

**EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR THE PROMOTION OF  
LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG ALL UNDERGRADUATES  
(ENLU)**

**TASK FORCE 1: INSTITUTION-WIDE LANGUAGE POLICIES**

**BENCHMARKS FOR A HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE  
POLICY**

**REPORT PREPARED ON THE BASIS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF  
ENLU TASK FORCE 1 – 2004**

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In the current international context, knowledge of languages plays a key role in the academic and professional training of all graduates. Students with a knowledge of one, two or more languages in addition to their L1 have access to possibilities in terms of academic and professional mobility, and with respect to their employability which they simply would not have in the absence of these linguistic competences. Furthermore, the European Higher Education Area will become a reality only if students, researchers, academics and administrative staff in Higher Education institutions across Europe are able to communicate effectively with one another, and this depends crucially upon their knowledge of languages. Ensuring that all graduates have access to effective language learning possibilities is thus a key goal of all Higher Education institutions throughout Europe.

Translating this goal into reality calls for the development of institutional language policies. Setting up such policies can encounter a variety of difficulties – the attitudes of various actors to the role of languages, the means of integrating language learning into already full academic programmes, financial restrictions and, last but certainly not least, a lack of understanding of what a language policy is, how it can be developed, and how it can be implemented in practice. The goal of this report is to offer guidelines in this respect. It does this in three stages. Firstly, it identifies and briefly discusses a number of benchmarks which play a key role in the development of a Higher Education language policy. Secondly, it formulates a series of specific questions relating to the benchmark in question which are designed to help institutions evaluate their current practice and explore avenues for positive action. Thirdly, it briefly outlines instances of good practice linked to the benchmark in question in order to indicate the type of actions which have been taken in the area in question by one institution or another in Europe.

## **I. LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE**

Higher Education in Europe is currently being influenced powerfully by the Bologna Process, which involves a profound re-thinking of the goals and organisation of Higher Education (HE). The goals of the Bologna Process, as reaffirmed in the Berlin Communiqué of September 2003, are to make Europe “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and social cohesion”. In other words, the ultimate goals of the Bologna Process do not relate to HE as an entity in its own right, but rather to HE and to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as engaged social actors who are called upon to play their part in supporting the economic and social well-being of Europe. Two issues assume particular importance in this respect. The first relates to the needs of the workplace, and thus to the employability of graduates, and the second relates to the consolidation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

On the first point, the European economy, as indeed the world economy as a whole, is increasingly mobile and international. In this context, the ability to communicate with clients and colleagues from different countries and with different languages is essential. This means that, in the short term, developing graduates’ languages skills is simply a matter of responding to current realities and needs. In a longer term perspective, however, it is clear that a truly multilingual European workforce will be capable of creating synergies which would simply not be possible at the level of individual countries working in isolation. Ensuring that all European graduates are proficient in at least one or two other languages opens up professional possibilities which would not exist in the absence of these linguistic skills. It thus creates a potential for economic initiative and growth which will be to the benefit of the economy and of society as a whole. This may be seen at at least two different levels. At the international level, certain widely spoken languages (English, French, German, and Spanish) play a particular role, and students aiming for an international career clearly need to acquire competences in at least one or two of these languages. At the same time, Europe is also the Europe of the Regions, where local cross-border trade and cooperation are crucial. In this respect, a wide range of less widely spoken languages assume a potentially greater role than those which dominate on the international scene. In either case, language skills can play a key role in terms of students’ employability. If HEIs wish genuinely to equip their graduates for their future professional life in the increasingly international and multilingual context in which we now live, they cannot fail to give attention to the place of language learning in Higher Education.

On the second point, the EHEA plays a key role in contributing to the well-being and prosperity of Europe in the emergent knowledge-based economy. Traditional economic models are disappearing, and it is on the basis of advanced technology and flexible service provision that the future well-being of Europe in both economic and social terms will rest. HE plays a key role in this achieving these goals. However, for the EHEA to become a reality, students and academics from across Europe need to collaborate closely with one another, and this in turn depends on their knowledge of each other’s languages. Here, too, the question of languages in HE assumes a fundamental enabling role. The challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century call for collaboration and the creation of synergies which go beyond the resources of European states operating individually within their traditional national borders. Without the means of communicating effectively with

one another, however, European students and academics will simply not be able to make the EHEA work effectively.

