**Recommendation [CM/Rec(2022)1](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture**

*(adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 February 2022 at the 1423rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

**Explanatory memorandum**

**Rationale**

This recommendation addresses two developments of concern to the Council of Europe. The first is a tendency on the part of public authorities and civil society to think that proficiency in one additional language is enough as long as that language is English. The other is the populist notion that proficiency in minority or migrant languages, widespread in today's increasingly diverse societies, is harmful to societal cohesion. By successfully combining plurilingualism as an educational goal and plurilingualism as a societal reality and by fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding, plurilingual and intercultural education seeks to transform linguistic and cultural diversity into educational and social capital. Embracing all educational sectors and levels, plurilingual and intercultural education derives from and serves the Council of Europe's commitment to democratic culture. It values cultural diversity, promotes respect for cultural difference and openness to other beliefs, world views and practices, and seeks to develop analytic and critical thinking skills while building knowledge and critical understanding of the world. The competences it sets out to develop are those that Europe's citizens need if they are to participate actively in democratic culture; they are defined in the *[Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture](#)*.

**Preamble and specific recommendations**

The preamble situates the recommendation in the context of the numerous Council of Europe conventions, recommendations and other instruments, as well as those of other international organisations, which are relevant to the role played by language and culture in education for democratic citizenship and in the achievement of societal integration. Between them, the conventions, recommendations and other instruments cover a wide range of topics and perspectives, all of which point back to the Council of Europe's fundamental mission to promote and defend democracy and human rights. They represent a substantial *acquis* on which the recommendation draws in order to remind member States of the interdependence of plurilingual and intercultural education and education for democratic culture.

The action foreseen set out in the recommendation is that which is typically included in recommendations concerning States party to the [European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18)](#); the subject matter of the recommendation is described in the appendix. The recommendation recognises that member States are responsible for the organisation and content of their educational systems and that the actions they take on the basis of the recommendation will have due regard to the legal and other requirements of their particular context.

The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms establishes the right to education in Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (ETS No. 5, 1950). Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on ensuring quality education recognises that this right can only be fully exercised in practice if the education is of sufficient quality. The preamble to this recommendation recognises that for language education to be of quality it must contribute to equitable and inclusive education and educational success, to mutual understanding, societal integration and participation in European democratic processes.

The specific recommendations to member States (1.a-k) reflect the breadth of the concept of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, its importance for all educational sectors, and the fact that its implementation depends on the active support and participation of a wide range of stakeholders. In recognition of its ambition, the recommendation uses aspirational verbs – *encourage, request*, *invite*, *support*.

**Appendix**
**Purpose (paragraph 1)**

As society's linguistic and cultural diversity has increased, so education's task has become more challenging. In earlier times, pupil and student cohorts mostly grew up with the same language. In recent decades, as a result of large-scale mobility, educational systems have faced the challenge of including learners from widely diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and situations. Plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture responds to this challenge by embracing diversity as a resource that enriches the educational experience of all learners. At the same time it seeks to develop learners' plurilingual and intercultural competences and thus equips them for participation in Europe's diverse democratic cultures. When educational systems adopt approaches to teaching and learning that welcome and engage with linguistic and cultural diversity, they can more easily develop their own democratic culture, providing pupils and students with first-hand experience of democratic processes and supporting the democratic culture of society as a whole.

**Scope (paragraph 2)**

There are three dimensions to the scope of the recommendation. First, it is addressed to all educational sectors and levels and refers to all aspects of the curriculum. Plurilingual and intercultural education is for everyone, not just for those who already speak two or more languages and have experienced cultural diversity. Second, it embraces all languages present in a given educational context, whether or not they are part of the official curriculum and regardless of their societal status. And third, it recognises that successful implementation depends on an evolutionary change in societal attitudes to language and culture and thus on the support and collaboration of a wide range of partners in civil society (e.g. youth, sports, music, social and cultural associations) and a wide range of stakeholder groups, including employers, the private sector and the media.

**Definitions (paragraph 3)**

The definitions given in this paragraph are for the purposes of the present recommendation only. It is recognised that member States and other actors may attribute a different meaning to the same or similar terms, in their own context, and/or use different terms to denote the same or similar phenomena.

