



EUROIntegrELP: Second Partners' Meeting



ELT NEWS: July-August 2006
By : Anastasia Spyropoulou
Email : anastasia@eltnews.gr

EUROIntegrELP: Second Partners' Meeting
5-7 May, Goethe Institute, Thessaloniki

The European Language Portfolio

The [European Language Portfolio](#) is a detailed and personalized description of learners' foreign language competences regardless of whether they are gained inside or outside of formal vocational or educational contexts.

The ELP comprises three sections:

- the language passport which its owner regularly updates. A self-assessment grid is provided where his/her language competences can be described according to common criteria accepted throughout Europe and which can serve as a complement and/or alternative to customary certificates.
- the language biography which describes the owner's experiences in each language and which is designed to guide the learner in planning and assessing progress.
- the dossier where examples of personal work can be kept to illustrate one's language competences.

The standardized form and content of the ELP makes it an internationally recognised document. The ELP has also become part of EUROPASS, an official European scheme which promotes the transparency of vocational qualifications across Europe.

EUROIntegrELP is a European project aiming at the promotion of language learning among adults belonging to various social and professional groups, through the use of the European Language Portfolio (the EAQUALS/ALTE version for adults) as a quality instrument. It seeks to enhance opportunities for social integration and professional development through language learning including less widely used and taught languages.

The project starts from the premise that in a multicultural and multilingual Europe it is necessary for language learners to be encouraged to value their already existent partial competences in various languages and to develop new ones, to take responsibility for their own learning and develop self-evaluation skills. Learning foreign languages increases the learners' chances of social integration in their own country and in an international environment, as well as their opportunities for personal development.

Partners in the project:

Romania: [PROSPER-ASE Language Centre](#) (co-ordinator)
Austria: [Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum](#), Graz
Belgium: [Karel de Grote-Hogeschool, Antwerpen](#)
Croatia: **Octopus - jezikne usluge**, Zagreb



Estonia: [Dialoog, Tallinn](#)

Greece: [ELT NEWS](#) & [QLS \(The Panhellenic Association of Language Schools of Accredited Quality\)](#)

Italy: [The British School of Trieste](#)

Lithuania: [Utena College](#), Utena

Poland: [PASE Poland -The Polish Association for Quality Language Services](#)

Romania: [QUEST Romania \(The Romanian Association for Quality Language Services\)](#); [EUROpean Institute for Risc, Security and Communication Management, Bucharest](#);

[EuroEd Foundation, Iasi](#);

[International Forum, Timisoara](#)

Slovakia: [TUKE, Technical University of Košice](#)

The 2nd Partners' Meeting

The second partners' meeting was held in Thessaloniki at the hospitable premises of the Goethe Institute. More than thirty people from the participating institutions as well representatives from OPTIMA (The Bulgarian Association of Foreign Language Schools), and MAQS (The FYROM's Association of Foreign Language Schools) attended the presentations and the discussions held throughout the weekend.

The 2nd Partners' Meeting Objectives

The objectives of the 2nd partners' meeting were:

- to outline project activities carried out so far
- to establish strategies and priorities for 2006-2007
- to share best practice
- to refine the project's work plan

The presentations revealed some interesting facts concerning the spread of the European Language Portfolio in the participating countries.

- All participating countries have either produced or are in the process of producing their own translations of the EAQUALS/ALTE Portfolio.
- Numerous events and activities have taken place for various audiences e.g. language teachers, materials writers, parents and students, small and medium size business managers, etc. In addition vocational and tertiary education institutions across Europe have started to use the European Language Portfolio as a tool for self evaluation and assessment.
- A number of articles have been published in local media focusing on the pedagogic value of the ELP.
- Leaflets, posters, calendars, bookmarks etc. have been produced for the promotion of the project in the participating countries.
- The partners' websites also provide information on the project and its activities.
- A guide for business people is being developed. This guide will focus on the value of the ELP in the world of businesses as a tool for evaluating staff's linguistic fluency and cultural skills.

Partners agreed that the development of an ELP guide for businesses is necessary because surveys have pointed out that businesses lose business as a consequence of a lack of language skills.

A global survey entitled 'Languages at Work 2002' conducted by the Language Advantage Organisation in the UK, which involved 585 firms from 50 countries using 90 languages, revealed that 20% of respondents estimated that they had lost business because they did not have adequate language or cultural skills. Eight companies estimated they had each lost over \$1 million of business due to language and cultural mis-communication. The survey claimed that "poor language skills and a lack of cultural understanding of overseas markets are stunting UK growth".

It is widely acknowledged that a key element of any innovation-driven economy is the sharing and amalgamation of knowledge through international networking and collaboration. Linguistic fluency greatly facilitates this process and the ELP can be a valuable tool in this new business environment since it provides objective evaluation and comparison of language proficiency levels. Terms such as 'fluent', 'intermediate' and 'basic' do not have a universal interpretation. The *Common European Framework of Reference* for measuring language proficiency is a major

advance in this regard. The view is that, while acknowledging that individual learners have different capabilities, it is valid to categorise them within a broad proficiency range.

The social aspect of the meeting



Participants had the chance to enjoy the Greek hospitality, sample traditional Greek cuisine and appreciate the varied and rich night life of Thessaloniki. They all left for their respective countries with the best impressions and promised to come back.

The third partners meeting will be held in 2007 in Graz, Austria.



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
This document reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.