

2001, the European Year of Languages

In January 1999 the Council of Europe declared 2001 the European Year of Languages (EYL). It will be an occasion to celebrate Europe's rich linguistic heritage as a source of mutual enrichment, to encourage diversified language learning in a continent of increasing interdependence and to support lifelong language learning as a way of responding to economic, social and cultural changes in Europe.

In June 2000 the European Union officially declared 2001 the EYL, and there will be close co-operation between the Council of Europe and the EU throughout the year. Unesco will also play an active role.

The European Cultural Convention structure makes it possible for the Council of Europe to reach the public in forty-seven countries. The fifteen EU member states as well as the three EFTA countries will also participate through the EU. The Council of Europe will pay special attention to the needs of the newer member states.

To ensure co-ordination and to finalise preparations for the Year, the Council and the European Union will hold a second seminar for national co-ordinators, hosted by the UK authorities in Manchester from 19-21 October 2000.

As from autumn 2000 information on the EYL will be included on the joint CoE/EU website linked to other relevant international and national sites, some of which will be retained after the year as a platform for language issues. Complementary information can be obtained from the Council of Europe website:

<http://culture.coe.int/AEL2001EYL>

The campaign will have a joint CoE/EU opening event in Lund, Sweden from 18-20 February 2001 and a closing

event in Belgium towards the end of the year.

A European Day of Languages (to promote linguistic diversity), an Adult Language Learners' Week (to support lifelong learning) as well as European competitions (to involve young people) will be organised as joint activities. A Guide for Adult Language Learners will also be jointly produced.

The Council of Europe will organise a number of regional and European events, for example a European conference on minority languages hosted by Croatia in March 2001. This conference will further enhance the Council of Europe's work both in the field of minority rights and under the Stability Pact.

Particular attention will be paid to promoting the Council of Europe's tools (Common European Framework of Reference and the European Language Portfolio) and national education policies to promote diversified language learning.

To raise public awareness of the aims of the EYL special attention will be paid to publicity. A flyer to be translated in the languages of the member states has been produced and a more comprehensive Information pack aimed at the general public will be developed in co-operation with the EU.

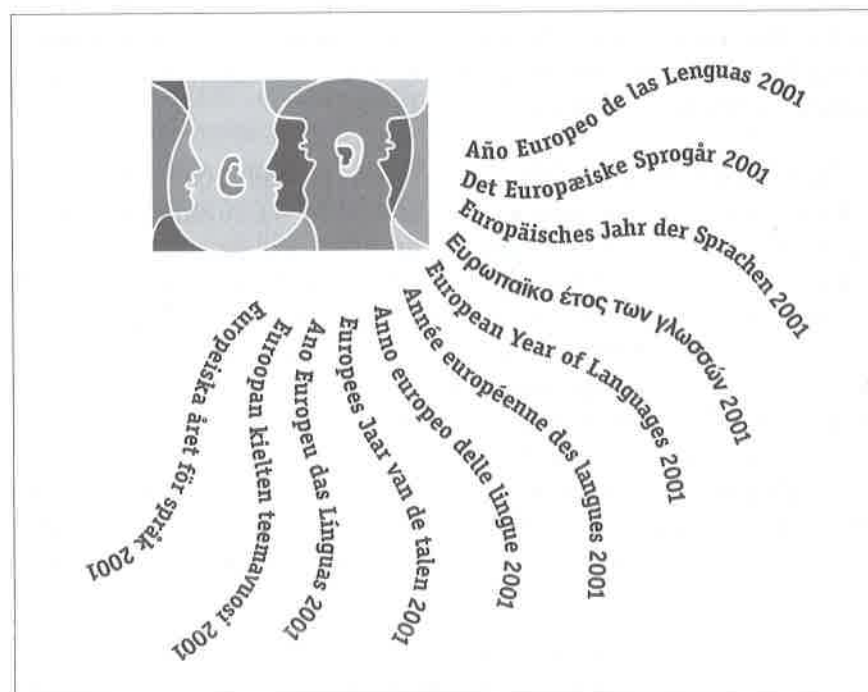
In addition to the Internet site, an Intranet site to enable communication among co-ordinating bodies will be established. Different types of promotion materials will be produced with the intention of motivating European citizens to learn more languages. ■

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Council of Europe / European Union joint logo for the European Year of Languages

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2000



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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The summer months are traditionally the time for those in the world of education to recharge their batteries, and look forward to the challenges ahead. This is also the case at the Council of Europe, although it is perhaps a reflection of the fast-moving times in which we live that this summer has seen no slowing down of activities in certain parts of Europe – and in particular in the South East.

The Council of Europe's role in supporting the regeneration of education in Kosovo has recently been underlined by the signing of a contract on higher education reform with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), funded by the World Bank. No time has been lost in implementation, with considerable work already being undertaken to provide a new legal basis for higher education in the territory, as well as to reform legal education. Further details on the scope of this project can be found in the press release on page 2.

Activities also continue apace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the crucial role of education in the process of refugee return and developing a democratic ethos in society has been recognised within the country and by the international community. The

educational reform agenda is being sustained by a mixture of incentives for the country to be fully integrated into European co-operation structures, and conditional financial support. Progress has been real and tangible over the past year, although much more remains to be done if human rights and genuine democracy are to become the driving force of society.

The Council of Europe has been at the forefront of educational change during the ongoing process of accession to the Organisation. The Parliamentary Assembly has adopted a recommendation on education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see page 3), following a greatly appreciated report by the Spanish parliamentarian Lluís Maria de Puig. This is an important instrument to sustain continued progress.

Major work also continues elsewhere in the continent, including other troubled regions. The successful regional Conference of Ministers of Education in Georgia (see page 4), which brought together Education Ministers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine and produced a common declaration of educational intent, is a positive sign whose importance should not be underestimated in the