twinnings have enabled many children to discover Germany and Spain, which is not without repercussions on the choice of languages they subsequently learn” (Lorient, France).
- “City twinning has encouraged schools to open French language departments in spite of the reduced number of teaching hours and volunteers who chose the language” (Ventspils, Latvia).

- **desire to**
  - **wish to**
  - **stimulus to**
- } **learn the language**

### 4.5.2 Language teaching at an early age

- “Very positive especially among primary schoolchildren, who are very curious and delighted to speak another language” (Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer, France).
- “It is quite obvious that school exchange programmes motivate pupils to learn a language. The impact is greater if school exchange programmes begin at primary school” (Wattrelos, France).
- “They have to be set up as soon as possible so that teaching is very specific” (Saint-Sébastien-sur-Loire, France).

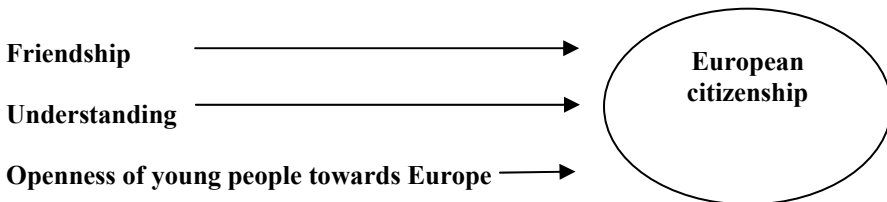
### Dual characteristic of teaching at an early age



### 4.5.3 European citizenship

- “Twinning therefore help to promote foreign languages in a pleasant and interesting way. In a single European Union the knowledge of languages must be accompanied by knowledge of the culture, the life of others, an understanding of the problems of others” (Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic).
- “Powerful impact in terms of friendship, of understanding others. Other opportunities to meet other people and to get to know their situation in their country of origin” (Narva, Estonia).
- “The advantage of school exchange programmes is not just learning a foreign language quickly but also establishing strong bonds of friendship between young people” (Lovech, Bulgaria).
- “Essential for the openness of young people towards Europe” (Vichy, France).

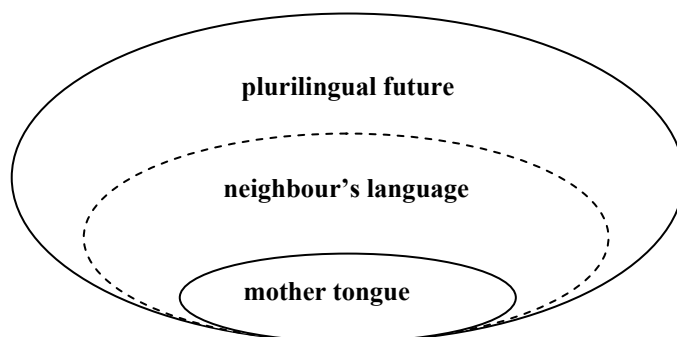
### Socio-affective dimension of European construction



### 4.5.4 A plurilingual future

- “A great potential that has not yet been tapped” (Naestved, Denmark).
- “Pupils already have the possibility of learning English, German, French and Russian. If another language was needed, we could try and negotiate with our partners” (Birstonas, Lithuania).
- “It ought to be compulsory for pupils to learn the language of a neighbouring country” (Graz, Austria).

- “Exchanges contribute to the advancement of teaching through international contacts. What’s more our municipality has drawn up a set of rules to support twinning activities as well as the concept of international co-operation in schools” (Viborg, Denmark).
- “Twinning play a considerable role in improving the level of languages and in fluency, especially for young generations preparing their future life” (Torva, Estonia).



