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Education and Culture

Lifelong Learning: Education and Training policies

Multilingualism policy

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Follow-up of the Action Plan on language learning and linguistic diversity National Report Template

Country **BELGIUM (FLEMISH COMMUNITY)**

INTRODUCTION

The Action Plan for language learning and linguistic diversity invited Member States to take actions on various issues. This document lists these points for action. It follows the same order as the chapters of the Action Plan: *1.Lifelong language learning; 2.Better language teaching; 3.Building a language-friendly environment.* Chapter four invites you to outline the global national strategy on languages and, if Member States so wish, to provide information on other language initiatives which do not fit into the framework of the Action Plan and/or plans for multilingualism.

Some actions recommended by the more recent Communication on Multilingualism are also included in the relevant chapters. They are shadowed in grey and are optional. Although the time allowed for these actions is shorter, Member States have the possibility to report on their initial work on them.

The national report should be written by filling in this template. Each point is followed by some key questions which guide Member States in presenting their work in progress. It is not compulsory to answer each point. If some of them were not a priority at national level it should be mentioned and the point(s) skipped.

Once completed, the national report should be posted on CIRCA: http://forum.europa.eu.int/Members/irc/eac/languages/library?l=/actionsplans20042006/follow-up_national&vm=detailed&sb=Title

For more information, please post a message on the CIRCA language newsgroup (http://forum.europa.eu.int/Members/irc/eac/languages/newsgroups?n=europa.eac.languages.bulletin_board) or contact Patrizia Baralli or Luca Tomasi (see contact details at the end of the document).

1. LIFE-LONG LANGUAGE LEARNING

1.1. 'Mother tongue plus two other languages': making an early start

It is a priority for Member States to ensure that language learning in kindergarten and primary school is effective, for it is here that key attitudes towards other languages and cultures are formed, and the foundations for later language learning are laid. The European Council in Barcelona called for "further action ... to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age.

In implementing this commitment, most Member States will be called upon to make significant additional investments. In implementing their commitment to teach at least two foreign languages from a very early

Commission européenne, B-1049 Bruxelles / Europese Commissie, B-1049 Brussel - Belgium. Telephone: (32-2) 299 11 11. Office: MAD0 08/21. Telephone: direct line (32-2) 2994633. Fax: (32-2) 2996321.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture
E-mail: patrizia.baralli@ec.europa.eu

age, Member States should consider whether adjustments are necessary to primary school curricula, and whether provision for the training and deployment of additional specialist teaching staff and other teaching and learning resources in primary and pre-primary schools is adequate.

Member States are invited to review their current arrangements for early language learning in the light of best practice from across Europe; and

implement the Conclusions of the Luxembourg Presidency concerning Content and Language Integrated Learning, including raising awareness of the benefits of this approach, exchanging information and scientific evidence on good CLIL practice and specific CLIL training for teachers.

What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

a)

1. A decree issued in May 2004 made French compulsory from the 5th year of primary education onwards (age 10) in schools in Flanders. In the Flemish schools in the Brussels region French has always been compulsory from the third year (age 8) onwards. Now, French is a compulsory subject in all primary schools.

At the same time the decree introduced the possibility of having language awareness lessons and also lessons of initiation into the French language; both approaches can start in nursery school.

2. "Formaprim", an in-service teacher training programme, was launched in 2004 by the Flemish Department for Education, the French Embassy in Belgium and other stakeholders, to improve the teaching of French as a foreign language in primary education. "Formaprim" combines summer courses of French in France with preparatory meetings, an evaluation meeting for the participants and train the trainer courses.

Demand for participation is such that there is serious competition for available places.

3. In December 2004, the Flemish Socrates Agency organised a Comenius "contact seminar" on "Early Language Learning" for participants from primary education and initial and in-service teacher training institutions. The contact seminar, with 52 participants from 16 different countries, resulted in 8 proposals for Comenius 1 and 1 for Comenius 2.

b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

a)1.

The implementation of the new approaches (language awareness and initiation into French - a non formal teaching approach -) takes time. There is also lack of teaching materials facilitating these approaches.

c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

a)1.

The minister has launched a draft comprehensive language policy programme, which he will submit to all educational stakeholders before finalising it in February 2007.