The Bologna Process involves a profound re-thinking of the goals of HE in Europe. It also calls upon HEIs to position themselves with respect to both the challenges and the opportunities of the current international situation. In this way, it offers an ideal framework for re-evaluating the role of languages in HE as a means of promoting academic mobility and the employability of graduates. If HEIs wish to become full actors in the present European and international context, and to prepare their students for the academic and professional demands of this context, they therefore need to give serious and considered attention to the role of language learning in HE.

## **II. TOWARDS (A) HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY**

The remarks made above underline the importance for HEIs to address the language question in an explicit and strategically oriented manner, and this entails policy-oriented decisions, specifically the development of institution level language policies. Higher Education Language Policy (HELP), however, is a relatively novel concept, and one whose emergence is closely linked to the new academic and professional context outlined above. This report seeks to identify some of the key parameters or benchmarks which merit being taken into consideration when a HEI is seeking to develop and implement a language policy.

The report is based upon the following input.

### Background documents

An article on language policy prepared by Angela Chambers as part of the European Language Council's Interest Group on Language Policy in Universities in Europe.

The results of a questionnaire completed during the ENLU launch meeting in Brussels, 23-24 April 2004, by 32 participants.

### National / Regional surveys

Flemish Community, Belgium

Four universities in Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Various HEIs in Ireland

Five universities in Sweden

### Analyses of individual HEIs

University of Graz, Austria

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

Université de Mon-Hainaut, Belgium

University Lille 3, France

Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Umea University, Sweden

University of Freiburg, Switzerland

(Draft) Language policy documents

Aarhus School of Business, Denmark

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj, Romania

University of Jyväskylä, Finland

University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Situations differ widely across Europe according to various factors, including whether the national language is widely used (e.g. English, French or German) or not, the levels of language teaching at secondary level, the managerial and decision-making traditions at both national and institutional levels, and the current level of language awareness of individual HEIs. It is therefore unlikely that any one specific model of language policy will be equally appropriate in all contexts or for all HEIs. Nevertheless, a certain number of parameters or benchmarks are of general relevance, even if this relevance may be more or less immediate in one context as opposed to another.

### **III. BENCHMARKS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY**

As suggested above, HELP is an emergent concept, and the benchmarks proposed in this report are inevitably provisional, and are thus meant to stimulate debate and further reflection. Four main categories of benchmark were identified in the documents analysed. The first (III. 1.) relates to the **Strategic dimension**, and involves consideration of the strategic positioning of HEIs with respect to the current European and international context, and their policy decisions with respect to language learning. The second (III. 2.) relates to the **Enabling conditions** which need to be set in place to ensure effective policy development and implementation. The third (III. 3.) relates to a number of key **Pedagogical issues** which need to be taken into consideration in the realisation of a HELP. The fourth (III. 4.), **Towards an integrated model**, looks at a number of policy issues which go beyond the more immediate concern of fostering the learning of languages among undergraduates.

Each of these four main categories contains a number of specific benchmarks. In each case, the issue in question is introduced, and then a number of focus questions are raised around which institutions can evaluate their current practice in the relevant area. Finally, as and where available, examples of good practice are provided to illustrate what has been done in one HEI or another in the area in question. These examples of good practice vary in terms of their depth and degree of innovativeness. They are provided simply as instances of some of the efforts which are being made in various HEIs across Europe to respond to the various challenges set by the present international environment.

#### **III. 1. THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION**

##### **III. 1.i. Language teaching vs a language policy?**

Most HEIs cater for language learning in one form or another, either for language specialists or students of other disciplines. It is by no means certain, however, whether this means that the institution in question has made clear and strategically oriented decisions with respect to the role

of languages, or that the language teaching which is organised reflects a coherent vision of the position which the HEI as a whole seeks to assume in response to the current international context.