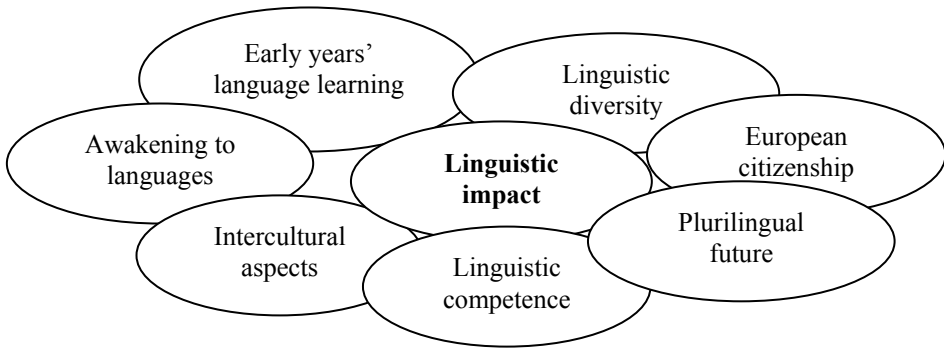
#### 4.5.5 Language skills

- “Speaking a foreign language in a real context is a good exercise for any teacher” (Marjamaa, Estonia).
- “School exchange programmes are a good way of motivating students and teachers to learn foreign languages” (Sillamae, Estonia).
- “Pupils can learn the foreign language in a genuine environment; they can talk directly to the local inhabitants, make friends, etc.” (Brno, Czech Republic).
- “Both teachers and pupils need to improve their language fluency” (Johvi, Estonia).
- “The youngest participants in the exchanges have an immense opportunity to overcome their fear of speaking a foreign language and also to improve their language skills by communicating directly with children of the same age” (Ogre, Latvia).
- “The mobility achieved so far with pupils has proved that school exchanges encourage and develop the language skills of the participants” (Preveza, Greece).

#### **Improving language skills outside the classroom:**

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>genuine environment</b></li> <li>▪ <b>mobility</b></li> <li>▪ <b>partner schools</b></li> </ul> |
|---|

The answers obtained are used to identify the components that combine to achieve an overall linguistic impact.



#### **4.6 In conclusion**

Linguistic diversity is an essential part of democratic citizenship.

Exchanges enable direct contacts between peoples and cultures, and encourage a greater interest in language learning bolstered by a better knowledge of the context in which the languages are spoken. Once contacts are established and friendships have been made, school exchange programmes enable pupils to acquire plenty of personal experiences and dismiss stereotypes. School exchange programmes in the context of twin cities have highlighted and made popular the need to learn languages at an early age. Languages can and should be learnt at primary school, and exchanges are an essential condition for encouraging linguistic diversity and learning to communicate in a natural way.

Education towards tolerance through encounters can start very early on by teaching languages at a young age. It is a dynamic process in which very young children are full of enthusiasm and highly motivated.

It is also very important to think about continuing exchanges. School exchange programmes can be an opportunity for innovative renewal in language learning strategies and methodology. This objective – far from running counter to the idea of political twinning – represents its best interpretation in the long term.

## **5. Conclusion**

### **5.1 Evaluation of experiences and needs**

#### **5.1.1 Dominant linguistic practices**

As was to be expected the use of English is widespread yet very disparate depending on the countries and categories of participants in the exchanges.

- The use of interpreters is far less generalised than communicating with English, even if it is frequent in certain countries and for certain target groups.
- The concern for, or reality of, linguistic diversity is universal but varies in degree according to the size of the countries and their linguistic traditions. In any case it is an interest in the partner's language that remains the driving force behind linguistic diversity.
- Finally, besides the languages of the two partners, diversity is sometimes achieved by using a third language, which is not always English.

#### **5.1.2 Current situation and projects**

The evaluation of exchanges, whether it be positive or (more rarely) negative, whether it stem from the municipalities or the participants themselves, is always formulated according to the success of the communication between participants in which languages, especially spoken languages, play a crucial role. Other notable points include:

- the frequent intention to organise adult courses or to consolidate the *status quo*; although there are rare instances of courses being reduced or abolished;
- the interest in diversifying courses;
- the universal motivation of cultural and personal exchanges as illustrated by the various practices depending on the categories of participants.

#### **5.1.3 Obstacles to and difficulties of adult language courses (in decreasing order of frequency)**

- cost and financing problems;
- lack of interest in language courses;
- difficulty involved in aligning learners' levels or objectives;

- lack of progress;
- “English is good enough”;
- difficulty of finding a teacher.

#### **5.1.4 Wishes and best practice**

- The intention to launch new courses is quite often related to a concern to diversify languages.
- Whenever teaching materials are ill-suited to the needs of participants, they should be complemented by the teachers themselves.
- One particular wish is to recruit language teachers who are native speakers of the twin cities’ languages.

#### **5.1.5 Overall assessment of the language courses**

- What is most striking in spite of everything is the discrepancy between the widespread desire among participants to communicate and the paucity of language courses around to satisfy this desire.
- The discrepancy is compounded by another hiatus, that between the stated political motivation (either the now well-established Franco-German rapprochement or the building of a single Europe, especially with the countries of eastern Europe) and the small number of language courses available to achieve these specific objectives.
- Finally, what is most astonishing is the huge difference between the number of adults courses (twenty cities) and the number of partnerships between classes and sometimes entire schools (fifty-seven cities), even if these partnerships go well beyond the context of twinned cities.
- However, it is also clear that whenever there is a strong political motivation (33.3% of cities claim that they are fully involved in language preparations), it is reflected in inventive solutions for both the financing of courses and finding teachers and teaching materials adapted to the needs of the exchanges. It can be hoped that this present survey will help to communicate these examples of best practice.

#### **5.1.6 Obstacles to and difficulties in school exchange programmes**

- Financing problems are often cited (sometimes due to the large number of schools concerned or the multiple twinning schemes set up by one and the same town or city).