The policy programme promotes language awareness and initiation into French and lists clear objectives for both approaches. The minister strongly advises

-all initial teacher training institutions to pay attention to both approaches in their curricula;

-in service training providers and pedagogic counsellors to support the teachers in these approaches;

-initial and in service training institutions to seriously improve the primary school teachers' command of French;

-in service training providers, material developers and pedagogic counsellors to develop teaching materials in keeping with the newly stated objectives.

Most in training institutions for primary school teachers are adapting their curricula to integrate the competences to teach French.

1.2. Language learning in secondary education and training

In secondary education or training young people complete the acquisition of the essential core of skills that will serve them throughout a lifetime of language learning. Member States agree that pupils should master at least two foreign languages, with the emphasis on effective communicative ability: active skills rather than passive knowledge. 'Native speaker' fluency is not the objective, but appropriate levels of skill in reading, listening, writing and speaking in two foreign languages are required, together with intercultural competencies and the ability to learn languages whether with a teacher or alone.

Member States should provide adequate information to parents about the choice of their child's first foreign language, and the flexibility of school curricula to permit the teaching of a wider range of languages.

a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

Statistics about the average amount of foreign languages per pupil in Flemish secondary education:

1st cycle of secondary education: 1.4 foreign languages;

2nd +3rd cycle of general secondary education: 2.5 foreign languages;

2nd +3rd cycle of artistic, technical and vocational secondary education: 1.7 foreign languages.

Almost half of the pupils in the 1st cycle of secondary education and in the 2nd and 3rd cycle of general secondary education learn *two* foreign languages. 69% of the pupils in artistic, technical and vocational secondary education learn *two or more* foreign languages.

Actions

New Modern Languages Study Plans, designed by the various providers of education, on the basis of the curriculum laid down by the Flemish

Parliament have been implemented. Its focus on active skills rather than passive knowledge, has been worked out in the study plans. 'Native speaker' fluency is not the objective but appropriate levels of skill in reading, listening, writing and speaking are required.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
- The Flemish educational authorities agree with the European recommendation (mother tongue + 2) but it is difficult to implement it due to curriculum overload.
 - Parents and pupils tend to choose the more prestigious secondary education options with mathematics and sciences. Motivation to learn French and German is decreasing in favour of English due to media influence.
 - Well-balanced foreign language teaching implies a dual approach towards communicative skills and linguistic competences. Quite often teachers do lack such expertise. Moreover many observers blame the communicative approach for decline in the command of linguistic competences.
 - Curricula guarantee continuity in language learning in the transition from primary to secondary education; yet effective teacher co-operation to facilitate smooth transitions is still lacking.
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

The minister has launched a draft comprehensive language policy programme, which he will submit to all educational stakeholders before finalising it in February 2007. The programme suggests

- adding foreign languages to the core curriculum of vocational education where there have been none so far;
- adding a foreign language to the core curriculum in technical and artistic secondary education where there is only so far;
- initiatives to improve teachers' skills with respect to the communicative approach;
- solutions to guarantee more continuity;
- the introduction of CLIL in secondary education.

1.3. Language learning in Higher Education

“Higher Education institutions play a key role in promoting societal and individual multilingualism. Proposals that each university implement a coherent language policy clarifying its role in promoting language learning and linguistic diversity, both amongst its learning community and in the wider locality, are to be welcomed. All students should study abroad, preferably in a foreign language, for at least one term, and should gain an accepted language qualification as part of their degree course”

Member States are invited to review training programmes at universities to ensure that they equip students in the language professions with the right skills for rapidly changing working conditions.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

1. Higher education curricula have always offered the option of taking language courses. Often they are even part of the core curriculum especially in human sciences. One particular higher education institution (University of Antwerp) offers bachelor students majoring in natural sciences, the opportunity of combining their studies with a language minor; thus preparing them for a combined natural sciences/language degree.

