the ICC is a not-for-profit organisation governed by German law.

The ICC is
A Network for Language Learning and Teaching:
• Sharing expertise, services and experience
• Providing direct benefits for member organisations
• Creating a platform for members' operations and services
A source of up-to-date information through:
• A permanent office
• Regular information bulletins
• A dedicated website
• International conferences and workshops
Involved in international projects covering areas such as:
• Teacher Training
• Languages for vocational and specific purposes
• Information and communication technologies in language teaching
• Certificate-based and competence-based language assessment

The chief aim of the ICC is to promote and improve the learning and teaching of languages in adult education through joint developments and the good practice of its members.

In order to fulfil this aim, the ICC primarily:
- develops and sets common standards in the assessment and certification of language and language teaching competence
- maintains a pool of instruments for the assessment and certification of language and language teaching competence common to all its members
- ensures the quality, validity and reliability of these instruments through:
  a) the specification of objectives, contents and criteria
  b) objectivity, transparency and coherence in assessment procedures
  c) recognition of ICC standards at regional, national and international levels
  d) training those responsible for the maintenance and development of the ICC's activities
- promotes and facilitates the training of teachers as a means of improving the quality of language teaching in the member organisations and in order to pool expertise in the further development of the ICC system
- promotes participation of organisations within the ICC and of the ICC in relevant national and international projects and developments

- promotes the exchange of expertise with regard to language learning and teaching at an international level
- represents Adult Education and Vocationally Oriented Language Learning and Teaching at the Council of Europe and the European Commission

The Conference

The Conference opened its doors on March 4 with a welcome speech from the Director of ECML, **Adrian Butler** (photo), who welcomed the participants, introduced the Conference theme and gave way to Hanna Komorowska and Robert O'Dowd. Their presentation's aim was to approach the question of intercultural competence. The two speakers compared and contrasted their personal and professional experience in the area of cultural studies and the audience was invited to participate in the discussion.

This notion of "**critical dialogue**" set the scene for the rest of the proceedings which dealt with intercultural incompetence, teaching and learning.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The second day kicked off with a series of workshops which dealt with topics ranging from professional mobility to new literacies in language learning.

ICC Annual General

Robert O'Dowd and **Bernard Moro** jointly explored how the new literacies, in particular electronic literacy, can be developed in the foreign language classroom. Participants presented two common uses of online technologies in foreign language education (**online web units** and **telecollaboration**) and discussed how these can be applied in order to achieve successful intercultural language learning.

Bernand Moro presented examples of the type of **collaborative work** that students can get involved in and how various groups that are involved with distance learning can organise their work. Distance learning poses a series of difficulties and barriers that need to be eliminated for the success of the project. Such difficulties can be summarised in the form of questions shown below:
1. How can the papers be collected?
2. How can we address the problem of formatting, of sorting and of marking papers?
3. How do we identify our remote students?
4. How do we set up a platform or system that will allow students and teachers to communicate and how can we streamline its operation for the benefit of everyone?

Mr Moro addressed all these issues bringing, in several occasions, real life examples from his university.

These very basic but critical aspects of Information Communication Technology (ICT) are often considered as trivial, but require close attention as they are part of reality and those who participate in such a teaching system have to confront them.

Telecollaboration refers to the use of online communication tools to connect language learners in different countries for the development of collaborative project work and intercultural exchange. These tools include e-mail, web-based message boards and videoconferencing. For over 15 years now, foreign language teachers all over the world have been bringing their students into contact with partners in distant cultures through the use of these technologies. The learning outcomes of these exchanges have been seen to be both powerful and enlightening and there is a definite potential for both language and culture learning.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

DILAPORT

Marianne Driessen and **Minna Scheinin** gave an informative presentation on DILAPORT – a digital tool designed for vo-

Meeting and Conference 2005

cational language teaching.

DILAPORT is a 2-year Leonardo funded language project and serves as a transparent, clearly formulated, explicit, readily comprehensible and available tool to users. The project's aim is to promote learner autonomy, self-assessment and make learning visible to students, teachers, tutors and employers. DILAPORT offers concrete and lifelong benefits for both learners and skilled professionals in the form of digital material bank, language biography and dossier. It also improves the subject-matter expertise and pedagogical competence of teachers and tutors and enhances collegial collaboration and co-operation of educational authorities on secondary and tertiary level on a European scale.

Over the course of this project, a digital model portfolio and a corresponding set of instructions will be developed for use in the public domain. The resulting portfolio is such that a student can send it in a digital form, for example, to an employer or install it into the institution's portal. The portfolio offers the teachers a tool for authentic assessment of the language learning process, as well as a tool to evaluate the language skills of prospective employers. Employers and authorities will receive a transparent document of the language skills of the applicant.

The digital language portfolio contains the following parts:
- **Language passport**: The assessment of the learner's own language skills according to the Council of Europe's common reference levels, which are elaborated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
- **Dossier**: Authentic samples of the student's best demonstrations of skills e.g. written texts, video clips, pictures or presentations
- **Material bank**: A collection of authentic extracts of documents needed in future employment, as well as useful linguistic phrases such as customer service phraseology ready to be taken into use when needed.

often do not have the possibility to gain certification for the tasks they are fulfilling.

The ICC has therefore developed a European wide framework for teacher development with training schemes that lead to certification (**EUROLTA**) and provide a qualification for those who wish to teach modern languages to adults.

EUROLTA

- **is recognised by all member organisations of the ICC**
- **guarantees that the holder of the qualification has received specific training in language teaching to adults**
- **sets minimum standards for quality teacher training for language teachers**

The **ICC** is responsible for maintaining these standards through

- the accreditation of tested institutions
- the training of auditors and assessors.

One major trend that is observed in the area of professional training, is the shift in emphasis from input-oriented systems of quality control, (i.e. accreditation of training courses), to output-oriented systems (i.e the assessment of individual professional competencies) regardless of whether they have been developed in specific training courses or through experience. Another trend that special attention was given to is that language teaching to adults, after years of being largely a complementary activity in many European countries, is increasingly seen in terms of a professional career. A European Language Teacher Portfolio should support the professional development of language teachers by defining areas and levels of competence and by giving them the means to provide proof of their professional achievements to employers in a transparent way.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The Conference came to an end with a round up discussion where participants and speakers had the chance to reflect on what was said during the three day conference and discuss possible future developments in the field of intercultural competence in language education.

DILAPORT - Matrix of the products and target groups

	Product 1: Language portfolio	Product 2a: Guideline for teachers Product 2b: Teacher training program
Students	Language portfolio to be used in future working life	Improved instructions for better language learning processes
Language teachers	A tool for authentic assessment of language learning process	New methods for language teaching in specific areas
Employers, authorities	A transparent document of the language skills of the worker applying for a job	Dissemination of language portfolio as a working method approved by the ministers of EU

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The last day sessions took place at the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) at Nikolaiplatz, and featured a plethora of presentations – eight in total – covering a wide range of topics.

Margrit Hagenow-Caprez gave an interesting presentation which looked at the context of the European Language Teacher Portfolio and the EUROLTA Framework.

EUROLTA (European Certificate in Language Teaching to Adults) was developed by the ICC to deliver a quality language teaching qualification for teachers.

The ICC has recognised that many teachers of languages engaged in the field of adult education
- look for opportunities to advance in their profession