



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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 .....**Sweden**.....

### 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](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](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).

### Introduction.

Sweden applies management by objectives and results in many areas, including education and training. The Government provides the framework and sets the objectives to be achieved, whilst concrete implementation is delegated to local bodies. Because decision-making is decentralised, these bodies exercise considerable authority in their areas.

The municipalities bear the main responsibility for providing education in pre-school, compulsory (primary and lower secondary) school, upper secondary school and adult secondary education. Decisions on organisation, staffing and implementation are taken at

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the local level. Universities and university colleges are independent government authorities. They are independently responsible for implementing national objectives and decide for example on programme syllabi, etc.

There is also a long tradition of adult education in Sweden. The two most important forms are adult secondary education and liberal adult education. Like all other public education, adult secondary education is provided free of charge to the individual. Liberal adult education includes folk high schools and study associations. They receive grants but set their own goals and are themselves responsible for their activities. About 10 per cent of the Swedish population take part in study circles every year.

## 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 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.*

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

#### *a 1) Multicultural pre-school*

In a bill to Parliament from September 2004, the Government makes it clear that strengthening children's language and identity development is an important task for pre-school. The Government also believes that the curriculum must emphasise the multicultural role of pre-school. Bilingual, mother tongue and cultural support staff can give important extra support to these children. Increased support will be provided for producing educational material in languages other than Swedish.

#### *a 2) Pilot schemes with English as instruction language in compulsory school*

In 2003 the Government issued an ordinance allowing municipalities to start pilot schemes where English is used as the language of instruction in compulsory (primary and lower secondary) school. Half of the total teaching time can be used for this purpose.

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

b 1) The changes in the curriculum for pre-school have been carried out. How much support the pre-school can offer depends very much on the economy of the municipality and the supply of staff with adequate language skills.

b 2). Very few municipalities have applied to participate in the pilot schemes.

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

The National Agency for School Improvement has the task of supporting pre-schools by providing good examples of how to carry out reforms. The National Agency for Education carries out inspections in schools and municipalities.

NOTE: Please note that the regulations allow local decisions on CLIL up to a 50 per cent level in compulsory school. CLIL is also allowed in upper secondary education. Schools are only required to apply for permission if they want to teach a whole upper secondary programme in another language. CLIL is quite common in ISCED III education, to varying extents. Schools do not have to report to the authorities if they teach CLIL subjects.

CLIL courses are also offered at Stockholm Institute of Education and elsewhere as a specialisation in the undergraduate Teacher Education Programme.

Consequently we do not feel any need to promote CLIL especially. In both areas (CLIL and Early Language Learning) schools are free to decide for themselves. As decentralisation is a very important principle in the Swedish system the obstacle might be local priorities.

All pupils in primary and lower secondary school can study two foreign languages. English is compulsory and FL II is optional but must be offered to all pupils. About 80 per cent opt for FL II. The distribution of language lessons over the nine years is a local decision. A majority of schools start teaching English from the first school year, but there are also schools that start in year two, three or four. Most schools offer FL II from year 6.

## **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?

The first FL in Sweden is always English, which is compulsory for all students, both in primary and lower secondary school and in upper secondary education, in both general education and vocational training. This means that about 90 per cent of a cohort study English up to at least B1 level. A wide range of languages can be offered as second FL, as the syllabi are general and could apply to any language. The focus is on the skills and abilities described in the recommendation above.

In primary and lower secondary school all students study English as the first FL. Students also take an extended course in a second FL (level 2, see below) and it is also possible to take a shorter and easier course in a third FL (beginner's level, level 1).

Students who drop out of language education can take more Swedish and/or English instead. When students drop out of language education they are entitled to a written report on what they have achieved. This helps them to enter a language group at the correct level when they start upper secondary school.

The course-based system of upper secondary education that was introduced in the early 1990s, with the greater freedom it allows, has led many secondary school students to avoid advanced courses in languages, so as to obtain a better grade average for admission to higher education. In order to encourage upper secondary school students to take advanced courses in languages other than English, the Government has decided that advanced courses in French, German and Spanish should be given extra credit when rating qualifications for admission to higher education. This sends a strong signal to students, parents and schools that language skills are useful and are valued in society. Language courses other than English should be offered all students, including those studying vocational programmes in upper secondary schools, and students in primary and lower secondary schools should be encouraged to opt for and continue with a second FL.