3.a    "A communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact": the definition of plurilingualism given by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (1.3) assigns the concept two essential properties, plurality and integration, and includes all the languages in the individual's repertoire, whenever, wherever and however they have been learnt. The development of plurilingualism begins with the language of the home, then embraces the language of society at large, and after that the languages of other peoples, which may be learnt formally or informally. When the language of the home is not the language of society at large, as is often the case with migrants and persons belonging to minorities, plurilingualism is a precondition for access to education. When the home language is the same as that of society at large, plurilingual development nevertheless takes place through education: the spoken communication skills developed in early childhood are gradually complemented by literacy and academic language. In other words, pupils and students become plurilingual by learning additional languages, but they also become plurilingual by mastering the genres, registers and terminology characteristic of different curriculum subjects. This means that all teachers have a role to play in supporting the linguistic development of their learners.

3.b    Whereas "plurilingualism" refers to the language capacities of the individual, the Council of Europe uses "multilingualism" to refer to the presence of two or more languages in a society. This is an important distinction because plurilingual individuals do not always live in multilingual societies and multilingual societies are not necessarily made up of individuals who can communicate in two or more languages.

3.c    A "plurilingual repertoire" allows a person to cross linguistic divides and overcome linguistic barriers. The languages in a plurilingual repertoire may have been learnt at different stages of life and in different ways. They may be used in different contexts and for different purposes, which is likely to result in differences in proficiency. For example, one language may be used principally for oral communication in the family and when socialising with friends, whereas another may be the medium of academic learning and thus associated with specialist terminology, registers and genres.
Plurilingual repertoires are inherently unstable because changes in the individual's circumstances may lead to changes in their communicative behaviour (see also 3.g below). A change in social relationships may result in much less frequent use of a language that was previously central to the individual's social behaviour; and a move to another country may mean learning a new language. Plurilingual repertoires frequently include partial competences in a number of languages: the phrase-book language, for example, that many tourists learn on holiday abroad.

3.d    "Intercultural competence" is the complex set of attitudes, knowledge, skills and values on which we draw when we engage in intercultural dialogue; and intercultural dialogue is the means by which culturally diverse societies create and maintain social cohesion. The Council of Europe's *White Paper on intercultural dialogue* defines social cohesion as "the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation" (section 1.4), and it argues that the learning and teaching of intercultural competence are essential for democratic culture (section 5.3). As an educational goal, intercultural competence is closely linked to plurilingualism because it enables plurilingual individuals to engage with the cultural diversity they encounter when they use the different languages in their repertoire. Intercultural competence allows them to respond to cultural diversity with respect, argue for and justify their own point of view responsibly and sensitively, and subject to critical scrutiny aspects of their own culture that are commonly taken for granted. The attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding that derive from intercultural encounters enhance the individual's democratic competences as defined in the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*, and play a crucial role in the development of self-understanding.

3.e    The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2.1.3) defines "mediation" as "written and/or oral activities … [that] make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly". Mediation in this sense happens both within languages and also between languages via translation and interpretation. Cross-linguistic mediation tends to arise spontaneously in contexts of formal learning when groups of learners make use of all the languages at their disposal to engage with, explore and explain curriculum or discipline content. Such activities typically lead to mediation in an extended sense, embracing a wide range of collaborative procedures by which teachers and learners negotiate diverse attitudes and beliefs as they construct knowledge. Mediation in this broader sense, whether within or between languages, is fundamental to teaching approaches that aim to harness and extend learners' individual and collective agency and create a democratic classroom culture by making space for the learner's voice. The CEFR *Companion volume* (2020) provides a detailed discussion of the concept of mediation and a large number of illustrative scales for mediation in both senses defined here.

3.f    Proficiency in the language/s of schooling is a precondition for access to education and the fulfilment of the individual's educational potential. As the umbrella term applied to the dominant language of teaching and learning, extracurricular activities and institutional management, "language of schooling" embraces a variety of linguistic registers, ranging from informal oral communication to the formal varieties of academic language characteristic of different curriculum subjects and disciplines. Besides being the medium of instruction across the curriculum, the language of schooling is also taught as a subject in its own right. In its formal varieties the language of schooling may pose a challenge to all pupils and students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In all its varieties it may pose a challenge to those who speak a minority or migrant language at home. Immersion education (conducted in a minority language), bilingual education (conducted in two languages) and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) entail instruction in an additional language, which for that purpose replaces the dominant language of schooling.

3.g    A person's "home language" is necessarily their default medium of communication in early childhood;

but through education, children who have grown up with a language other than the dominant language may come to feel more comfortable in the latter language, especially if they identify strongly with the culture of the dominant community. They may also become more proficient in the language of schooling than in the language/s they acquired from their parents, especially as regards literacy and mastery of academic registers and genres. This is an example of the inherent instability of plurilingual repertoires. One of the benefits of plurilingual and intercultural education is that it welcomes home languages and valorises them in the eyes of all learners. In this way it works against language loss, which can have important consequences for family cohesion; it may also encourage the transfer of literacy skills from languages learnt at school to the language/s of the home.

