

ELT NEWS



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THE GREEK MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR EFL

EAQUALS Annual Conference

European Centre for Modern Languages

Graz, Austria

The European Association for Quality Language Services (EAQUALS) held its annual Conference late last November at the premises of the European Centre for Modern Languages, at the beautiful town of Graz, Austria. The Conference invited members of EAQUALS (Examination Bodies and Language Schools across Europe with a strong commitment to quality) to gather together, discuss current issues concerning membership, marketing strategy, recent developments and projects undertaken by EAQUALS, build up and strengthen relationships, exchange opinions, concerns and expertise as well as socialise in a most friendly atmosphere.

Thirty-two full members, fourteen associate members and fifteen guests coming from countries such as the UK, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Switzerland, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece represented FL Schools such as the British Council, Goethe Institute, Bell Schools, International House, and other chains of schools well-known in their respective countries.

Harry Nikolaidis (Lord Byron School, Thessaloniki) and Panayiotis Kanellakopoulos (Silla Kanellakopoulou School, Kalamata) were the only EAQUALS full members from our country and were warmly received by their colleagues as the first ever Greek members, which met EAQUALS standards.

All these people had the chance to attend informative talks, academic and practical, as well as hear what other EAQUALS members had achieved.

David Vann, Principal, Richard Language College, UK, explained how the school had applied the Common European Framework of Languages to course design

Report and photographs by
TASSOULA SPYROPOULOU

and delivery and how, after extensive consultation and trialling, they designed and implemented the 'student linguistic profile', which gives more information on the students' achievements and competences than the traditional school report with pass/fail grades.

Zoltan Rozgonyi, Executive Director, International House, Budapest, guided audience through the 'EuroPro'

language exams they have developed in Hungary, which test general English, and are useful for students who want to enter or graduate from university or who require a validation of their everyday English skills. The exams are recognised by the Hungarian state and are promoted in neighbouring countries.

Cherry Gough, gave participants useful information on the various tasks and activities of the British Council, which operates internationally promoting the English language and culture. She partic-



The city of Graz

ularly focused on China, this giant-size Asian country, with the tremendous resources and potential.

Gabi Gauler, Goethe Institute, Munich, demonstrated 'Profile deutsch' a new reference manual and CD-ROM, useful for curriculum developers, heads of institutions, textbook authors, examinations specialists, teachers and pupils. The packet comprises learning objectives, 'can do' definitions and communication aids for proficiency levels A1, A2, and B.

Lutda Kotarska, EAQUALS Chair Inspections sub-

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ECML



The audience

EAQUALS Annual Conference

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committee, guided prospective members through the standards and criteria the association requires in the field of academic management.

Laura Muresan, Co-Chair Quest, Romania, presented a CD-ROM Guide to quality resources.

James Banner, Hilderstone College, UK, dealt with cross-cultural issues in language education.

Frank Heyworth, Secretary of EAQUALS, presented a new publication, a Guide to Project Management, useful for people who are about to design and/or take part in projects.

Three plenary sessions were delivered during the two-day conference. The first was about ECML (European Centre for Modern Languages), its aims, objectives and its medium term programme 1999-2003 and was delivered by **Jose Huber**, Acting Director of ECML. The second was delivered by **Dr David Newby**, University of Graz, and was about a project initiated by the Austrian Ministry of Education, the aim of which was to support innovation in the teaching and learning of foreign languages at Austrian universities. The third was by **Dr Peter Hargreaves**, Director, Cambridge ESOL, who spoke about a progress report on ALTE input into the Council of Europe work relating language examinations to the Common European Framework of Languages.

The convention closed with **Peter Brown**, Chair of EAQUALS, who asked and got the members' approval for a charter for e-learning, which EAQUALS will develop exclusively for its members.

All in all it was a most informative convention, excellently organised, smoothly run, which covered a lot of important issues. The next convention is going to be held in the historic and picturesque town of Prague, in April.

About EAQUALS

EAQUALS is a Pan-European association, which, for the benefits of students, clients and staff, aims to promote and safeguard quality in institutions teaching foreign languages in Europe. It was formally established in Trieste, Italy, in December 1991. The group of founder members represented language schools in Italy, Spain, Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland, and with interests in Hungary and the Czech Republic.

EAQUALS is an open association: any school or institution which is providing language training services may apply for full membership, whether it is in the private or public sector, and whatever languages are being taught. The only requirements are that the institution can prove that it meets the criteria contained in the EAQUALS Code of Practice in a full inspection, and that it pays membership and inspection fees as specified. (contact person: theyworth@eaquals.org)



Mr Jose Huber, Acting Manager of ECML



Harry Nikolaidis, Frank Heyworth and Panayiotis Kanellakopoulos relax over a glass of wine.

About the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)

The European Centre for Modern Languages is an institution of the Council of Europe located in Graz, Austria, established in 1994. It has an autonomous budget, managed by the Council of Europe, with each member state paying an annual contribution to participate in the activities and in the decision-making process and orientations determined by the Governing Board.

The backbone of the Centre stems from the medium term programme through its three year programming, which is based to a large extent on a selection of projects originating from all over Europe and which take the form of expert meetings, workshops, regional events and other types of activities.

The principal themes of the current programme are constructed around:

- The organisation of language education;
- Language awareness;
- Intercultural competence;

- The different aspects of multilingualism;
- The usage and utility of new technologies in language education;
- Quality assurance in project management.

(For more information search the following web site: <http://www.ecml.at>)

About Graz

Graz, the capital of the Styrian region, was founded 900 years ago and reached its peak of glory in medieval and renaissance times, when it was the seat of the Hapsburg monarchy. The Old Town, one of the best-preserved city centres in central Europe, has been included in the UNESCO list of world cultural heritage sites.

Graz is also an educational centre with a university, which dates back to 1585, and a student population of 40,000.

(ELT NEWS would like to express its warmest thanks to EAQUALS Board and specifically to its Secretary, Mr Frank Heyworth, for sponsoring its chief editor, Tassoula Spyropoulou, thus enabling her to attend a most successful convention.)