- Schools are “too wrapped up in teaching their curriculum”.
- “Teachers are a little reluctant.”
- “Lots of work, but work that’s rewarded.”

### **5.1.7 Wishes and best practice**

- Good regular co-operation between cities and school authorities.
- Exchanges conducted thanks to European programmes.
- Regular exchanges of pupils’ work: regular but rare!
- By contrast there is a majority of schools perpetuating the tradition of school exchange programmes.

### **5.1.8 Overall assessment of school exchange programmes**

- No municipality mentions at any point a negative or unsatisfactory outcome of a school exchange programme.
- On the contrary there is a convergence of positive feedback: “very rewarding exchanges”, “efforts are made with success”, “to be encouraged”, “improvement in language skills” or “motivations”, “always very interesting” and “invaluable linguistic impact”.
- The quality and impact of school exchange programmes are also reflected in the fabric of “personal relations established between families” or “between pupils”. Given these circumstances it is not surprising that lasting partnerships are established.
- The good results explain why only eight cities have a single school committed to an exchange while other towns or cities have between two and seventy-three (!) schools involved.
- One statistic perfectly illustrates the very considerable success of school exchange programmes: only 23.5% of exchanges take place “solely in the context of twin cities”.
- In other words, all the other exchanges take place “outside the context of twin cities”. This means that when deciding a twinning project, a certain number of cities have not sufficiently taken into account the languages taught at their schools.
- Cities have therefore not fully utilised their capacity for twinning in order to satisfy the needs linked to school exchanges, especially where linguistic requirements are concerned.

- In spite of this favourable situation concerning school exchanges, one statistic proves that things could be improved, if only by focusing more effectively on learning: the proportion of 29.6% of regular exchanges of pupils' work. It proves conversely that 70.4% of schools have little or no regular exchanges of pupils' educational output.
- Even if there are gaps and omissions in the answers to the questionnaire, there is a clear tendency to make do with visits to partner classes – without a genuine “teaching methodology for exchanges”. This is food for thought.

## 5.2 Assumptions confirmed with reservations

**Assumption 1: “The knowledge of languages is an essential factor in the promotion and realisation of democratic European citizenship.”**

European and democratic dimensions were not mentioned under any of the questionnaire's headings. This gives all the more importance to two key indicators: firstly, European motivation is mentioned in several of the free answers: “European Union” but also “international understanding” and “regional integration”; and, secondly, the choice of twinnings themselves (French-German twinnings or twinnings with southern Europe or countries of eastern Europe) is a political orientation clearly dictated by the developments of Europe's recent history.

Moreover, it is these same developments that justify the existence of the EU programme of aid to twinnings (namely, €12 million from the European Union to support twinnings in Europe, including those in EU candidate countries).

The languages learnt as part of adult language courses also indicate the European orientation of choices: not just English and German, but also Italian, Spanish, Swedish, French, Greek, Hungarian, Norwegian and Polish.

The languages spoken during reciprocal visits are also indicative through their diversity; besides those already mentioned the languages include Russian, Danish, Flemish, Bulgarian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Finnish and Czech.

Finally, the answers given on the choice of languages studied by schoolchildren and the choice of partners nearly always contain favourable comments either on European citizenship or cultural rapprochement.

Given its generalised formulation, one can only confirm the assumption that a knowledge of languages is not only an essential factor but also – in all likelihood – the only really effective factor in achieving cultural rapprochement and a European state of mind. Personal contacts necessarily generate – or accompany – political awareness. Indeed there is a need to know and demystify the other, especially politically.

**Assumption 2: “The language question, always an issue in the framework of twin cities, rarely finds a satisfactory answer; the potential offered by this context is not sufficiently used for language learning.”**

It is important to differentiate between the two parts of the assumption and to examine each separately. As has been seen, replies to the language question are often adequate and sometimes wholly satisfactory, and as such are rarely the subject of a clearly negative evaluation. Cases of a complete language fiasco are exceptional.

By contrast one is justified in asking whether the potential of twinnings is fully exploited for language learning. The proportion (81%) of replies marked “no” and of those left blank to the question of language courses speaks volumes in itself. The importance of the systematic promotion of languages in general – and of linguistic preparation in particular – in the success of reciprocal visits is clearly underestimated.

In qualitative terms it is obvious that certain courses would be more effective and would result in the commitment of more adults if the methods, books and teachers were chosen or prepared more specifically. In Section 6 the necessary recommendations will be made in this respect.

**Assumption 3: “Learning the partner’s language is rarely a priority.”**

This assumption has to be qualified: whenever the conditions to learn a partner’s language are not in place, there is still a desire to take initial steps in that direction. The use of an interpreter or of English (as a third language) is often seen as a last resort, sometimes as a makeshift solution, for most categories of participants in exchanges.