3.h     Traditionally, education systems have labelled languages according to the relation in which they stand to the national language, for example "minority language" and "foreign language". In contexts of linguistic diversity, however, this leads to complication and potentially to confusion: what is a foreign language for one person is the home language of another. In linguistically complex societies, moreover, it is not always easy to know how to label the languages of different regions. The term "additional language" avoids these problems by adopting the perspective of the learner: the term applies to any and every language that a person learns in addition to the language/s first learnt in early childhood; it is especially useful when attempting to describe plurilingualism and plurilingual repertoires. As indicated in the *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* (p. 68), "the forms of plurilingualism (number and nature of linguistic varieties) to be promoted and developed will be defined specifically in relation to each situation (national, regional or local), the sociolinguistic situation (languages present in the geographical area) and collective needs and group aspirations".

3.i     Because the concept of "plurilingual and intercultural education" takes explicit account of all the languages present in a given educational context and seeks to bring them into interaction with each other, it has transformative implications for all education stakeholders and for all areas and levels of educational policy and practice. Plurilingual and intercultural education may also include languages that are neither present in the school nor included in the curriculum – for example, sign languages, migrant languages or neighbouring languages in border regions. By recognising the plurality of language resources that learners have acquired, and continue to acquire, outside school and by bringing languages into interaction with each other, this approach to education fosters the development of plurilingualism and intercultural competence, promotes language awareness, develops learners' mediation skills, and supports inclusion and integration. In other words, it prepares learners to participate proactively in the democratic processes of linguistically and culturally diverse societies. Plurilingual and intercultural education helps learners to integrate new knowledge and skills with what they already know and can do, thus giving them confidence and motivation to learn. The *Framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures (FREPA)* offers a broad set of descriptors that reflect the knowledge, attitudes and skills that need to be developed in the context of plurilingual and intercultural education.

**Principles (paragraph 4)**

4.i      Education prepares the individual to be an active participant in democratic society by promoting their personal development, while combining social responsibility with growing self-awareness, self-confidence, independence of thought, and critical cultural and language awareness. The achievement of these goals depends, among other things, on the acquisition of appropriate competences in the language/s of schooling and other languages that are part of the curriculum. These competences merge with competences in languages learnt outside the educational context to constitute a plurilingual repertoire which facilitates participation in and enjoyment of linguistic and cultural diversity. When pupils and students speak a minority or migrant language at home, it is necessary to find ways of including those languages in the individual's educational experience in ways that benefit all pupils/students. Only when this is done can education be considered fully inclusive.

4.ii     All the languages present in schools and other educational institutions should be explicitly acknowledged, respected and valued, and the linguistic and cultural diversity of pupils and students should be used to support plurilingual and intercultural learning across the curriculum. In accordance with the Council of Europe's view of integration as a two-way process that requires an active response on the part of majority as well as minority communities, plurilingual and intercultural education seeks ways of converting linguistic and cultural diversity into educational capital that benefits all learners. The languages present in a given institution should be included in all aspects of the educational process, curricular and extracurricular; when the languages available to learners, together with associated cultural experiences, are drawn into the educational process this helps all learners to develop critical language awareness and intercultural competence.

4.iii-iv In a plurilingual and intercultural approach to education, all teachers are responsible for helping their learners to understand and master the academic language (terminology, registers and genres) specific to their subject. In doing so they should encourage their learners to draw on the full range of their linguistic and cultural resources. Because it is sensitive to language and culture across the curriculum, plurilingual and intercultural education develops pupils' and students' critical understanding of culture, critical language awareness and their literacy.

4.v      As an increasingly important part of everyday linguistic reality, communication via digital media should play a central role in plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture. Digital citizenship and engagement involve a wide range of activities, from creating, consuming, sharing, playing and socialising, to investigating, communicating, learning and working. Most if not all of these activities have a role to play in plurilingual and intercultural learning, which should aim to develop pupils' and students' ability to make responsible and critical use of digital media. By creating and integrating digitally enhanced learning spaces, educational institutions can develop their own democratic culture of digital literacy. This is especially urgent in view of the requirement for online learning imposed by the coronavirus pandemic.