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

There is no intention to introduce a choice of first FL. There are no obstacles concerning the second FL other than local priorities and that qualified teachers may be hard to find in less frequent languages.

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

NOTE: The syllabi for modern languages and English were revised in 2000 and in 2006. A system has been created with a clear progression and 7 defined levels. The levels can be applied to the learning and teaching of languages irrespective of age and stage of school. Schools must offer French, German and Spanish as a second FL but are free to add any language of interest. Statistics show that languages such as Russian, Italian, Arabic, Finnish, Danish, Japanese and Chinese are also taught but are not very frequent.

### 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?

In order to bring about continuous and systematic work on internationalisation, the Government Bill *New world – new university* (June 2005) presents an overall strategy for the internationalisation of higher education. The following broad objectives are expounded in detail in the strategy:

1. Sweden must be an attractive country for foreign students to study in.
2. Higher education graduates must be attractive in the labour market in Sweden and internationally.

3. Universities and other higher education institutions must conduct active internationalisation efforts so as to enhance the quality of their education and promote understanding of other countries and of international conditions and relations.
4. Obstacles to internationalisation must be eliminated, in Sweden and internationally.
5. Follow-up of international activities in the higher education system must be developed and improved.

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

The number of outgoing Erasmus students is increasing very slowly.

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

The International Programme Office for Education and Training has been given special objectives in its appropriation directions since 2005. For instance, the number of outgoing students in the Erasmus programme is to increase to at least 3 000.

#### **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?

Sweden’s international environment has changed radically in recent years, both through a changing context for foreign policy and through the development of information technology. These changes have had a great impact on the conditions for international cultural exchange. Cultural activities can no longer be confined within national borders. It is no longer possible to draw a clear and simple boundary between national and international cultural policy or cultural activities.

In the Government Communication *The internationalisation of cultural life* (Govt Comm. 2005/06:188) the Government sets out a strategy for greater international cultural exchange. The National Council for Cultural Affairs will receive an additional budget for support for international cultural activities.

#### *Liberal Adult Education in Sweden*

For more than a hundred years people in Sweden have come together to study on their own terms, listen to lectures, take part in cultural projects, etc. People meet to learn more together, to strengthen their opportunities to influence their own situation in life and oftentimes to influence and change social conditions. Around 75 per cent of Swedes 18 to 75 years of age have taken part in a study circle at one time or another; around 40 per cent have taken part in at least one study circle during the last three years. Foreign languages as well as cultural activities are well represented.

In Sweden there are ten different study associations arranging around 350 000 study circles every year with about three million participants altogether. They also arrange more than 200 000 cultural events with about 15 million participants or visitors.

Liberal adult education is largely financed by grants from central government, regional governments and local councils. The parliament has laid down the aims and conditions for granting government support to liberal adult education.

Liberal adult education is supposed to give priority to activities that aim at bridging educational gaps and that are geared towards people who are educationally, socially and culturally disadvantaged. Particularly important target groups are people of foreign descent, physically or mentally challenged participants and the unemployed.

In 2006 the former government presented a bill (2005/06:192) aimed at supporting life-long learning for all citizens.

**The Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning (CFL)** is a national authority working to make lifelong learning possible for everyone by enhancing and stimulating the development of flexible learning in municipal adult education, folk high schools, study associations and in the workplace.

Irrespective of one's age, background, place of residence, family life and work it must be possible to study and improve one's education. Adult education must be able to meet individual requirements, needs and desires.

CFL's task is to develop and expand the accessibility of lifelong learning by supporting the development of methods and teaching resources for flexible learning. CFL offers distance learning for adults at upper secondary level with opportunities for individual choice of start date, structure, pace and method. Courses of all kinds, including language courses, are web-based and complement the adult education offered by local authorities.

Over the last few years learning centres have grown up all over the country, promoting learning for a large number of people. In 2003 the Government tasked CFL with contributing to the development of learning centres all over Sweden.