And yet regularly in the course of this survey one sees a preference for the general adoption of English as a future solution. This response, even if the survey shows that it has to be strongly qualified, clearly illustrates the role, not to say responsibility, of national federations of twin cities in making their members aware of the urgent need for a global project for the promotion of languages within the context of cities and municipalities. Indeed, only the large associations of local authorities, which are closest to their populations and their elected representatives, have both the means and the resources for implementing this type of cultural, linguistic and citizenship promotion in Europe.

While learning the partner’s language is a key concern of citizens, it is a concern that is insufficiently shared and conveyed.

**Assumptions 4 and 5: “School and university twinnings only rarely coincide with the twinnings of their respective cities and are not fully exploited from an educational (cultural) and linguistic point of view.”**

As we have seen, only 23.5% of cities registered school exchange programmes as part of the twinned cities programme itself. The assumption of school partnerships “outside the scope of official twinnings” is therefore amply verified.

This fact corroborates the earlier claim that twinnings are not fully exploited from an educational and linguistic point of view. Or, to be even clearer, school exchange programmes are so successful that any twinning project should make it a permanent fixture or even a strategic priority. Not to mention the fact that it is an investment in a child’s future.

In a strategy designed for the systematic promotion of languages, it would of course be easy to also enliven the educational content and methods of such exchanges.<sup>1</sup> This step will not be taken by many unless national associations of towns and cities raise the issue, at least at the level of strategic orientations.

**Assumption 6: “City twinnings offer a remarkable potential for the promotion and learning of languages.”**

Even with a limited sample of only eighty-one cities and municipalities from sixteen countries and thanks to the two parts of the survey – one quantitative/statistical, the other qualitative (in the form of open questions) – one is able to measure the extent to which exchanges between cities are a dynamic practice, close to the citizen, capable of converging all kinds of target groups in unique experiences.

Contact with a living language in the country where that language is spoken, an encounter with partners from similar backgrounds (retired persons, sportsmen and women, schoolchildren and others), the challenge of communication with its attendant failures and joys, and the ability to overcome cultural barriers and stereotypes transform reciprocal visits into a unique means for the people of Europe to come together through language, culture and human ties.

Through closeness to their citizens, cities and municipalities represent the living entity that is Europe and are the true forces responsible for the Europe of tomorrow.

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<sup>1</sup> A reminder that the Centre international d’études pédagogiques (CIEP) at Sèvres has opened a department specialising in the “pedagogy of exchanges”, which provides a contact service with the appropriate partner in the targeted country as well as methodological consultancy for negotiating and implementing the educational exchange under the optimum conditions.

## **In conclusion**

In conclusion to the survey, it would be useful to note the vitality of the exchanges between cities and the omnipresence of the language question in this mode of communication, across all categories. The solutions employed in replying to this question and their attendant success varied greatly.

The survey outlined the wide array of situations, revealing existing learning facilities and also opportunities and shortcomings.

While it was not possible to draw up a strict typology (which would have involved making debatable distinctions between monolingual and plurilingual countries), the study highlights the lively presence of a Europe of citizens and peoples that seeks out and experiences transcultural contact on a daily basis. It is important to help that Europe to establish itself and to prosper, starting with a lasting affirmation of its living languages in a spirit of openness and mutual understanding.

## **5.3 Future strategy**

If the institutions concerned (ECML and CLRAE / Council of Europe and the CEMR) are to follow up the survey, its complete success will depend first and foremost on the representativeness of the sample of cities and municipalities involved in the next phase of the survey.

To bring together such a sample, it is important not to underestimate the importance of the national associations of towns and cities, the national twinning officers and the large international federations of towns or united cities. All must be involved at three different levels: fine-tuning the survey questionnaire, which can always be improved upon; establishing national samples of towns, cities and municipalities to serve as respondents; and finally motivating those towns, cities and municipalities to participate fully in the survey.

If there is a lack of resources needed to organise the meetings that are essential for such concertations, one should obtain the financial guarantees and other aid from Europe's political institutions that are likely to release (for the benefit of the ECML) the subsidies required for such a concertation and multilateral harmonisation.

To be deprived of such subsidies is to do without the representative sample of at least 250 cities and municipalities of Council of Europe member states, whose number – if a new survey is to be established on a valid sample – should not be less than 37 out of 45 countries.

The survey strategy outlined above satisfies the necessary principles – involving the bodies concerned and transforming those surveyed into the subject of the survey – and also practical necessities: working at grass-roots level, obtaining official or national instigations and relaying to the towns and cities both the questionnaires and any follow-up decisions that might be taken in the light of the recommendations below.