Language teaching is often organised at faculty level. In this way, it reflects the specific language needs of students following different specialisations. Two questions arise in this respect. The first is whether faculty-level policies reflect, albeit with a degree of diversity specific to the various disciplines concerned, a broader or shared vision of the role which the HEI has of its strategic positioning with respect to its role on the international scene and the way in which it seeks to prepare its students for the current academic and professional context. The second is whether such faculty-level policies may offer useful models which could be generalised to other parts of the HEI.

- ⇒ Has your institution developed a language policy reflecting the manner in which it positions itself in the current European and international context?
- ⇒ Does it have a model, even if only “partial” (possibly faculty-level) one, which can offer guidelines and / or be generalised to the other parts of the HEI so as to contribute to the development of a coherent language policy at institutional level?
- ⇒ Do you consider that current reflection and action on languages in your institution is adequate with respect to the current European and international context and its demands?

### **Good Practice**

1. In four universities in Plovdiv, Bulgaria (Plovdiv University, Technical University Plovdiv, University of Food Technologies, Agricultural University) none as yet has its own explicitly formulated language policy. However, moves towards the elaboration of such a policy are being supported by two convergent trends. On the one hand, all four universities have strategic plans which are related to the integration of the country into the European Union, and languages will surely play a role in such plans. On the other hand, individual faculties are developing their own language policies. In this way, there is a combination of top-down (university strategy) and bottom-up (faculty policy) initiatives which set the scene for the development of coherent institution level language policies.

2. The Université Libre de Bruxelles has developed a language policy which states that all undergraduates will study at least one foreign language during their undergraduate programme, and that all will attain at least the level B1 on the scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages by the end of their Bachelor programme. Individual faculties are free to set higher objectives (level C1 by the end of the Bachelor for business students, for example), but B1 for all undergraduates is the minimum level of achievement for all graduates of the Université Libre.

3. At the University of Lausanne, the *Language Policy Committee* has prepared a draft language policy document which explicitly links the language policy of the university to the goals of the Bologna Process and to the EHEA.

4. The Senate of the University of Babes-Bolyai Cluj, Romania, adopted in December 2001 a policy document entitled *For a European Language Policy*, which explicitly sets the objective of mother tongue + 2 foreign languages for all its students. The Babes-Bolyai language policy document is one of the very few explicitly formulated and publicly available HELP documents which exist at the present point in time.

### **III. 1. ii. Languages for all (undergraduates)?**

As indicated above, most HEIs cater for language teaching for a more or less large number of their students. The current international context, however, makes it necessary to generalise language learning to all students for the simple reason that all graduates, whatever their specialisation, will be entering a multilingual and multicultural academic and professional workplace and need therefore to be prepared for the demands which this workplace will make of them.

Within this perspective, language learning for all undergraduates should be a particular goal for at least two reasons. Firstly, there is the question of practical skill: Having at least one or more foreign languages opens up many extra possibilities to graduates in terms of both academic mobility and employability. Secondly, language learning at undergraduate level sets the basis for more advanced learning of an already known language or the learning of other languages at subsequent stages of graduates' academic or professional life. Ensuring that all undergraduates be able to learn or increase their skills in at least one language should therefore be an objective for all HE programmes.

- ⇒ Which opportunities does your institution offer to students for learning languages?
- ⇒ Does your institution have or is it developing a languages for all strategy?
- ⇒ Which factors in your institution (or in the broader national or international context) could support the realisation of such a policy?

### **Good Practice**

1. In certain countries, government decrees impose on universities the obligation to organise language learning for all undergraduates. This is the case in France, where ministerial decrees make it obligatory for universities to offer language courses in all programmes and at all levels. In this case, the element of good practice emanates in the first instance from the governmental level, but sets up a framework within which individual HEIs have the obligation to respond in an autonomous manner. In other words, the governmental intervention sets a framework for local initiatives in the field of languages for all.

2. In Romania, the government has decided that the Bachelor examination has to include a language proficiency component. The Senate of the University of Babes-Bolyai has taken further

steps in the same direction by making possession of a language proficiency certificate a requirement for enrolment in both MA and doctoral programmes. Neither of these measures entails the actual setting up of a language policy per se. Nevertheless, they establish achievement criteria to which individual students and HEIs have to respond in a focused, strategic manner. In other words, they make the possession of language skills and integral component of HE.