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

One obstacle is the difficulty of getting middle-aged men involved in adult learning processes.

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

Many projects have been launched to try to reach new groups and try to motivate them to take part in adult education.

### **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?

A government inquiry presented a report on the position of sign language in spring 2006. Under its remit, the inquiry identified the conditions for providing equal quality education in sign language for deaf and hearing-impaired children and young people. The report is currently under consultation.

Learners who for some reason or other need special support are integrated into the education system as far as possible. According to the curriculum for primary and lower

secondary school, the pre-school class and after school centre (Lpo 94) activities should be adapted to each student's circumstances and needs. We have also a few special schools for pupils with learning disabilities and/or hearing impairment.

A student with special needs should be offered studies in languages other than English if he or she wishes it and if his or her circumstances allow it. The syllabi for English have been adapted for the special schools for students with impaired hearing and also for students with learning disabilities.

There is also a regulation stating that teachers should take into consideration when giving grades if there are goals that could not be achieved due to a disability or special circumstances. This means that teaching could and should be adapted to the difficulties caused by severe dyslexia, etc.

- 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?

The principle of language diversification and language diversity has been Swedish national policy for more than a decade.

a 1) Cf. the reply to 1.2. Apart from English, which is compulsory, the most common languages on offer in the Swedish school system are French, German and Spanish. However, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Danish and Finnish are also taught in some schools. More than 100 minority languages are taught to first language speakers, but could also be taught as FL as the syllabi for modern languages can be applied to any language.

a 2) The CFL mentioned in 1.4 provides opportunities to learn languages as a complement to the adult education offered by local authorities. Thus Russian for example can be provided as distance learning.

a 3) Subject to legislation and appropriation directions, universities and other higher education institutions are free to decide for themselves which educational programmes to offer and what form they will take. One illustration of this is that more than 50 foreign languages are currently taught at Swedish higher education institutions. An increasing number of language courses are also being offered as distance courses, giving more students the opportunity to study foreign languages.

One notable trend is the increasing number of higher education institutions providing courses in Chinese and Japanese, for example.

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

b 1) Demand and the supply of qualified teachers are important factors.

b 2) When few students choose to study certain languages, this causes financial problems for the institution. Moreover, it is difficult to maintain skills and standards in small-scale settings.

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

## 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?

a 1) All pedagogical questions are the responsibility of the local schools. The holistic approach was, however, addressed in a five-year pilot scheme in 2000-2005, in which primary and lower secondary schools were allowed to disregard the national timetable and distribute the time spent on each subject according to their own needs. The possibility of working with projects, themes and cross-curricular activities was increased in the 900 schools that participated in the pilot scheme. Some schools took advantage of these new possibilities to enhance language teaching. In some schools the language teachers wanted fixed slots in the timetable for their groups.

a 2) In February 2006 the Government set new programme goals for the 17 national programmes in upper secondary school, including vocational training. The programme goals state the aim of the programme and the skills a student should have on completion of the programme. The programme goals assert the importance of language skills in several languages and state that all students should be encouraged to study languages. This is also stated for more vocationally oriented programmes where English is the only compulsory foreign language. All students have scope for optional subjects within their study programme. The new programme goals come into force from July 2007.

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

The pilot period is now being evaluated.

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

## 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';<sup>1</sup>*

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

Part of the strategy for internationalisation that the Government presented in its bill *New world – new university* (Govt. Bill 2004/05:162) is that there must be more international mobility among higher education students taking teacher education programmes. The structure of the new Swedish teacher education programme offers good opportunities of mobility for student teachers in the course of studying both their subject and their profession.

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

There is very low mobility among students studying to be teachers.

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

In order to improve mobility among student teachers, special objectives have been introduced in the appropriation directions issued to the International Programme Office for Education and Training.

- The Office must promote increased Swedish participation in EU programmes.
- The number of outgoing students in the Erasmus programme must increase to at least 3 000.
- The number of outgoing teachers in the Erasmus programme must increase to at least 700.

