

---

#### **European Year of Languages 2001: the role of universities**

Angela Chambers

University of Limerick, IE

Among the 43 projects selected for funding in the first round of EYL applications, nine are co-ordinated by universities. Aarhus Universitet, DK, is co-ordinating a project involving a theatre festival in Copenhagen in June 2001, organised by five Scandinavian universities and based on a competition between five theatre teams performing plays in French. Europas Sprachen in Bielefeld, co-ordinated by Universität Bielefeld, DE, celebrates the European Year with a new language or language group every month, through a combination of crash courses, cultural activities and information aimed at schools, young people and adults.

The Universidad de Salamanca, ES, is leading a partnership of universities in eight countries, organising a series of activities throughout the Year to stress the importance of learning languages. These will be aimed at both specialised target groups and the general public (open days in language centres, events in primary and secondary schools and competitions). Jyväskylän yliopisto, FI, is producing a 14-page booklet in Finnish and Swedish to inform a wide public about the principles and methods of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). Topics include: how to learn and acquire a language, natural ways of learning, case studies on language learning, different styles of learning, etc. Stockholms universitet, SE, is undertaking a six-month programme of information and promotional activities relating to language learning, which will be offered and marketed to the public, especially politicians, businesses, industry, media, education institutions, pupils, and parents. The project encompasses some 29 languages and includes lectures, "language tasters" and an exhibition.

Four projects involve academic conferences. The Freie Universität Berlin, DE, in association with the CEL/ELC, is hosting a conference at community level on promoting multilingualism in universities. The aim is to bring together decision-makers in universities from all over Europe, representatives of the world of employment and others, with the aim of drawing up an action plan to develop university-wide strategies. A project co-ordinated by the Universität Wien, AT, consists of three studies and a conference involving teachers and experts from all over Europe. The themes of the studies are: the role of languages in education systems in central, eastern and southern European countries; "new" languages in Austria / the EU; minority languages in a changing world. The conference, on the theme "A multilingual Europe in an enlarged EU" will coincide with the European Day of Languages (26 September). The Folkeuniversitetet, SE, is focusing on awareness raising about language learning among adults, with a special focus on the European Adult Language Learners' Week (May 5-11), including a conference and festival. Activities leading up to the conference include "language taster" events, exhibitions, seminars, publications, surveys and Internet activities.

The Folkuniversitetet Kursverksamheten together with Lunds Universitet, SE, is organising a seminar on languages for the public and tourists in the Öresund region. The project includes "language cafés" during the European Adult Language Learners' Week in May, with mother tongue speakers of several EU languages leading discussions. There will be "language tasters" in the Folksuniversitetet during the European Day of Languages on 26 September. An academic conference will be held on language acquisition and different languages' influence on one another. Videoconferences will bring together participants from local schools and partner schools in Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and England.

---

## **MALTED - Multimedia Authoring for Language Tutors and Educational Development**

Dolorès Ditner

University College London, UK

You may remember an article published in a previous Bulletin regarding an EU funded project led by the Language Centre at University College London, under the direction of Dolorès Ditner (who sits on the CEL/ELC Publications Committee). The project (MALTED) was funded by the EU Telematics Applications programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci.

The project provides a set of multimedia authoring tools and offers access to datasets of materials from a common pool, 'Asset Base', which has simple, easy-to-use tools for creating a wide range of learning activities. The aim was to design and implement a telematic solution for collection and re-use of multimedia materials for language tutors.

The system consists of four main components: The Runtime system (RTS), the Developer Tool, the Asset Base and the Learning Management System (LMS). The RTS allows learners to follow language courses and perform exercises. The Developer Tool permits teachers to create exercises and courses either with new materials or by re-using/adapting existing exercises, which is the ideal solution for tutors of 'languages for special purposes'. The Asset Base provides storage and retrieval facilities for management of multimedia assets and their associated metadata, accessed by students through the RTS who can search and download courses and by tutors who through the DVE can retrieve or publish teaching material. The Learning Management System registers students' performance which can be monitored by the tutors through the LMS.

The project has now been completed and successfully endorsed by the European Commission after being trialled by end users in the primary, secondary and tertiary educational sectors and in vocational training institutions. MALTED is to be made available shortly as freeware accompanied by user manuals; training courses on the system will be organised for tutors this summer. For further information and to register on training courses please email the Project Director on: [c.hoffmann@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:c.hoffmann@ucl.ac.uk)