### **III. 2. ENABLING CONDITIONS**

The points made in the last section relate to the strategic dimension of HELP, namely the evaluation of current practice within the individual HEI with a view to discovering paths or strategies which might serve to guide action designed to extend the provision of language learning possibilities. Once strategic decisions of this nature have been made, the next stage entails setting in place structures by which policy decisions can be translated into reality.

#### **III. 2. i. Consultation and decision making structures.**

For a language policy to be developed and implemented at institutional level, structures need to be set in place which allow for strategic reflection on the role of languages and the planning of practical actions to promote more extensive language learning. This having been said, the structures which are most likely to be effective in one institution or another depend to a significant degree on the organisational and decision making traditions of the institution in question.

Different models exist. Chambers, for example, identifies three main models for the development of a HELP. One involves initiatives arising from the language department; another involves decisions at senior management level, and a third is an integrated model, in which decisions regarding language policy are gradually integrated into various institutional documents. Chambers suggests that top-down models, ie. models which originate in senior management, have the greatest chance of success in that they ensure more powerful institutional support. This having been said, it stands to reason that for a language policy to be effective in the long term collaboration of senior management with faculty leaders and with language specialists is highly desirable.

- ⇒ Are there consultative of decision making structures in place at your institution which are designed to promote the development of an institution level language policy?
- ⇒ Which decision making and planning structures are most widely used in your institution or country? Do they operate in a more top-down (being initiated by senior management) or a more bottom-up manner (on the basis of proposals and initiatives of practitioners)? Or are joint models more frequent? Could any such structures provide a model for the development of a coherent and effective language policy?

#### **Good Practice**

1. The Université Libre de Bruxelles has set up an *Interfaculty Languages Committee* composed of deans of faculty, senior management, and language teachers, as a forum for discussing the content and organisation of its language policy. The *Interfaculty Languages Committee* allows for the sharing of objectives and concerns among the various actors concerned by language teaching and learning in the university. It is thus an example of a mixed model, combining input from various concerned parties in the institution.

2. The National University of Ireland Maynooth has set up a *Modern Languages Committee*, which is a standing committee of the Academic Council. The *Modern Languages Committee* is responsible for formulating and recommending language policies, assisting modern language departments in the implementation of such policies, and making recommendations for the provision of new courses.

3. In February 2003, the University of Lille 3 created the post of *Chargé de mission à la politique des langues*. The appointee's tasks are to coordinate language policy development at the level of the university as a whole, to make an evaluation of the current situation in terms of language teaching and learning, and to make proposals to decision making bodies for future initiatives.

### **III. 2.ii. Pedagogical planning and coordination.**

The ENLU questionnaire (completed by 32 participants at the ENLU launch meeting in Brussels, 23-24 April 2004) shows that a variety of different structures exist (and co-exist) with respect to the practical organisation of language teaching. In some cases, language teaching is organised in a language centre or department, while in others it is organised within a given faculty. It is probably unproductive to look for any one single best model. A number of objective considerations do, however, merit being taken into account in evaluating the effectiveness of the various models which exist.

One relates to the concentration of logistical and pedagogical resources, and the possibility for teachers to initiate collaborative endeavours. A HELP is unlikely to be effective if those who are required to implement it on the pedagogical level operate in isolation and without the necessary material, pedagogical and psychological support. In this respect, organising language teaching in a language centre or department has evident advantages. The same applies with respect to the organisation of focused teacher training (cf. III. 2. iv., below). At the same time, one danger in the language centre model is that the centre can become marginalised within the institution as a whole, may lack status (cf. III. 2.iii., below), and its members may not play a full role in decision making at institutional level. (This danger is greater in the case of a language centre than in a language department or faculty, as the latter more frequently enjoy full academic status within the HEI, whereas language centres often have an ambiguous institutional status.)