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<sup>1</sup> *European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference*  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/doc/profile\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/doc/profile_en.pdf)

With regard to teacher education programmes in particular, it is essential to achieve increased mobility. (The latter objective has applied since 2005.) In addition, the Office must report measures taken to increase participation in the EU programmes, particularly those specified above, as well as measures implemented to promote increased mobility in the teacher education programmes. The Office must assess the contribution these measures have made towards meeting the objectives.

As part of these endeavours, the Office has organised a conference held in spring 2006.

### 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 recommended<sup>2</sup> 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?

As previously, the responsibility for recognising foreign teaching qualifications rests with the National Agency for Higher Education.

Figur 2. Sökande av behörighetsbevis, per utbildningsland (grupperat), år 2000–2004, antal.

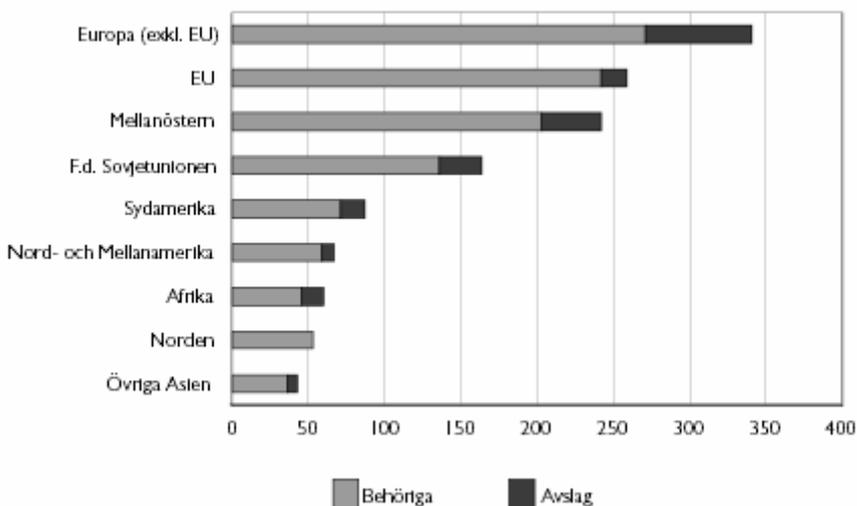


Figure 2. Applications for certificate of qualification, by country of education (in groups), 2000–2004

Europe (excl. EU)  
 EU  
 Middle East  
 Former USSR  
 South America

<sup>2</sup> 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)

North and Central America  
Africa  
Nordic countries  
Other Asian countries

Qualified

Rejected

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

Cf. 1.1 : There are courses at the teacher training institutions for CLIL. Subject teachers (ISCED II and III) in Sweden teach at least two subjects. This means that many language teachers are also qualified to teach art, history or geography, etc. This makes it easier to teach CLIL than in many other countries.

Many of the students who are studying subjects other than languages use foreign course literature and practice writing in another language (mostly English). Foreign students and many of the Swedish students take the same classes, which makes this language training more natural. The students who then become teachers have language skills that allow many of them to teach in another language.

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

English is too dominant.

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

Cf. the answer to 1.2 concerning the extra credit that will be given to advanced courses in FL other than English from 2010. Thus more pupils in upper secondary education will be stimulated to study French, German and Spanish at an advanced level. In this way more university students will be fluent in these languages and will dare to take part in exchange programmes with countries where these languages are spoken.

With an increased proportion of student teachers studying abroad, the number of teachers – and not just language teachers – who can teach in languages other than Swedish will increase.

## 2.5. Testing language skills

*The Common Reference Scales of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Language<sup>3</sup> 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 Portfolio<sup>4</sup> 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?

Three ELPs have been acknowledged by the European Validation Committee.

The starting point for the reform and development of language syllabuses in 2000 was an analysis of the CEFRL. The CEFRL moreover has been considered in the present reform of syllabi for upper secondary education although it may not yet be as transparent as in some other countries. We are making progress in this work. The Swedish syllabus is divided into seven levels; A1 in CEFRL is a lower level than level 1 in the Swedish system and C2 is more demanding than level 7.

Our assessment is quality based and related to certain criteria for each grade. There are national tests and self assessment materials for all levels in English, and production of such materials for languages other than English is rapidly increasing. These materials are produced by the National Agency for Education. The Agency has also produced DVDs with benchmarks for oral production. Benchmarks for writing skills are also included in the test materials.