4.vi     Giving pupils and students a voice in the educational process is a way of developing their capacity for

autonomous learning and critical thinking and thus preparing them for lifelong learning and active participation in the democratic process. Making space for pupils' and students' voice means requiring them to share responsibility for the teaching/learning process and involving them in the organisation of extracurricular activities. If pupils and students are to develop a plurilingual voice, they should have the opportunity to engage in educational activities that require them to use the various languages in their repertoire to support the organisation and reflective evaluation of their learning.

4.vii   Because it values and draws on the linguistic and cultural resources of all pupils and students, plurilingual and intercultural education supports the full inclusion of those from disadvantaged and marginalised situations, always provided that other necessary measures are also taken, for example to help them develop proficiency in the language of schooling.

**Measures (paragraph 5)**

*Introduction (paragraph 5.a)*

5.a    The concept of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture is informed by the large number of Council of Europe conventions, recommendations and other instruments that seek to promote democratic culture and societal integration and recognise the pivotal role that language and culture play in education. Accordingly, the concept is all-embracing and potentially transformative. Clearly, the full implementation of the measures proposed in this paragraph is the work of many years and entails shifts not only in education policies and practices, but also in societal attitudes to linguistic and cultural diversity. At the same time, however, the measures include a number of actions that can be taken immediately, especially at the level of the educational institution and the classroom; support is provided by a wide range of resources already developed by the Council of Europe[1]. It is important to recognise the benefits that such actions can bring to the educational experience of individual pupils and students. By documenting their implementation, and analysing and interpreting the evidence thus gathered, institutions and authorities can contribute to long-term evidence-based educational reform.

*Policy and practice (paragraph 5.b)*

5.b.i   Whether carried out at national, regional or institutional level, a review of existing policy should be guided by the principles elaborated in paragraph 4. It should also be informed by the Council of Europe's *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* and the *Language education policy profiles* developed by the Council of Europe in collaboration with member States. Much can be achieved by a review at institutional level, especially when it leads to the development of an institutional language policy (see also 5.b.xv below).

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[1] In the remainder of paragraph 5 reference will be made to specific examples of relevant resources. Further relevant resources and information on in-country support provided through ECML "Training and consultancy" are listed at the end of the document.

5.b.ii  The concept of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture embraces all curriculum subjects and disciplines, and its implementation requires that attention is paid to language and culture in all subjects. *ROADMAP* is a self-assessment tool linked to a database of promising practices for the development of a tailor-made whole-school strategy to support students' competences in the language/s of schooling. Pupils and students should be made aware of genres and strategies that are relevant to all curriculum subjects/academic disciplines (e.g. how to organise an argument or a description, or how to browse a text). They should also be made aware of the terminology, registers and genres that define each curriculum subject/academic discipline. Language requirements should be included in the specification of attainment targets, and the linguistic dimension should be addressed in textbooks and other teaching materials. Again, institutions and teachers can achieve a great deal within existing frameworks by adjusting their pedagogical practice. Detailed guidance is provided by *A handbook for curriculum development and teacher training – The language dimension in all subjects*. *Developing language awareness in subject classes* helps subject teachers to identify the linguistic needs of their learners and provide tailored support, while *Language descriptors* proposes minimum language standards in history/civics and mathematics for learners aged 12-13 and 15-16, linked to the CEFR levels.

5.b.iii-iv  Plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture requires that pupils and students have the opportunity to learn additional languages for purposes of authentic and progressively complex oral and written communication, and it is increasingly common for this process to begin at an early age. Decisions regarding the number of languages pupils/students are expected to learn, which languages are offered, in what order, and at what stages of schooling, tend to be taken at national level; though at institutional level pupil or student choice may be constrained by the way the timetable is organised. Two languages in addition to the language of schooling is generally regarded as the least that should be offered. Guidance on policy and practice is provided by the *Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* and the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*. *More languages? – PlurCur!* presents research and reports on practical implementation of plurilingual whole-school curricula. The *CEFR* and its *Companion volume* provide support for the design, implementation and evaluation of language teaching programmes and facilitate the management of progression from one educational level to another in ways that take account of the competences learners have already acquired.

5.b.v  Traditionally, the foreign languages taught at school have been drawn from a narrow range. Because it is focused on the personal and professional development of the individual, however, plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture values all languages equally and thus calls established linguistic hierarchies into question. In linguistically and culturally diverse populations, the learning of another language present in the community provides intercultural experience of immediate relevance to social inclusion and societal integration. The learning of other community languages may be especially appropriate in pre-school and primary education. *Inspiring language learning in the early years* encourages children and teachers to develop their linguistic skills, learn new languages and open themselves to the languages around them.