## **6. Recommendations**

### **6.1 Topicality and relevance of improved language promotion**

Europe is progressing but not by leaps and bounds. The Single Market, the common European institutions, the EU's enlargement and the European constitution are all steps in the right direction. And yet does such progress measure up to our democratic traditions, our welfare and economic achievements, our education levels, our expectations as citizens? Or better still: in what way does the ordinary citizen have a share and a say in the construction of Europe and its monitoring?

Enumerating the questions is enough to make one see the extent of progress that still has to be made if people are to have a genuinely positive and unambiguous perception of this construction. Citizens will only begin to address the European issue as a topic that concerns them if they have a better understanding of their European neighbours as fellow citizens.

The twinning of cities and municipalities certainly represents one of the biggest platforms for mutual acquaintance and merger between fellow citizens ever created in modern times. However, this movement can only achieve its full potential in Europe if the question of languages is fully embraced. There is a widespread lack of learning a neighbour's language, of a genuine diversification of the languages offered to all, and of an awareness that the most profitable investment in terms of language acquisition and the future is learning languages at any early age coupled with an extension of exchanges and class partnerships.

A merger between fellow citizens depends on eliminating clichés, stereotypes and xenophobic images about one's neighbours. With direct contacts and a good understanding of the language, this can be achieved at any age. As for the formative value of early learning, it is immeasurably more effective and helps largely to do away with later demystifications, which are essential for adults marked by history and their prejudices.

It is important for Europe not to shape the young generation in the same way: they deserve better.

It is also becoming increasingly clear that a knowledge of languages will be crucial to professional mobility and the ability to make full use of training. Within the new global context, essential English will not be sufficient. It is often the third language that will tip the balance in a whole series of sectors, situations and countries.

And yet the surest means of not learning other languages is to impose English as the first compulsory choice for everyone: "why learn another language," wonder so many parents and pupils, "if you already have English that dominates virtually everywhere?" The reality, however, is that English, if learnt as a third language by a child of 10 to

11 years of age who already has a first living language besides his or her mother tongue, will be mastered more quickly and better than by his or her monolingual classmate.

This consideration is a way out of the “English for all and sundry” approach and allows diversification through the acquisition of languages at an early age. It would be fatal for the European project to dispense with such an educational and cultural leverage point, and to speed up even further the process of language levelling. This analysis does not oppose English; it is an educational and political argument in favour of the multilingualism of individuals, based on language education at an early age.

Such multilingualism obviously does not exclude English; it merely makes it one element among others in the spectrum of languages spoken by the European citizen of tomorrow.

## **6.2 Preferred procedures and methodology**

### **6.2.1 For exchanges in general**

Visits between twin cities can only be genuinely satisfactory and achieve maximum effect under the following conditions:

- It is essential to raise the awareness of participants before the visit to prepare the group for the cultural differences in daily life, the importance of the first words spoken, a realisation of the partner’s expectations and the conviviality necessary for the success of the exchange.
- Particular emphasis has to be placed on the stereotypes about one’s neighbours in common circulation, as well as those conveyed by one’s neighbours (which provides an opportunity both to de-dramatise and demystify the whole matter).
- A minimum of five sessions of induction to the spoken language seem necessary to prepare participants for the initial contacts and give them a taste for the partner’s language.

The induction course should emphasise the following points:

- the first linguistic interactions to be performed and understood: greetings, introducing oneself, asking the other person’s or a third person’s identity, thanking, excusing oneself, taking leave, asking the way, asking for or giving directions, asking the time, negotiating an activity, an exit, a price, accommodation, stating one’s likes and dislikes, etc;
- likely subjects of conversation depending on the target group: sports, the exchange programme, scheduled or possible leisure activities, places to visit including places



during the return visit, and above all the differences in daily life (eating habits, meal times, etc.);

- learning to use the host as an occasional “language teacher” and obtaining from him or her the information, vocabulary or expression lacking (“How do you say that in your language?”);
- listening to various audio models of simple conversations, various men’s and women’s voices, at different linguistic registers (daily, radio, TV);
- involving participants in identifying their language requirements (vocabulary, topics, cultural and other issues) so the induction course can address those needs more effectively.

This awareness-raising process can motivate participants to go further with their languages.

### **6.2.2 For regular language courses**

- Use books and documents structured around the topics and needs of the exchange: there are examples of preparatory books for exchanges, in particular in the French-German field;<sup>1</sup> develop a progression according to the most likely interactions;
- structure the courses around intensive spoken practice aimed at the topics and needs of the exchange; if written work is not excluded, it should be subordinated to spoken work;
- involve the course participants in the choice of topics by defining their needs (elementary precaution);
- give priority to genuine documents from everyday life in the host country, audio and video documents but also the print media and posters, billboards, other street writing, etc;
- diversify the voices, the audio models, the registers;
- insist on the non-verbal aspects, the difference in gestures, the different behavioural habits and mention again the prejudices and clichés one has about the other or *vice versa*;
- after the visit draw up a language statement, a follow-up and in-depth review, especially of the things that did not work from both a language and a cultural point of view: the course follow-up will be structured around remedying these problems and the contents of the summary report;

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1 Refer for instance to the “Tandem” methods used by the Office franco-allemand pour la jeunesse (OFAJ), and Jacqueline Feuillet (1990, 1992 and 1999), *Herzlich willkommen in Frankreich! Cours d’allemand pour villes jumelées*, published at the initiative of the OFAJ by Nantes University and the town of Saint-Herblain.

