

Nikolaiplatz 4/1, A-8020 Graz

Tel: +43 316 323554-0, Fax: +43 316 323554-4

information@ecml.at, www.ecml.at

ECML 25th Anniversary Conference: Languages at the heart of learning: 25 years of inspiring innovation

On **Thursday 5 and Friday 6 December 2019** the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe will organise a high-level conference to celebrate its 25th anniversary (as well as the Council of Europe's 70th anniversary) and reflect on the important contribution made by the Centre to the field of language education. The event will also showcase the results of the ECML's current programme - [Languages at the heart of learning](#) - and launch the next programme 2020-23 - [Inspiring innovation in language education: changing contexts, evolving competences](#).

The conference will combine plenary sessions more focused on key political challenges related to language education (day 1), with break-out sessions where particular aspects of language education will be examined in more detail, including the range of tools and capacity-building activities organized by the Centre to help bridge the gap between policy and practical implementation (day 2).

Day 1, Thursday 5 December

Day 1 will take place at the prestigious [Meerscheinschlössl](#). Through keynote speeches, panel discussions and interactive presentations, the role of quality language education in fostering a culture of democracy will be addressed - why it matters and what it looks like. There will be discussion of key policy developments such as the [Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation on protecting and promoting sign languages in Europe](#) and the [Council of the European Union's Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages](#), as well as consideration of the ECML's role as the interface between policy, research, teacher education and practice.

Day 2

Option one: participants can spend all of day 2 at the ECML, actively engaged in smaller group discussions. These will be organized broadly around the ECML's [nine thematic areas](#) with the presentation of key outputs the current ECML programme, together with insights from the Centre's range of [Training and Consultancy activities](#). There will be four parallel sessions, giving participants the opportunity to cover a

number of key themes. The day will be topped and tailed with plenary sessions on dissemination, adaption and impact, drawing on successful examples from ECML member states.

Option two: participants can alternatively choose to return to the Meerscheinschlössl for the morning of Day 2 and take part in a dedicated sign languages event, and then join activities at the ECML in the afternoon. This dedicated sign languages event will consider the implications of the Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation at the levels of policy, teacher education and classroom practice as well as key Council of Europe tools for sign languages: [the CEFR Companion Volume](#) and the ECML [ProSign project](#) outputs.

At various intervals over the two days a draft **Conference Declaration** will be discussed and feedback gathered. This will be presented in plenary towards the end of Day 2 and a final version published in early 2020. The aim of this **Declaration** is to highlight the key contribution of quality language education to democratic societies, and at the same time acknowledge the challenges that need to be addressed. As such the Declaration could pave the way for a **Council of Europe Recommendation** on Quality Language Education.

The conference will close on a very personal note: the ECML's long-standing expert consultant, Frank Heyworth, who has been closely involved with the Centre since its inception, will tell us his story of how the centre has evolved, what this involvement has meant to him. He will no doubt share his pearls wisdom as to future directions for language policy and practice at the ECML and the wider Council of Europe.

Participation:

In addition to participants funded by the Council of Europe and/or nominated by National Authorities, the conference will be open to the wider public on a self-financing basis.

You will be able to register online at www.ecml.at from **Tuesday 1st October 2019**. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

A maximum of 200 places are available for the first day of the conference.

If you also wish to participate in the second day of the conference, please specify when registering whether it is for option one (all day at the ECML), or, option two (morning at the Meerscheinschlössl; afternoon at the ECML).