2. Linguistic diversity and small languages: recent legislation implementing the Bologna process has addressed the issue of the language of instruction in Flemish higher education. The new regulation wants to meet two objectives: attracting international students through the provision of (mostly postgraduate) programmes taught in widely spoken languages and the recruitment of international staff who teach in another language. At the same it preserves the status of Dutch as a language for academic and scientific work.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

1.4. Adult language learning

Every adult should be encouraged to carry on learning foreign languages, and facilities should be made readily available to make this possible. Workers should have the opportunity to improve the language skills relevant to their working life. Cultural activities involving foreign music, literature or films, holidays abroad, town-twinning activities, voluntary service abroad can be promoted as opportunities for learning about other cultures and languages”

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

1. Since the school year 2005-2006 centres for adult education have been provided with free placement tests for French and English enabling teachers to better detect the level of the student 's previous language knowledge. They facilitate a more accurate placement in the appropriate course levels of the Flemish adult education system.

2. In 2005 we left the concept of big annual events like 'de Grote Leerweek' (the Big Learning Week) and replaced it by a permanent campaign ('L-campagne') raising awareness for LLL by i.a. the creation of an online database called "Word wat je wil" www.wordwatjewil.be. It offers a complete survey of all kinds of courses, training and learning activities both formal and non-formal.

3. Vouchers subsidising life long learning have been made available (by a Ministerial Order of 2001) with a view to giving a boost to adult learning and as such to LLLL.

4. Language modules have been developed and implemented focussing on skills relevant to working life. (eg legal language, business language)

b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

a)3.

The vouchers were primarily used by adult learners who would have enrolled in adult education even without such vouchers (dead weight losses).

c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

a)3.

A promotion campaign for LLLL will be started targeting specific groups (low-skilled persons and immigrants) in order to enhance their participation in adult learning programmes.

1.5. Language learners with special needs

Language learning is for everybody. Only a very small minority of people has physical, mental or other characteristics that make language learning impossible. Provision for learners with special needs of one kind or another is increasingly being made within mainstream schools and training institutions; however, such learners are still excluded from language lessons in some cases. Good practice in teaching languages to learners with special needs can be further developed and new methods and approaches need to be developed for the teaching of foreign languages to such learners

a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

1.6. Range of languages

Promoting linguistic diversity means actively encouraging the teaching and learning of the widest possible range of languages in our schools, universities, adult education centres and enterprises. Taken as a whole, the range on offer should include the smaller European languages as well as all the larger ones, regional, minority and migrant languages as well as those with 'national' status, and the languages of our major trading partners throughout the world. The imminent enlargement of the European Union will bring with it a wealth of languages from several language families; it requires a special effort to ensure that the languages of the new Member States become more widely learned in other countries. Member States have considerable scope to take a lead in promoting the teaching and learning of a wider range of languages than at present.

a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

1. Higher education

After the enlargement of the EU, the languages of the new EU countries can be taken as optional courses by higher education students. Some institutions for translation and interpretation studies have opened new programmes in those languages.

2. Adult education

Since the school year 2005-2006 Sign Language has been added to the language offer of the Flemish Adult Education System. Centres for adult education can organise such courses.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

a)2.

Although the Flemish Adult Education System offers already a wide range of languages (Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Dutch second language, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish) a working group led by the Vlor, the Flemish Council of Education, an advisory body of all education stakeholders, is studying the feasibility of organising and subsidising courses of Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, Rumanian and Serb.

2. BETTER LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1. The language-friendly school

It is important that schools and training institutions adopt a holistic approach to the teaching of language, which makes appropriate connections between the teaching of 'mother tongue', 'foreign' languages, the language of instruction, and the languages of migrant communities; such policies will help children to develop the full range of their communicative abilities. In this context, multilingual comprehension approaches can be of particular value because they encourage learners to become aware of similarities between languages, which is the basis for developing receptive multilingualism.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

In the school year 2004-2005 the option of having language awareness lessons and also lessons of initiation into the French language, both from nursery school onwards, was introduced.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

More time is needed for effectively implementing the holistic approach characterising language awareness (éveil aux langues) lessons and language initiation lessons.

- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

The minister has launched a draft comprehensive language policy programme, which he will submit to all educational stakeholders before finalising it in February 2007. The programme promotes language awareness and initiation into French and lists clear objectives for both approaches. Such approaches can only succeed from a holistic point of view. In his draft programme the minister strongly advises

-all initial teacher training institutions to pay attention to both approaches in their curricula;

-all in service training providers and pedagogic counsellors to support the teachers in these approaches;

-initial and in service training institutions to seriously improve the primary school teachers' command of French;

-in service training providers, material developers and pedagogic counsellors to develop teaching materials in keeping with the newly stated objectives;

-cooperation among all language teachers within a school with a view to enhancing the pupils' understanding of the connections of different languages and their systems.