- for this self-evaluation process use the *European Language Portfolio*, which is published by the Council of Europe and adapted to all target groups: it also has a strongly motivating effect for learning based on language interactions;
- do not outsource the courses to external establishments if they do not guarantee that the lessons will focus on the needs of the visit and on the spoken language. Instead, train a specialist language teacher to adopt this specific approach aimed at preparing exchanges.

### 6.2.3 For school exchange programmes

For an effective linguistic and cultural immersion in the country whose language is being studied, the following practical arrangements and teaching preparations are recommended:

- practical arrangements: the schoolchildren should be in an immersion setting, namely “not among nationals”; they should be placed with host families or in bi-national pairs if the accommodation is in a hostel; the efficiency criterion is the intensity of contacts with speakers of another language, in both activities and daily life;
- multiple teaching preparations:
  - school exchange programmes are not just the visit itself but the entire package consisting of the “teaching methodology for exchanges plus visit plus follow-up”;
  - the “teaching methodology for exchanges” concern first and foremost a common project comprising of the exchange of pupils’ work: written work, spoken tapes, video recordings, personal letters, email, reports on a topic chosen together with the partner, class magazine, photos or graphics exhibition, etc. The output dimension is a plus that makes the learner more active, which in language learning is the key;
  - the “teaching methodology for exchanges” defined in this way should make use of all the information and communication technologies available in teaching: email, Internet, CD-Rom, not to mention videos, audio tapes, faxes, camcorders, cameras and ... ordinary mail;
  - use of these technologies is essentially the same as the functions of all languages: learning, producing and exchanging in a language. Under-using these technologies would be tantamount to dispensing with many uses of the language that is to be learnt or taught;
  - the “teaching methodology for exchanges” therefore assumes a transdisciplinary pedagogy in which the language is not just learnt for its own sake but for what it enables; among other things, this supposes the involvement of several teachers working as a team;

- here, too, the *European Language Portfolio* (school version) is a tailored and motivating self-evaluation tool;
- through the exchange of pupils' work and the multifaceted use of the language, a visit to a partner class also becomes one of the highlights in learning about the other's culture and habits;
- the real problem is that the cities and municipalities have little or no influence on the choice of languages by educational establishments (and their choice of partners) and even less on the educational methods implemented. The solution can only lie in consultations prior to twinnings, if there is time, so that reciprocal needs can be taken into account. For educational methods this necessarily means contacts between municipal officials and school authorities as well as open discussions. The present document could provide a starting point or a trigger for such meetings.

The quantitative success of school exchange programmes is an infallible indicator of the usefulness of school partnerships. Yet their profitability depends largely on the educational methods that accompany them. Twin cities can contribute to consolidating such exchanges in both number and quality.

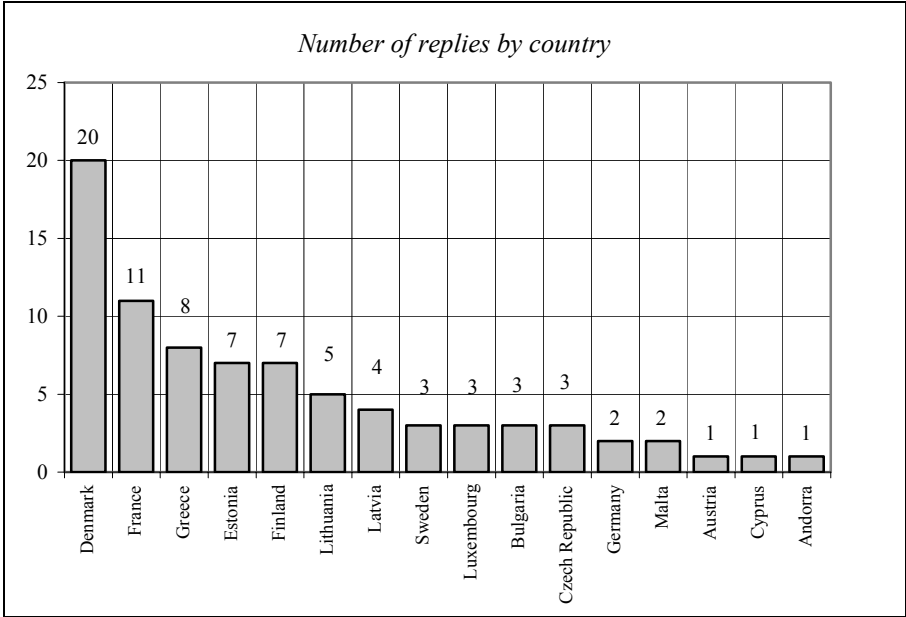
None the less, the main area of action for cities is the preparation of exchanges for adults and language courses. Since the educational establishment does not screen the initiatives of cities and municipalities, their language priority certainly lies in the promotion of adults' courses. What already exists can and should be generalised.