5.b.vi The concept of plurilingualism rests on the assumption that we learn new languages on the basis of the language/s we already know; and even when the classroom focus is on a particular target language, the other languages in the learners' repertoires are ever-present as a potential resource. Learners at all levels should be encouraged to draw on the languages at their disposal, and the linguistic intuitions they nourish, to support learning across the curriculum. In this way learners develop the critical language awareness that is often a prerequisite for successful engagement in intercultural communication. *Specifying languages' contribution to intercultural education* offers practical ideas for ensuring that language learning also contributes to the development of intercultural competences. Partnership and mobility are essential to intercultural learning. The tool *Intercultural learning: school partnerships & mobility* helps schools to assess and enrich their partnerships, including reciprocal methods in which students learn systematically with partners.

5.b.vii Traditionally, teachers of different languages working in the same institution have had little to say to one another, as though they were engaged in entirely different, even mutually exclusive practices. When a key goal of education is to develop learners' plurilingual and intercultural repertoires, active collaboration between teachers of different languages is a precondition for successful implementation; and collaboration between language teachers and teachers of other subjects is also essential. Again, it is possible to effect significant change within existing frameworks at institutional level. If a national curriculum is committed to plurilingual and intercultural education and teachers are collaborating, public authorities need to ensure that this collaboration across languages and subjects is also standard practice for teacher educators. They should also encourage collaboration among teachers' professional associations.

5.b.viii The various models of immersion and bilingual education, as well as of content and language integrated learning (CLIL), occupy a special place in plurilingual and intercultural education because they use immersion techniques to develop learners' academic proficiency in a language that is not the dominant language of schooling. Immersion education delivers the curriculum in a language other than the dominant language of schooling, bilingual education typically delivers the curriculum in the language of schooling and another language, and CLIL programmes teach part of the curriculum in another language. The second and third of these approaches provide important opportunities for intercultural learning: to study any curriculum subject in two languages is to encounter it from the perspectives of two academic traditions. When secondary students in Germany, for example, learn history partly through German and partly through French, their learning cannot help but be multiperspectival and intercultural. The success of bilingual education and CLIL depends crucially on effective collaboration between teachers. By making the link between content and language learning more visible, *A pluriliteracies approach to teaching for learning* helps CLIL teachers ensure deep learning at both language and subject level, while *Conbat+* presents an innovative way of managing diversity in the classroom by combining plurilingual and pluricultural approaches with content-based teaching.

5.b.ix Individuals' home languages – the languages in which their identity is most deeply rooted – are necessarily the starting point for all learning. This is equally true of a 6-year-old from an immigrant family on her first day at school and a university student who is pursuing his studies in a country where few people speak the language through which he has previously been educated. Plurilingual and intercultural education

encourages such learners not to leave their home language at the school gate or in the corridor outside the seminar room, but to use it to support their learning in whatever ways present themselves. This is an essential step in the development of democratic culture in the classroom and the wider educational institution because it acknowledges the linguistic identity of individual learners and creates the mental and social space in which they can freely resort to the language which is the default medium of their consciousness. The inclusion of home languages provides a first-hand experience of democracy in action; it also benefits all learners because it introduces new perspectives on language and curriculum content. When pupils and students are encouraged to voice their intuitions about the languages in their repertoire and compare the features of different languages, they contribute to the development of language and intercultural awareness in the class or in the learning community as a whole. The resource *DEMOCRACY* helps support the development of competences for democratic culture through oral communication.

In some contexts home languages can be used as languages of instruction, but often this is impossible, either because of the large number of languages present in a given context or because no teachers are available. In these circumstances, home languages can still play an important role in helping pupils and students to develop proficiency in the language of schooling and in educating all learners to appreciate multilingualism and plurilingualism. In a linguistically diverse primary school, for example, pupils can be taught to count in the language of schooling and can then teach one another how to count in their various home languages. This reinforces basic curriculum learning and lays the groundwork for social and educational inclusion. In due course, with parental support, pupils can transfer to their home language the reading and writing skills they acquire in the language of schooling and other curriculum languages. The inclusion of home languages in the mainstream classroom in no way undermines a legal requirement to use the national language as the language of schooling because that is what teachers do in every lesson: they do not know, and thus cannot speak, their pupils' home languages. The resource *Maledive* provides guidance and resources to help teachers draw on learners' home languages in the classroom. Both the virtual open course for primary educators – *EducoMigrant* – and the *MARILLE* resource, aimed at secondary teachers – support practitioners to reflect on professional practices, to discover innovative and inclusive strategies and to deepen their understanding of working with learners from diverse backgrounds.