2.2. Language teacher training

Language teachers have a crucial role to play in building a multilingual Europe. They, more than teachers of other subjects, are called upon to exemplify the European values of openness to others, tolerance of differences, and willingness to communicate. It is important that they have all had adequate experience of using the target language and understanding its associated culture. All teachers of a foreign language should have spent an extended period in a country where that language is spoken and have regular opportunities to update their training.

The skills and personal resources required to teach languages well are considerable. Initial training should equip language teachers with a basic 'toolkit' of practical skills and techniques, through training in the classroom; language teachers need the advice of trained mentors as well as regular opportunities to keep their language and teaching skills up to date, inter alia via e- learning and distance learning.

Language teachers may often feel isolated, unaware of developments elsewhere with the potential to improve their work; they may not have access to adequate professional support networks; it is therefore important to facilitate contacts and effective networks between them at a regional, national and European level.

In this field, Member States have a crucial role to play in ensuring that all teachers of a foreign language have:

- appropriate initial training including practical training in the pedagogy of foreign languages, and experience of living in a country whose language they teach, and*
- regular paid access to in-service training.*

Member States will recall that the Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 invited them to encourage future language teachers to take advantage of relevant European programmes to carry out part of their studies in a country or region of a country where the language which they will teach later is the official language.

Member States are invited to review their current arrangements for foreign language teacher training in the light of the findings of the study 'European Profile for Language Teacher Education';¹

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

1. January 1st 2006 *mentorship* was introduced as a pilot project in some Flemish schools. The intention is to gradually expand such support for graduates.

2. Several initiatives for the *in-service training* of foreign language teachers have been launched or continued since 2004.

¹ *European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference*
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/doc/profile_en.pdf

→a) For French. In addition to the above-mentioned "Formaprim"-programme, the Flemish Dpt. for Education, the French Embassy in Belgium and other stakeholders launched the "Formacom"-project (2004-2006). "Formacom" combines an intensive training programme in France during the Easter holidays for 20 teachers of French. Preparatory, follow-up meetings and "dissemination courses" are organised with the support of the in service training partners.

→b) Existing initiatives for in service training of teachers of German and English continue.

→c) The Flemish Socrates Agency strongly intensified its promotion for the Comenius "language assistantships"-action and, as a result, the number of language assistants more than doubled between 2004 (39) and 2006 (95). There was also a sharp increase in the number of host institutions (primary & secondary schools and institutions for adult education): from 23 in 2004 to 42 in 2006.

The Grundtvig-3 action is very popular in Flanders as well, especially among language teachers in adult education (50 % of the applications received in 2004-06).

Participation in the Erasmus programme by Flemish students enrolled in language teacher training programmes or majoring in language studies that traditionally prepare for teaching profession, is relatively high.

→d) The University of Antwerp organises in service training courses of German, English, French, Dutch as a second language and Spanish. Traditionally these courses are very successful.

b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

a)2

The students in academic teacher training have periods of work experience in schools. These periods can coincide/overlap with participation in Erasmus programmes.

c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

(The following is not really to overcome the obstacle mentioned)

The minister has launched a draft comprehensive language policy programme. In it he strongly advises initial and in service teacher training institutions to use the Language Teacher Profile, a Framework of the European Commission.

2.3. Supply of language teachers

Some Member States face shortages of adequately-qualified language teachers; these may be general shortages or may relate to certain languages or certain types of education or training; these shortages need to be addressed and sustainable solutions found. More can be done to exchange teachers between Member States; such teachers may work as teachers of their mother tongue, teachers of another language or as teachers of another subject through their mother tongue. In linguistic border areas there is particular scope for initiatives targeting neighbouring languages in this field.

Member States have been recommended² to remove legal and administrative obstacles to the mobility of teachers and their progress needs to be monitored

In this field, Member States have a particular responsibility to remove any remaining administrative or legal barriers to the employment of teachers of a foreign language from other Member States.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

Shortages of teachers exist in adult education and in secondary education, particularly for teachers of French with respect to short temporary replacements. Hiring foreign teachers can address the problem but the legal requirement of the command of Dutch is an obstacle.