This research has shown that a Europe of grey matter and elective affinities is taking shape before one's eyes: by encouraging exchanges, generalising language courses and school exchange programmes, and by training teachers in the "teaching methodology for exchanges".

For the European citizen of tomorrow, for a new fellow citizenship, for a Europe closer to its citizens, it is important for exchanges of experience to be encouraged by an unprecedented reciprocal promotion of languages.



# Appendix 1: Participating towns and cities<sup>1</sup>




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**Germany**

**Bickenbach:** Italy

**Volkertshausen:** Italy

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**Andorra**

**Encamp:** Spain, France

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**Austria**

**Graz:** Germany, Croatia, United States, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Slovenia

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<sup>1</sup> The partner country of each twinning is indicated after the name of the town or city.

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**Bulgaria**

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**Dryanovo:** Greece, Italy

**Lovech:** Germany

**Yambol:** France, Poland, Russian Federation

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**Cyprus**

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**Paphos**

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**Denmark**

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**Aalborg**

**Fredericia:** Germany, Cape Verde, Finland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden

**Gladsaxe:** Germany, Austria, Croatia, Hungary, United Kingdom

**Grenaa:** Germany, Estonia, Faroe Isles, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Finland

**Helle:** Finland, Lithuania

**Holstebro:** Douzelage<sup>1</sup>

**Naestved:** Finland, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Sweden

**Nykobing F.:** Germany, Finland, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden

**Odense**

**Randers:** Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

**Rønne:** Germany, Estonia, Italy, Sweden

**Rosenholm:** Germany, Poland

**Roskilde:** Germany, Cape Verde, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

**Silkeborg:** Germany, United States, Finland, Norway, Poland, Sweden

**Skandeborg:** Germany, Finland, Norway, Sweden

**Skörping:** Germany

**Skovbo:** Germany, Latvia

**Thisted:** Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

**Viborg:** Finland, Lithuania, Norway

**Vordingborg:** Finland, Norway, Sweden and co-operation with Poland

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1 A twinning network that began with twelve towns.