Another important factor is good communication between language teachers and both faculty and students. This promotes focused goal setting and the adaptation of teaching methods to students' specific needs and habitual learning style. From this perspective, a faculty based approach to teaching can be very effective in qualitative terms. Disadvantages also exist, however. One is that, below a certain critical mass, language teachers may lack the material resources for effective and creative pedagogical initiatives. Another is that effective channels of communication may not

exist among different faculties or groups of teachers, such that it results in a dispersion of efforts and difficulty in developing a coherent policy at institutional level.

- ⇒ Which structures currently exist in your institution for the practical organisation of language teaching (language centre or department, faculty-based, or other)? Are they currently viewed as being adequate and, if not, in which ways?
- ⇒ Which pedagogical structures would seem to offer the optimal combination of resource concentration, on the one hand, and effective communication between language teachers and other concerned actors (faculty heads, management, etc)?
- ⇒ Which possibilities exist for setting up such structures?

### **Good Practice**

1. The University of Mons-Hainaut has assigned the responsibility for organising language teaching to its *Institut de Linguistique*, which has a number of clearly defined tasks in terms of the realisation of the language policy of the university. These include providing expert advice to the faculty language centres and to the Governing Board of the university, organising or supervising practical language teaching, and liaising with external bodies on language related issues.

2. At the University of Umea, Sweden, a Language Centre set up in 2002 cooperates closely with the Department of Modern Languages to offer intensive and ab initio courses to a wide range of students. This is part of a bottom-up strategy engaged by the two entities which is designed to extend the learning of languages to as wide as possible a range of students in the university. In this respect, it is worth noting that the university as a whole does not as yet have an explicit languages for all policy.

### **III. 2. iii. Emphasising the value and “status” of skill-oriented teaching of languages.**

To use Bourdieu’s distinction between the cognitive and social functions in academic life, traditionally, it is the cognitive function of language studies that has been most highly esteemed. This is most evident in the status of literary and linguistic studies as opposed to the teaching of practical language skills. In the current context, however, and in particular in the light of the goals of the Bologna process, this traditional status distinction needs to be re-thought. Helping students acquire relevant and effective communication skills is crucial to their future opportunities in both academic and professional terms. At the present time, however, many practical language teachers have a marginal status in their institutions, with fewer career prospects and often little contact with decision makers. If a HELP is to work effectively, however, those most directly involved in its pedagogical realisation need to have a status which reflects the role which they are required to play in the practical realisation of the policy.

- ⇒ What status does practical language teaching enjoy in your institution in academic and career terms?

- ⇒ Do practical language teachers have a career status which reflects the specificities of their tasks?
- ⇒ Do they enjoy access to decision making organs, and the possibility to enter into collaborative endeavours with “mainstream” academic staff?

### **Good Practice**

1. Two universities in Belgium, the *Université Catholique de Louvain* and the *Université Libre de Bruxelles*, have created the status of *Maître de langue*. This is a status particular to university teachers specialised in practical language teaching. It offers a career path based on pedagogical excellence and creativity as opposed to the traditional academic criteria of thesis and publication. In this way, it acknowledges and values the specificities of practical language teaching in the current university context.

### **III. 2. iv. Teacher training**

Extending language learning to all (undergraduates) and gearing the content of this teaching to the needs of these students (preparation for mobility programmes, academic communication skills, professionally relevant competences, etc) make significant demands on the pedagogical skills and expertise of language teachers. The same is true with respect to teachers’ ability to make effective use of the many possibilities offered by ICT. The long term quality of a HELP thus depends crucially on the skills of the teachers involved in its realisation. Catering for ongoing teacher training is thus a basic enabling condition for the effective realisation of a HELP. This is all the more the case in that hardly any country has a pre-service teacher training diploma for HE teachers. This means that support for novice staff and ongoing teacher development are crucial. Furthermore, it is unlikely that teachers will be able to encourage lifelong learning in their students if they, too, are not engaged in the same dynamic.

- ⇒ Which structures exist for offering support and ongoing teacher training to HE language teachers in your institution or country?
- ⇒ If the current situation is less than satisfactory, which possibilities exist for setting up such structures?