Actions

1. If schools cannot hire teachers matching the legal linguistic requirements they can depart from them. Schools can then hire foreign teachers who lack certification of command of Dutch. Yet, this is only a temporary solution. Such departure from the linguistic rules can only be granted 3 times within a school year.

2. Yet, since September 1st 2006, centres for Adult Education are allowed to recruit native speakers. This addresses the problem of shortage of language teachers in the centres for adult education only.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

Knowledge of Dutch is legally required in compulsory education and action 1 is only a temporary solution.

- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

2.4. Training teachers of other subjects

Most pupils and trainees could study at least some of their curriculum through the medium of a foreign language. Many more members of the teaching profession should in future be able to teach their subject(s) through at least one foreign language; to this end, trainee teachers should study language(s) alongside their area of specialisation and undertake a part of their teaching studies abroad.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

The Flemish SOCRATES/Comenius-agency stimulated the participation of two Flemish initial teacher training institutions in COMENIUS-2.1-projects, namely: "Include-Me" and "MOST". In the period 2004-06, 32 Flemish trainees could go and teach in institutions abroad thanks to the financial support via COMENIUS-2.2.a. They taught subjects such as physical education, history, physics, geography... in French and/or English. In this way not only the students but also their professors gained experience with CLIL.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

There are still legal obstacles to the implementation of CLIL.

² by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Mobility ... for Students, Persons Undergoing Training, Volunteers, Teachers and Trainers (2001/613/EC)

- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

In the draft comprehensive policy programme the minister considers the implementation of CLIL projects. Such CLIL projects will have an impact on teacher training.

2.5. Testing language skills

The Common Reference Scales of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Language³ provide a good basis for schemes to describe individuals' language skills in an objective, practical, transparent and portable manner. Effective mechanisms are needed to regulate the use of these scales by examining bodies. Teachers and others involved in testing language skills need adequate training in the practical application of the Framework. European networks of relevant professionals could do much to help share good practice in this field.

The European Language Portfolio⁴ can help people to value, and make the most of, all their language skills, howsoever acquired, and to carry on learning languages by themselves

In this respect, Member States were invited by the Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 to set up systems of validation of competence in language knowledge based on the Common European Framework of reference for languages developed by the Council of Europe, and to stimulate European cooperation in order to promote transparency of qualifications and quality assurance of language learning.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

1. The Language Portfolio

-The pilot version of the Flemish Language Portfolio for Adults (2001) has been re-worked in keeping with the Principles and Guidelines of the Council of Europe;

-The start of the development of a European Language Portfolio for the 3rd cycle of primary education and the 1st cycle of secondary education (10 to 14-year olds).

2. National programmes of assessment of languages are in the pipeline. Tests will be administered in a sample of schools and the schools will get feedback about their results. Similar tests will be made available to all other schools that can administer them at their will.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

a)1.

Teachers are not familiar with the Common European Framework and the Portfolio concept.

The LPF concept is integrated neither in the core curriculum nor in the study plans.

³ http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/Common_Framework_of_Reference/default.asp

⁴ [http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=\\$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/welcome.html](http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/welcome.html)

- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

a)1.

The results of the linking of the final objectives of the core curriculum to the levels of the CEFR will be disseminated.

The use of the LPF will be promoted.

3. BUILDING A LANGUAGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

3.1. An inclusive approach to linguistic diversity

National and regional authorities are encouraged to give special attention to measures to assist those language communities whose number of native speakers is in decline from generation to generation, in line with the principles of the European Charter on Regional and Minority languages.

Member States are encouraged to give special attention to measures to assist language communities whose number of native speakers is in decline from generation to generation, in line with the principles of the European Charter on Regional and Minority languages.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?
- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

3.2. Building language-friendly communities

Every community in Europe can become more language-friendly by making better use of opportunities to hear and see other languages and cultures, thereby helping to improve language awareness and learning. It is in the interest of the Union to capitalise on the skills and experiences of its many bi- and tri-lingual citizens, and temporary residents such as Erasmus students; monolingual citizens have much to learn from them; public authorities can make better use of their skills in schools, adult education centres, cultural establishments and workplaces.