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## Estonia

**Johvi:** Denmark, Finland, Germany, Russian Federation, Sweden

**Marjamaa:** Finland, Sweden

**Narva:** Denmark, Estonia, Russian Federation, Sweden

**Sillamae:** Finland, United States

**Tartu:** Finland, Germany, Sweden

**Torva:** Finland, Poland, Sweden, United States

**Voru:** Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden

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## Finland

**Espoo:** China, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, United States

**Haukipudas:** Hungary, Latvia, Russian Federation, Sweden

**Joensuu**

**Jyväskylä:** China, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden

**Lahti:** China, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, Ukraine

**Rauma:** Denmark, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden

**Tampere:** Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Sweden, Ukraine, United States

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## France

**Auxerre** (Yonne): Germany, Italy, Poland, United Kingdom

**Basse-Goulaine** (Loire-Atlantique): Germany

**Boquého** (Côtes d'Armor): Romania

**Lorient** (Morbihan): Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Spain, United Kingdom

**Plaisir** (Yvelines): Austria, Germany, Portugal, United Kingdom

**Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer** (Var): Germany, Italy

**Saint-Sébastien-sur-Loire** (Loire-Atlantique): Germany, Hungary, Wales

**Sainte-Honorine-du-Fay** (Calvados): Germany

**Vichy** (Allier): Germany, Scotland, Spain

**Vire** (Calvados): Germany, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom

**Wattrelos** (Lille): Germany, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania

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## Greece

**Chalkida:** Germany, Italy

**Kolindros, 18** (network of municipalities)

**Lefkada:** Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Israel, Japan, Romania, Sweden

**Preveza** (network of municipalities): Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Sweden

**Rethymnon** (Crete): Cyprus, Italy

**Rhodes**

**Serres:** Bulgaria, France

**Thessaloniki:**

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## Latvia

**Cesis:** Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Sweden

**Ogre:** Finland, Netherlands, Sweden, Ukraine

**Riga:** Australia, Belarus, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, Ukraine, United States

**Ventspils:** France

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## Lithuania

**Alytus:** Denmark, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Sweden

**Birstonas:** Germany, Norway, Poland, Lithuania

**Marijampole:** Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation

**Siauliai:** Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, Ukraine, United States

**Vilnius:** Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Taiwan, Ukraine, United States



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**Luxembourg**

**Mertzig:** Germany

**Mondorf-les-Bains:** Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland

**Pétange:** Italy, Slovenia

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**Malta**

**Attard**

**Zabbar:** Sicily

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**Czech Republic**

**Brno:** Austria, France, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States

**Hradec Kralové:** Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovak Republic

**Karlovy Vary:** California, Germany, Japan

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**Sweden**

**Hallsberg:** Estonia, Finland, Germany

**Nyköping:**

**Säter:** Estonia, Finland, Italy, Netherlands



**Appendix 2:**  
**Research questionnaire**  
**to the twinning officers of cities, towns and municipalities**

Reply from the city, town or municipality of: .....

Country: .....

Name of the twinning officer in charge: .....

Tel./fax: .....

Our town/city is twinned with (since?) .....

.....

## Questionnaire on language teaching and learning in the context of twin cities

### I. EXCHANGES BETWEEN TWIN CITIES

#### I.1 Presentation of the exchanges

Participants	Language used (national language, partner's language, both languages, another language)	Frequency/ duration (number of times a year/ average duration of visit)	Mode (correspondence, reciprocal visits, email)
Elected representatives and municipal officials			
Citizens			
Professionals/ tradespeople			
Sportsmen and women			
Students			
Schoolchildren			
Others .....			

Comments: .....

.....

.....

**I.2 Evaluation of the exchanges with regard to language communication**

	Point of view of towns/cities	Point of view of participants
Results	<input type="checkbox"/> satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> unsatisfactory	<input type="checkbox"/> satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> unsatisfactory
Opinions		
Improvements/ changes wanted		

Comments: .....

.....

.....

**I.3 What are your past experiences and future projects with regard to language communication between participants in exchanges and encounters?**

Answer: .....

.....

.....

**II. ADULT LANGUAGE COURSES IN CONNECTION WITH TWINNINGS**

**II.1 Have you organised language courses?**

- yes  no

If so, since when? .....

**II.2 What were your principal motivations?**

- personal interest (communicating with the population of the twin city, curiosity)  
 professional interest (to find training courses or employment in the twin city, commercial exchanges)  
 language interest

others .....

**II.3 How many people benefited from these language courses?**

- 41 people or more  
 31-40 people  
 21-30 people  
 fewer than 20 people

**II.4 Are you currently organising language courses in view of exchanges?**

- yes  no

For how many languages:

- one. Which one? .....  
 several. Which ones? .....

**II.5 The courses are held by:**

- your municipality
- the twinning committee
- a language school
- a university (or related institution)
- private teachers
- others (volunteers, etc.)

**II.6 Frequency:**

- one or twice a week
- three times or more
- others.....

**II.7 Methodology and books used:**

- existing ones (which ones?):.....
- own media
- others .....

**II.8 Evaluation of the adult courses in terms of language results:**

- your evaluation .....  
.....  
.....
- evaluation by the participants themselves .....  
.....  
.....

**II.9 If you have not done so already, would you like to organise or initiate language courses linked to twinnings?**

- yes  no

.....  
.....  
.....

**III. SCHOOL EXCHANGES AND TWINNINGS**

**III.1 Has the twinning of your town or city led to school exchange programmes?**

- yes  no

If so, please specify:

- how many establishments? .....
- what level of schools? .....
- what type of schools (vocational, apprenticeship, etc.)? .....

**III.2 With partners:**

- from the country whose language they are studying? Which one? .....
- from another country? Which one? .....
- as part of twin cities only? .....
- others? .....



**III.3 Does the exchange consists of:**

- annual visits by the partners? Specify:

.....  
.....  
.....

- occasional exchanges of teaching documents and materials between teachers? Specify:

.....  
.....  
.....

- regular exchanges of pupils' work (written, audio, audiovisual, drawings, others)? Specify:

.....  
.....  
.....

**III.4 What was the language used?**

- the partner's language
- own mother tongue
- another language. Which one? .....
- as much the partner's language as own mother tongue

**III.5 At whose initiative were all the practices described above implemented?**

- your municipal council
- the twinning officer
- one or more teachers
- others .....

**III.6 Evaluation of school exchange programmes:**

- by the municipal authorities. Please comment:

.....  
.....  
.....

- by the school authorities. Please comment:

.....  
.....  
.....

**Your conclusions:**

- on the framework that city/municipality twinnings provide for promoting the knowledge of languages:

.....  
.....  
.....

- on adult language courses and their possibilities for future development:

.....  
.....  
.....

- on school exchange programmes and their linguistic impact:

.....  
.....  
.....

**The ECML is very grateful for your interest in our survey and the time you have taken to contribute to this research.**

**Please feel free to enclose with your reply any documents and information you think may be of use to our research. Thank you.**

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