Sweden participates actively in European and Nordic cooperation on issues associated with CEFRL.

Sweden is also taking part in developing the European Indicator of Language Competence.

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

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

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural\\_Co-operation/education/Languages/Language\\_Policy/Common\\_Framework\\_of\\_Reference/default.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/Common_Framework_of_Reference/default.asp)

<sup>4</sup> [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)

### 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?

##### a 1) The Government Commission on the Finnish and Sami Languages

A Government Commission was appointed in 2004 to examine the possibility of extending existing legislation on the right to use Finnish and Sami. The commission has presented many proposals to widen opportunities for Finnish-speaking and Sami-speaking persons to use their mother tongue in Sweden. The report and the proposals are at present being examined for opinions by the parties concerned. When this procedure has been completed the Government will consider the proposals in light of the opinions and other relevant circumstances.

##### a 2) Education

In November 2004 the National Agency for Education was commissioned by the Government to analyse the school situation of the national minorities and suggest improvements if needed. The Agency presented its report in October 2005. The Agency's proposals target changes in the school regulations concerning rights to mother tongue education. The Agency also pointed out the need for information activities at different levels to increase the awareness and knowledge about the rights of the national minorities, and also the importance of arranging mother tongue education at local level to make it easier for students, especially young students, to attend classes.

a 3) In November 2005 the Government decided to provide SEK 1.5 million to support the development and production of teaching materials in Sami in Sami schools, with a special focus on South Sami. Furthermore, in April 2006, the Government decided to provide SEK 1 million to support the development and production of teaching materials in South Sami for adults. The Government has also decided to make it possible for adult Sami to receive state grants for short-term studies to learn to read and write in Sami.

a 4) In December 2005, the Government commissioned the National Agency for Education to make an in-depth study of the situation of Roma students in Swedish schools. The report is to be presented in February 2007.

a 5) Luleå University of Technology has been given special commitments concerning teacher training. The university is to offer teacher training with a focus on Sami language, Meänkieli language and Finnish (minority languages in Sweden).

a 6) It is also worth mentioning that the National Agency for School Improvement is working continuously to improve the website Theme Mother Tongue and offers skills development for mother tongue teachers. The National Agency for School Improvement

is also developing distance education in the national minority languages. Distance education will increase opportunities for students belonging to minority groups living in remote geographic areas, or where there is a shortage of mother tongue teachers, to obtain education in their mother tongue.

#### a 7) Culture and Media

Since 2002, the Swedish authority the National Council for Cultural Affairs has had special responsibility and extra funding to promote the languages and cultures of Sweden's national minorities. This in turn has enabled a significant increase in the financial support given to cultural centres, libraries and theatres, etc. The Council has received an additional budget in 2005 and 2006 for further progress in this area. The Council consults representatives of the national minorities, through e.g. the Swedish Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (SWEBLUL), before making assessments.

Public service media bear a major responsibility for paying heed to the needs of the national and ethnic minorities. Broadcasting licences for public service companies, Sveriges Television (SVT- Swedish Television), Sveriges Radio (SR-Swedish Radio) and Sveriges Utbildningsradio (UR-the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company) have long stipulated that they are to increase their efforts to cater for Sweden's national and ethnic minorities. In March 2006, the Government adopted the bill *More important than ever! Public service radio and television, 2007-2012*, (Government Bill 2005/06:112). The Bill stipulates the overall guidelines that are to apply for SVT, SR and UR for the next licensing period. In the Bill, the Government also proposes that broadcasts in the national minority languages shall continue to be a priority area and that accessibility shall be further improved.

The linguistic and cultural diversity of the Swedish film industry has increased in recent years. Regional production centres have been particularly instrumental in this development. The increasing diversity of the Swedish film industry is a positive development, which, along with greater gender equality, should be further stimulated within the framework of the production subsidies allocated to the industry. To highlight this issue, the Swedish Film Institute has been given the task, in close partnership with the relevant organisations, of examining and submitting proposals for how to promote the production of films in these languages.

