

Participant's report

to the National Nominating Authority and the National Contact Point

Meeting report

In the three weeks after the event, please complete this report. It contains two sections:

1. **Reporting:** this is intended as a feedback on the event, on what was learnt, on how the event will affect your work and on how it will be disseminated. In addition to the ECML National Nominating Authority and the National Contact Point in your country the ECML will use the report¹ in the "Experts involved in ECML activities" section of each ECML member state website (please see <http://contactpoints.ecml.at>).

This section should be written in one of the project's working languages.

2. **Public information:** this is intended as an information on the ECML project and its expected value for your country. The content should be of interest for a larger audience. Thus it should link up to interesting publications, websites, events etc. which were discussed on the occasion of the workshop or which are relevant in your country. The public information should be a short, promotional text of about 200 words.

This section should be written in (one of) your national language(s).

The completed file should be sent to

- the ECML National Nominating Authority and the National Contact Point in your country (contact details can be found at <http://www.ecml.at/aboutus/members.asp>)
- and in copy to ECML Secretariat (Erika.komon@ecml.at)

within the given deadline.

1. Reporting

¹ Only if you authorised the ECML to publish your contact details.

Name of the workshop participant	Silvija Andernovics
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Title of ECML project	LINCQ – Languages in Coporate Quality
ECML project website	http://www.ecml.at/l1/tabid/790/Default.aspx
Date of the event	November 21-22, 2013
Brief summary of the content of the workshop	<p>These 2 days were spent discussing the notion of non-formal and informal language education and how we might identify these aspects, evaluate and foster them. We heard from representatives of industry and the project team about their efforts to obtain answers from industry about the language policies that companies had in place (if any) and how they evaluated the language proficiency of their employees and prospective employees and what policies they might put in place in the future. Plurilingualism is seen as a key competence in corporate world of Modern Europe.</p> <p>I think that the participants, many of whom were teachers of ESP, expected to be asked to discuss and /or evaluate a template that the project team had come up with, but it became clear as the discussions and group work continued that there were many different ways of looking at the issue and that there were still more questions than asnwers by the end of the seminar.</p> <p>These areas of education have been highlighted by the Council of Europe as being strategic areas to concentrate on in a Europe where study and job mobility are seen as inalienable rights. In order to make the most of these opportunities language skills and their evaluation are seen as being the pivotal point. We do not just learn languages at school, but we are sent to training courses by our insitutions (non-formal) and often pick up language skills while at work, presenting at /attending conferences, by talking to workers from other countries etc (informal education) While official certificates are still accepted as the major and official form of evaluation, it is clear that businesses/ insitutions are going to have to set up systems which will recognise these other forms of learning. Mutual trust between the employer and employee is paramount if such a system is to work for the benefit</p>

of all stakeholders.

What did you find particularly useful?

Actually, I found the whole 2 days rather fascinating. Firstly, because it was an area / categories, which I was not used to thinking in. The group tasks were also quite difficult and it was interesting to see how diverse the ' solution' to the same problem was. As a teacher / teacher trainer I am usually so concerned with fulfilling the brief and delivering content, that many of the notions raised in the seminar were ones that I would tend to gloss over or devote very little time to. Rolf Scharer's presentation and comments in particular, I found both very rational and thought-provoking.

I also raised the issue of – native language skills, which is an area with which the project group has not been concerned with. In the Latvian experience, many business people I have come in contact with have commented on the poor native language skills that many of their employees exhibit. In English speaking countries it is evident as well, that both the spoken and written skills of native speakers are generally, in the main not what they should be. The equation is clear; poor native language skills coupled with poor to mediocre foreign language skills spells potential chaos in the office, factory or negotiations. I personally think that this is an area, which cannot be ignored, if we are talking about plurilingualism.

I was also pleased that having mentioned the need for trust, on both sides, this issue was then highlighted a number of times by the keynote speakers.

It is very important that this issue of non-formal and informal learning has been raised, so that a system can be devised which will motivate the employee and the employer to give credit where credit is due, hopefully without bureaucratizing the whole process, and for the benefit of both parties.

How will you use what you learnt/ developed in the event in your professional context?

It is hard to be specific about how I will use some of the ideas from the seminar. Certainly, I will talk about it to raise awareness. Most teachers are too intent on teaching for the exams to pay much, if any, attention to other important aspects of learning. In teacher training sessions some of the questions posed by the project group would be good discussion starters, especially for those teachers teaching ESP.

With my undergraduate students, many of whom hope to become entrepreneurs, I hope to get them thinking about the value of languages (many still think that speaking English is enough!) and the types of systems that they might set up in their enterprises in the future to foster good practice in this area. The concept of quality – and what we mean by this, is

	<p>something that is applicable to both teachers who deliver language courses and to employers who need employees with good language skills. Employees also need to be able to realistically evaluate their language competences. Some of the group tasks might be applicable to use as class activities and as a forum for discussion.</p>
<p>How will you further contribute to the project?</p>	<p>I would be very interested in further contributing to the project, but this is very dependent on the project group and how they have envisaged the next steps. The most obvious thing would be to canvass local enterprises re: language policies to add to the bank of information already collected by the project group. In some ways this is such a delicate and yet rather nebulous area that I do not see change occurring merely though the efforts of an individual. This is where the strength of being involved in a project becomes important.</p>
<p>How do you plan to disseminate the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to colleagues - to a professional association - in a professional journal/website - in a newspaper - other 	<p>Being the president of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE), information about this project and the work of ECML will be put on our website. I think that teachers in the main have forgotten about the work that the ECML does and the range of extremely useful publications that the ECML has produced. Because LATE runs a resource centre, which already houses most of the older ECML publications, this will be an excellent opportunity to both remind members of the ECML and its work and to highlight this project.</p> <p>I am also often invited to speak to teachers and to run teacher training sessions. Many of the ideas raised by the project can be discussed in these forums to raise awareness of the issues involved.</p>

1. Public information

Short text (about 200 words) for the promotion of the ECML event, the project and the envisaged publication with a focus on the benefits for target groups. This text should be provided in your national language(s) to be used for dissemination (on websites, for journals etc.).

The LINCQ – Languages in Corporate Quality – workshop – November 21-22, 2013 at the ECML centre in Graz, Austria, concentrated on discussing the notions of *non-formal language education* i.e. courses or activities which result in language learning, but which do not result in formally recognised qualifications and *informal language education* i.e. language which is picked up or learnt by interacting with colleagues, reading professional literature, presenting or attending conferences etc. The question is what systems need to be put in place in businesses and institutions to recognise this education and to give credit for it as it benefits both the employer and the employee. It is clear that with mobility in the areas of study and work being a stated priority of the European Union, a demonstrated competence in one or more languages other than your own will be essential in taking

advantage of this mobility. Companies will need employees with good language skills in order to be viable and successful concerns. We do not just learn languages in school and businesses will increasingly have to determine and evaluate exactly what language skills they require from their employees, in order to remain competitive in the business world. Formal certification e.g. IELTS, Cambridge exams are only one small part of this equation and companies will have to think about how they give credit for these non-formal and informal aspects of education, which have become increasingly important. Companies need to think about the ways in which language/s are important to their business success.

As yet, there are many questions that need to be resolved, but the debate has been started as this area has been designated a priority by the Council of Europe.

<http://www.ecml.at/l1/tabid/790/Default.aspx>