Tourism projects, cross-border projects and town twinning schemes can form the nuclei of local language learning schemes, enabling citizens to learn the language(s) of their neighbours or twin town(s), and offering an incentive to do so.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?
- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

3.3. Improving supply and take-up of language learning

It is essential to improve the take-up of language learning opportunities by continuous activities to raise awareness of the benefits of language learning, and by bringing language resources closer to the people who need them. The Council of Europe's initiative the European Day of Languages⁵ can be valuable in motivating people to learn foreign languages.

⁵ 26 September each year; see http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co_operation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/European_Day_of_Languages/default.asp

European Union initiatives such as the European Languages Label⁶ also have a key role in this by highlighting local, regional, or national projects that have found creative ways to improve the quality of language teaching.

The provision of language learning facilities and courses is the responsibility of local, regional and national authorities. Both within and outside formal systems there is still considerable unmet demand not only for language lessons but also for information and advice on language learning.

Appropriate structures are required to motivate people of all ages to learn languages, to offer guidance about how to start, and to provide easy access to a variety of different language learning activities. This is likely to require some investment in new provision, though there is also much to gain by making better use of existing language learning resources and staff in schools and universities, libraries, local learning networks and adult education centres.

a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

1. Representatives of the Association of Flemish Teachers of English (Vlaamse Vereniging van Leraren Engels), the Belgian Association of Teachers of French (Belgische Vereniging van leraren Frans), the Belgian Association of Teachers and Learners of German (Belgischer Germanisten- und Deutschlehrerverband), the Goethe-Institut Brussels, the British Council, the Service Culturel de l'Ambassade de France en Belgique, the Austrian Centre (Oostenrijk-Centrum) in Antwerp and the Youth Service for the Promotion of Language Proficiency (vzw Roeland, Jeugddienst ter bevordering van de taalvaardigheid) co operate to organise a European Day of Languages in Flanders every year. The Flemish Minister of Education and Training has committed himself to supporting this initiative. Through joint projects and actions the partners aim at raising awareness of the importance of language learning and at promoting linguistic diversity.

2. Adult education

→ A wider range of E-learning language courses will soon be on offer.

→ Although the Flemish Adult Education System offers already a wide range of languages (Dutch second language, English, French, German, Danish, Italian Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, Polish, Russian, Turkish, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Hebrew) a working group lead by the Vlor, the Flemish Council of Education, an advisory body of all stakeholders, is studying the feasibility of organising and subsidising courses of Hungarian, Rumanian, Serb, Croatian, Czech.

→ Basic Education (for people with little or no educational attainment) provides initiation courses of French and English.

→ The Public Employment Service (VDAB) provides a wide range of vocationally oriented language courses.

3. A Label campaign focussing on adult language learning was organised in 2004. Eighteen projects applied and 3 projects were granted the label.

b) Obstacles.

⁶ <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/language/label/index.cfm>

- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

4. OVERALL NATIONAL LANGUAGE STRATEGY

Member States are invited to describe how the Action Plan fitted into their national language policies

- a) How has the follow-up of the Action Plan been coordinated at national level?

Several recommendations from the Action Plan have been integrated in the draft comprehensive language policy programme.

- b) Has it been included in national policy initiatives?

- c) Was there a coordination group / committee

The comprehensive language policy programme was drafted by various experts.

Member States may provide information on other relevant national initiatives for languages which do not fit into the framework of the Action Plan

Were there any language initiatives and priorities which were either planned or carried out and which did not fit into the framework of the Action Plan

During the school year 2005-2006 a first exercise linking the final objectives of the core curriculum foreign languages to the levels of the CEFR took place. The results of this exercise are included in the draft language policy programme.

Member States are invited to establish national plans to give structure, coherence and direction to actions to promote multilingualism, including increasing the use and presence of a variety of languages in daily life⁷

- a) What initial steps have been taken on this issue?
- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

⁷ These plans should be based upon Integrated Guideline N° 23 and form part of the national plans that Member States are producing in the context of the Lisbon Action Plan for growth and jobs. (http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/pdf/integrated_guidelines_en.pdf)