In December 2005, the Swedish Riksdag discussed the Government Bill *The best language – an integrated Swedish language policy* (Government Bill 2005/06:2). The national language policy goals adopted specify that everyone has the right to language, including the right to develop and use their own mother tongue and national minority language. In order to achieve the language policy goals, government-financed language conservation and development activities have been coordinated and strengthened from 1 July 2006. This will enable fresh and more extensive measures to be implemented to conserve and develop both the Swedish language and Sweden's recognised minority languages Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib and Yiddish. The Sami Parliament will however continue to head conservation and development activities for the Sami language.

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

The Government is considering the proposals made by the National Agency for Education on the school situation of the national minorities. The Government must consider the school regulations for all the national minority languages and also be clear about the economic consequences of changing the regulations.

The obstacles also include insufficient knowledge in some municipalities about the right to mother tongue tuition and insufficient information to parents and students about their right to mother tongue tuition.

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

The report of the National Agency for Education on the school situation of the national minorities is currently being considered by the Government in light of the financial consequences of the proposals that the Agency presented to the Government in April 2006.

To promote information to the municipalities on this issue, the report has been printed and was distributed to all municipalities in Sweden in March 2006.

### **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?

In the border areas between Sweden and Finland, there is bilingual education at compulsory (primary and lower secondary) school level at Språkskolan (the 'language school') in Haparanda (Sweden). The students are recruited from Haparanda and from Torneå (Finland). These activities began in the 1989/90 school year and have been evaluated several times. The evaluations have consistently been positive, with regard both to the development of multilingual skills and to knowledge acquisition in different subjects.

As part of the work on border barriers conducted by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Agreement on Nordic Educational Community at Upper Secondary School Level was revised in autumn 2004. The new agreement places greater emphasis on mutual recognition of upper secondary education and closer coordination between national assessment criteria.

The Nordplus Junior exchange programme supervised by the Nordic Council of Ministers provides opportunities for inter-school cooperation aimed at increasing knowledge and understanding of other Nordic cultures and languages. During the past year, there has been a campaign to spread information about opportunities for Nordic cooperation as a tool for enhancing educational quality.

Nordplus also includes a mobility and network programme for adult learning. The total budget is DKR 10 million. The programme awards grants for courses and work experience placements in other Nordic countries and for cooperation projects.

b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?  
Cooperation between schools in border areas depends on local initiatives.

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

The International Programme Office has been made responsible for spreading information about these programmes.

### 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 Languages<sup>5</sup> can be valuable in motivating people to learn foreign languages.*

*European Union initiatives such as the European Languages Label<sup>6</sup> 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?

The Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company is arranging a yearly national campaign corresponding to the Adult Learners' Week called "1000 vägar till kunskap" (in English, "1000 roads to knowledge"). The aim of this campaign is to motivate people to start studying languages as well as other subjects, to offer guidance on how to get started and to provide information.

The learning centres mentioned in 1.4 that have been promoted in recent years also provide opportunities for language learning. These centres are important, especially in isolated areas.

The European Day of Languages is celebrated in Sweden. It has become more well known and more and more activities and more social partners are involved ([www.sprakdagen.nu](http://www.sprakdagen.nu)). Also the European Label is awarded each year in Sweden.

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

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<sup>5</sup> 26 September each year; see [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural\\_Cooperation/education/Languages/Language\\_Policy/European\\_Day\\_of\\_Languages/default.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Cooperation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/European_Day_of_Languages/default.asp)

<sup>6</sup> <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?

By an informal group at the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture.

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

No.

- c) Was there a coordination group / committee?

In Sweden ministries are very small. Officials who work with languages have informal contacts when needed.

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

- a) 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?

In December 2005 the Swedish Government and Parliament stipulated four new objectives for national language policy. The objectives are:

- o Swedish is to be the main language in Sweden
- o Swedish is to be a complete language, serving and uniting society,
- o Public Swedish is to be cultivated, simple and comprehensible
- o Everyone is to have a right to language: to develop and learn Swedish, to develop and use their own mother tongue and national minority language and to have the opportunity to learn foreign languages.

*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 life<sup>7</sup>*

- 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?

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<sup>7</sup> 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](http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/pdf/integrated_guidelines_en.pdf))