Plurilingual and intercultural education is further strengthened if proficiency in home languages can be formally recognised and certified. While this may not be possible at national level, educational institutions can easily create their own awards as a way of enhancing the status of home languages.

5.b.x   A plurilingual repertoire comprises languages that the individual can use here and now, starting in the earliest stages of learning. Accordingly, the quality of plurilingual and intercultural education depends on the adoption of teaching approaches that assign a central role to spontaneous communicative and reflective use of the language/s being learnt. The central importance of language use in the development of plurilingual repertoires means that, wherever possible, formal learning should be complemented by non-formal and informal learning. Pupils and students should be encouraged to participate in events in the wider community that afford opportunities for them to use their emerging plurilingual repertoires and thus help to consolidate

their formal learning. Schools and other educational institutions should also seek opportunities to co-operate with non-formal learning associations that recognise and support diversity, plurilingualism and intercultural learning.

5.b.xi    Plurilingual and intercultural learning depends on and helps to sustain *learning environments where languages flourish*. Such environments are complex in two senses: teaching and learning generate intricate patterns of interaction, and they depend on digital media and resources to transcend the limitations of the physical environment and provide access to learning opportunities in a wide range of languages. The provision of appropriate technological support requires continuous planning at all levels of the educational system and investment from relevant funding bodies. *E-lang resources* enable language teachers to help learners to become competent and autonomous language users as well as responsible digital citizens.

5.b.xii   In member States where textbooks and other teaching/learning resources are subject to approval by the relevant public authorities, publishers should be required to ensure that the content and structure of their materials reflect the principles of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture.

5.b.xiii-xiv Plurilingual and intercultural education seeks to establish a democratic classroom culture that fosters autonomous learning and critical thinking and includes the pupils' and students' voice in the educational process. This accords with the Council of Europe's view of the language user/learner as an autonomous social agent. Including pupils' and students' voices in the educational process entails much more than eliciting their views in the manner of market research. It requires approaches to curricula and teaching that allow learners to make choices, take decisions, act on those decisions and evaluate their outcomes; approaches, in other words, that assign a central role to individual and collective agency, foster learner autonomy and prepare for lifelong learning. Learners of all ages should be involved in identifying learning targets, organising learning activities, evaluating the learning process and assessing its outcomes. Self-assessment is central to the reflective dynamic that the Council of Europe's *European Language Portfolio* was designed to stimulate and support. These approaches are likely to foster the development of language and intercultural awareness and provide a framework within which learners can be encouraged to engage in intercultural dialogue inside and outside the immediate context of learning.

5.b.xv The relevant authorities should encourage educational institutions to develop their own policy documents based on the principles that shape plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture. Such documents should emphasise welcome and inclusion; foster a safe environment where all languages are respected and encouraged; summarise underlying principles; and explain what those principles mean for teaching, learning, assessment, the extracurricular life of the institution and relations with the wider community. Institutional policy documents should also valorise and indicate ways of benefiting from the plurilingual competences of teachers/lecturers and other staff as well as pupils and students, and they should see pupils and students as key ambassadors for the social function of the school/institution. In keeping with democratic culture, the development and regular review of the policy documents should involve all stakeholders. *What a*

*school language policy might contain* is a tool intended to support critical reflection on the idea of a whole-school language policy.

5.b.xvi  Assessment plays an essential role in education at all levels, whether its purpose is to monitor progress, diagnose difficulties, offer opportunities to reflect on future learning or measure achievement. If curricula and pedagogy aim to promote plurilingual and intercultural learning for democratic culture, it is essential that all modes of assessment respond to this objective. The central role played by self-assessment in the *European Language Portfolio* implies the possibility of an assessment culture in which learners also have a voice.

5.b.xvii  Plurilingual and intercultural education repeatedly implicates worlds beyond the immediate context of teaching and learning. It is thus essential that teachers and learners are given every encouragement to engage with those worlds, whether in person or virtually. The *PluriMobil* teaching tool provides guidance on ensuring that such experiences afford meaningful opportunities for learning. The European Commission's *Erasmus+* programme offers extensive support for international exchanges and collaboration.

5.b.xviii  Teachers and other staff committed to the implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education need regular opportunities to update and further develop their competences. Institutions in all sectors of education can support the professional development of their staff in two ways: by facilitating their attendance at external courses and by encouraging a culture of collaborative reflection within the institution. The development of an institutional policy document (5.b.xv above) can be used to introduce such a culture, and the regular reports that teachers are typically required to submit to their principals can include classroom data of various kinds. From there, it is a short step to the use of collaborative action research to frame all teaching and learning in the institution. Pedagogical approaches that foster autonomous learning and critical thinking and make space for pupils' and students' voices (5.b.xiii-xiv above) also allow them to participate in action research (see also 5.c.ix below), which adds substance and depth to the processes of peer and self-assessment.

