

**European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)
Workshop on
“Initiatives for Plurilingualism,
Cooperation between teachers and the ECML”
Graz, 29-30 September 2006**

by Cecilia Odé

ECML Graz invited FIPLV to a workshop on “Initiatives for Plurilingualism, Cooperation between teachers and the ECML” to present a paper on what FIPLV is and what FIPLV does for *plurilingualism* (a term used for individuals knowing more than one language: speaker’s competence) and *multilingualism* (used for an environment/territory in which more than one language is present).

On request of the ECML I arrived a day earlier to discuss the set-up of the workshop. With Astrid Guillaume (APLV, Université Franche-Comté, Paris, France), Helena Hanuljakova (IDV, Bratislava, Slovakia), Albert Raasch (Romanistisches Institut, Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken, Germany), Susanna Slivensky (ECML) and Margit Szesztay (Centre for English Teacher Training, ELTE, Hungary) we discussed the set-up, the theme of the workshop, the evaluation forms etc. *(on the picture Helena (left), Astrid (middle) and Susanna (right))*



Before entering the conference room a polaroid-picture was taken of all participants and put on a large map of Europe so that we could easily see which countries were present. Susanna and Margit opened the workshop; they were excellent. Working languages were French, English and German, two interpreters were there to translate from French and German into English, not the other way round as everybody had indicated before to at least understand English. To emphasize plurilingualism in a multilingual meeting room like ours, everybody (25 participants, 3 coordinators, Susanna and me) had to present him/herself in the mother tongue, a wonderful idea. We had to raise hands at certain questions Margit asked like “who represents an association of more than 1000 teachers?”. There were also countries where there is no association. They were offered help in how to create one and Margit presented a booklet on this subject: “Developing an Association for Language Teachers” by her and Ana Falcão, published by IATEFL. Participants were requested to write down their main expectation of the workshop and these

wishes were pinned on the wall. On one it said “to get to know FIPLV”. After this nice introduction we already knew quite a lot about one another. We used first names written on big badges in front of everyone. The first day was spent on presentations by ECML, FIPLV, IDV, and APLV and on explaining what to do in the group discussion.

For the Project description, Workshop Programme, Workshop Report, Photo Gallery and relevant Links I refer to the excellent website where all details can be found (for a French or German version, type F or G, respectively, after the



word ‘report’) http://www.ecml.at/mtp2/EDL_WS06/html/report.htm. On this site you can also find all powerpoint presentations, including my presentation on FIPLV. The general idea of the workshop was to come to concrete projects, a cooperation between the various associations and ECML. *(on the picture a group discussion)*

On the evening of the first day, during dinner, Adrian Butler joined us after his trip to Lithuania where he represented the ECML for the European Day of



Languages, which, as it appeared, in many countries is not celebrated. The second day Adrian Butler joined the workshop team and we spent most of the time on discussing issues in groups, but since I was not a participant and not a representative of just one association, I walked from group to group and listened. *(on the picture from left to right Susanna, Adrian,*

Helena, Albert and Astrid) I will mention just a few topics:

- too many students drop languages;
- within associations or at schools there is competition between languages instead of fighting together to maintain a diversity of languages;
- there is only one language for most students: English;
- in some countries students choose only big languages; for language teachers a first foreign language should be a gateway to next foreign languages, so tell about other languages in your English classes;

- a language teacher must be plurilingual; students who will become language teachers must learn at least one more language.

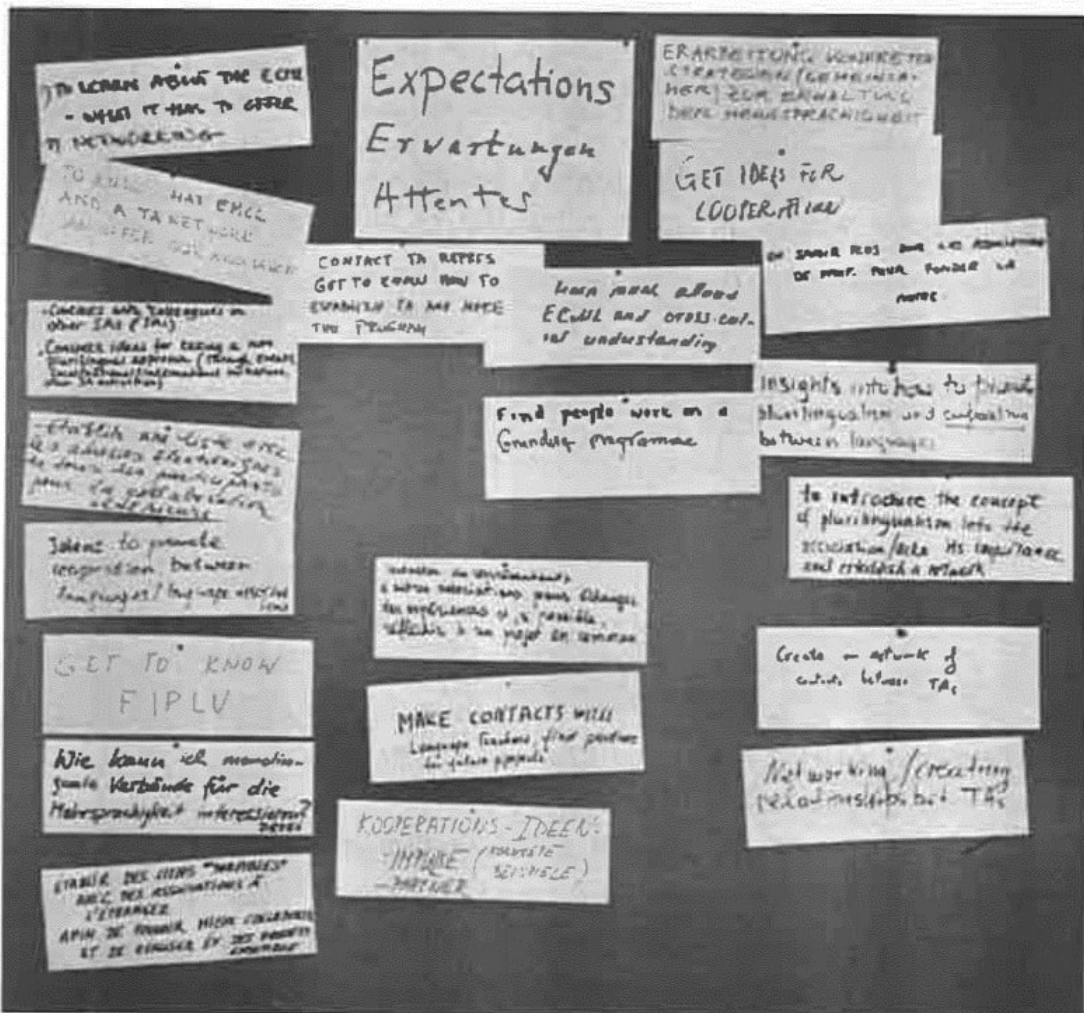
Some concrete proposals were formulated and again, since this is in progress and development, I refer to the ECML website (see below).

Finally, concrete issues for new projects at ECML 2008-2011 are: Evaluation, Continuity in language learning, Content and language education, Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. At the end of the workshop two groups were formed to work out a concrete project proposal.

As announced by Denis Cunningham in his Note from the President (this issue, p. 2), the FIPLV Head Office is now hosted by ECML:

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Cecilia Odé, FIPLV Editor of Publications
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the expectations of the ECML workshop participants