5.b.xix  The implementation of whole-school/institution-wide policies should include parents/guardians (in the case of schools) and the wider community of which the given educational institution is a part. The long-term impact of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture depends on the extent to which educational institutions succeed not only in implementation but also in advocacy. Linguistic and cultural diversity is best celebrated by demonstrating the educational and democratic gains that accrue from a plurilingual and intercultural approach. The resource *PARENTS* suggests a range of ways in which schools can involve parents in plurilingual and intercultural education.

*Initial and further teacher education (paragraph 5.c)*

5.c.i  The successful implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture depends crucially on teachers, regardless of the subject/s they are teaching; they are the agents of change. It is thus

essential that teacher education helps them to develop the necessary professional competences. Particular importance should be given to a focus on language and culture in all subjects and an exploration of those aspects of teaching and learning that all teachers have in common. Teachers' professional development should also explore ways of promoting the transfer of competences and strategies between languages. By bringing languages into interaction with one another, in classroom communication and in the minds of learners, plurilingual and intercultural education facilitates a systematic approach to the development of learners' mediation skills (described in detail in the *CEFR Companion volume*). Encouraging learners to compare and contrast features of the languages in their repertoires further helps to foster language awareness. *A guide to teacher competences for languages in education* contains a catalogue of frameworks and instruments to develop teacher competences, each one critically reviewed and illustrated with examples of use. *The European portfolio for pre-primary educators* is a tool for personal reflection on professional competences, focusing on the plurilingual and intercultural dimension of work with pre-primary children.

5.c.ii   Teacher education should challenge received attitudes, beliefs and preconceptions, including the "one nation, one language" view of linguistic identity, negative reactions to multilingualism and plurilingualism, and essentialist views of the relation between language and culture. Teachers should be introduced to the realities of linguistic and cultural diversity, the complexities of individual identity and self-identification, the multiplicity of individual affiliations, and the instability of plurilingual repertoires. It is also necessary to challenge approaches to teaching and learning that fail to assign a central role to spontaneous use of the language/s being learnt, concentrating instead on excessive rote learning and unachievable formal accuracy. The teaching unit *Challenging preconceptions* raises teachers' awareness of their own attitudes to languages and cultures.

5.c.iii-iv   If teachers are to be effective advocates for and practitioners of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, their education needs to make them critically aware of their own plurilingual repertoires and pluricultural identities, and to be prepared to use them in classroom communication wherever possible. This is a prerequisite for engaging teachers and student teachers in a detailed consideration of what plurilingual and intercultural approaches to education entail in terms of classroom practice. In particular, it is important to challenge the traditional view that only one language should be used in each lesson and to support the development of competences in interactive and mediational communication that teachers need if they are to manage linguistic and cultural diversity to the benefit of all learners. The illustrative scales for mediation in the *CEFR Companion volume* provide a detailed description of these competences. It is important for teachers to recognise that they can allow their pupils to use their home languages in the classroom, even though the teachers themselves do not understand those languages.

5.c.v-vi   The same competences enable teachers to include the learner's voice in the educational process, fostering autonomous learning, language and cultural awareness and critical thinking, and supporting the development of competences that pupils and students need if they are to participate in and contribute to democratic culture. In plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, the learner's voice has two dimensions: it is at once an expression of emerging plurilingual competence and a reflection of individual identity. Individual and collaborative goal-setting and self-assessment play an important role here, using

instruments like the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP). Checklists of "I can" descriptors, organised according to language activity and proficiency level, are central to each version of the ELP. When these are directly related to the aims of the curriculum, the ELP draws learners into the process of aligning curriculum, teaching/learning and assessment.

5.c.vii   Initial and further teacher education should help teachers to develop competences in the design and use of assessment instruments to diagnose, monitor, enhance and assess their learners' plurilingual and intercultural development. Emphasis should be placed on the need to align assessment with curriculum and teaching/learning and on the interdependence of teacher assessment, peer assessment and self-assessment.

5.c.viii  As noted in 5.b.xvii above, mobility, whether physical or virtual, is an inevitable implication of plurilingual and intercultural education. It thus has a role to play at all stages of teachers' professional development and should be an integral part of initial and further teacher education. In order to be educationally effective, mobility should be carefully prepared and subject to retrospective reflection. *PluriMobil* offers 14 lesson plans for teacher training and ready-made materials that support the entire process of mobility.

5.c.ix  A democratic educational culture recognises that teachers should be fully involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of educational reform. To this end, pre- and in-service education should familiarise them with the aims and methods of action research so that they can contribute to the evidence-based development of policy and practice. The resource *Action research communities for language teachers* facilitates the development of reflective classroom practice by linking professional networks, academic expertise and good practice in the language classroom.

**Co-operation (paragraph 6)**

6.a      As paragraph 5.a above acknowledges, the full implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture is the work of many years and requires the co-operation of a wide range of partners. On the one hand, the press and other media have a role to play in raising public awareness of the ways in which plurilingualism and intercultural dialogue benefit individual development and societal integration; while employers and the private sector can contribute by supporting plurilingualism in the workplace and making space for intercultural dialogue. On the other hand, the infinitely varied activities of civil society – youth and sports clubs, choirs and musical societies, cultural associations of all kinds – frequently show plurilingualism and intercultural dialogue in action and provide opportunities for pupils and students to use their plurilingual and intercultural competences in ways that foster informal learning. Creating the conditions that make co-operation possible is a public responsibility. Within the educational domain there may be schools and other institutions and organisations that operate in languages other than the language of schooling. They can support the implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, especially when they represent minorities that are present in schools.

6.b      It is the responsibility of education systems to ensure that the role of parents and guardians in the

education of their children is appropriately recognised, while schools are responsible for engaging parents' commitment to the implementation of their policies. But it is also essential that competent authorities in the member States bring the recommendation to the attention of international, national, regional and local associations of parents and legal guardians and encourage them to support its implementation. In particular, such associations should be encouraged to inform their members of the personal and societal benefits of plurilingualism and intercultural dialogue, thus empowering them to support the efforts of their children's schools to implement plurilingual and intercultural education.

6.c    Associations of education professionals and teachers' and lecturers' unions should be invited to take note of the recommendation and to support its implementation by promoting discussion of the concepts and principles that underpin plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, and informing their members of the personal and societal benefits of plurilingualism and intercultural competence. The Professional Network Forum of the European Centre for Modern Languages has an important role to play in this regard. Academic associations have a vital role to play in encouraging universities and other competent institutions and agencies to carry out research that contributes to understanding of plurilingualism and intercultural dialogue. The findings of such research, which should include the collection and dissemination of examples of good practice at all levels of education and in non-formal and informal learning contexts, might be expected to contribute to the more effective implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture.

6.d    The Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice, which represents all States party to the European Cultural Convention and has responsibility for overseeing the Council of Europe's intergovernmental programme in the field of general and higher education, including language education, and the European Centre for Modern Languages, an Enlarged Partial Agreement currently representing 35 member States, will continue to play a key role in supporting the implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture. It is proposed to create a summary webpage that defines basic concepts and provides links to key elements in the Council of Europe's vast collection of documents and resources in the areas of plurilingual and intercultural education and education for democratic culture. The implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture will continue to be supported by the development of policy guidelines and the organisation of projects, workshops, conferences and seminars on the many different aspects of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture. The Council of Europe will also seek to strengthen its co-operation with the European Commission, not least by working to secure the annual renewal of the Cooperation Agreement between the European Commission and the ECML.

**Additional Council of Europe resources**

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (website): http://www.coe.int/lang-CEFR
Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education:

- Language in other subjects: Language in other subjects (coe.int)
- Language and literacy/language as subject: Language as subject (coe.int)
- Intercultural education: Intercultural education (coe.int)

- Language(s) of schooling: [Language(s) of schooling (coe.int)](#)

ECML Thematic area: [Languages of schooling](#)

ECML Thematic area: [Sign languages](#)

ECML Thematic area: [Plurilingual and intercultural education](#)

ECML Thematic area: [Early language learning](#)

ECML Thematic area: [Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)](#)

ECML Thematic area: [New media in language education](#)

European Language Portfolio: [http://www.coe.int/portfolio](http://www.coe.int/portfolio)

ECML Thematic area: [Curricula and evaluation](#)


**In-country support: ECML [Training and consultancy](#)**

[Language of schooling in subject learning](#)

[Supporting the language(s) of schooling](#)

[Plurilingual and intercultural approaches](#)

[Using ICT in support of language learning and teaching](#)

[Teacher competences for languages in education](#)

[Setting up learning environments where languages flourish](#)

[CLIL and beyond](#)

[Supporting multilingual classrooms](#)

[Action Research Communities](#)

[Relating language curricula, tests and examinations to the CEFR](#)