### **Good Practice**

1. All language teachers in university *Centres de langue* in Switzerland have a contractual obligation to participate regularly in professional development programmes. Furthermore, the content of such programmes is geared closely around the specific needs and objectives of the teachers in question. This is one of the advantages of the language centre model of language teaching provision, namely that it offers the possibility of catering for focused and locally relevant teacher development.

## **III. 3. PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES**

### **III. 3. i. Creating a learning continuum**

Levels of achievement in language learning at secondary level vary a great deal across countries in Europe. As a consequence, HEIs have to work with different entry levels of language competence among their students. This has an evident influence on what can be achieved and the type and level of goals which can be set for language learning in HE. In some cases, where initial levels of competence are limited, “getting the basics” may be the only realistic objective. In others, goals may be set in terms of advanced academic and professional communication skills. Achieving continuity between secondary and HE language learning calls for contact being established with both the secondary sector, with respect to the learning goals it seeks to achieve, and also with the world of work, so as to identify the specific needs which students are likely to encounter on entering professional life. In other words, HEIs need to look upstream, to the preparation students receive from their secondary education, and also downstream, to the needs of graduates future academic and professional life.

In bridging the gap between entry levels and future needs, attention needs to be given to the sequencing of goals within students’ HE career. One factor which merits consideration in this respect is whether goals may need to be staged between Bachelor and Master / Doctoral cycles. For example, is it more effective to gear learning goals around general language competences at Bachelor level, while focusing more on discipline-specific language competences at Master / Doctoral level?

- ⇒ Which forms of collaboration does your institution have both upstream and downstream, ie. with the secondary sector and with the world of work?
- ⇒ Does your institution make use of tools such as the Common European Framework of Reference or the European Language Portfolio to make objective and continuity based evaluations of students’ language competences?
- ⇒ Does your institution have a policy regarding the nature of the language learning goals set for students’ at different stages of their academic career (eg. Bachelor vs Master level)?

### **Good Practice**

1. At the Agricultural University Plovdiv, foreign language courses are compulsory in all faculties. Students usually continue studying at least one of the foreign languages already studied at secondary level. Language courses at the Agricultural University are of a minimum of two semesters and pursue a staged set of goals. In the first stage, the objectives are defined in terms of language for “general purposes”, whereas the next stage focuses on language for specific purposes, ie. language courses geared to the specific vocational requirements of the students’ chosen discipline.

2. The draft language policy document of the University of Lausanne distinguishes between the language learning objectives of Bachelor and Master degrees. At Bachelor level, languages are seen as being a component of the “generic competences” to be acquired by all undergraduates. At Master level, on the other hand, languages are seen as part of students’ discipline specific competences (*savoirs spécifiques*), and are linked more to specialised academic or professional domains of usage.

NB. The specific choices made in these two cases may not necessarily be relevant in all contexts. Nevertheless, they both indicate strategic decisions with respect to the sequencing of learning goals, in the case of the University of Lausanne, over the first two cycles and, in the case of the Agricultural University Plovdiv, between secondary and tertiary levels.

### **III. 3. ii. Integration of language learning into students academic programme.**

One major difficulty with respect to the practical realisation of a HELP is to convince faculties to make place for language learning in their mainstream academic programme. On the one hand, this is understandable in that the traditional vocation of faculties has been to provide students with as thorough as possible a grounding in their chosen specialisation – and introducing language learning into students’ programmes inevitably calls for choices with respect to students’ specialist subjects. Nevertheless, within the framework of the Bologna Process, mobility and employability are fundamental goals, and the achievement of these goals is heavily dependent upon graduates’ language skills. For this reason, it is necessary for faculties to evaluate their current practice critically in the light of the academic and professional context for which they are preparing their students, and of the role of languages within this context. (cf. III. 3. iii., below)

- ⇒ In which way is language learning integrated into students’ broader academic programme?
- ⇒ Does language learning receive accreditation by means of ECTS in the same way as other subjects on the curriculum?
- ⇒ Do relevant and workable models exist in your institution for the integration of language learning into students’ broader academic programme?

### **Good Practice**

1. The language policy developed by the Université Libre de Bruxelles caters for a minimum of 8 ECTS devoted to languages - 4 in BA2 and 4 in BA3. That of the University of Lausanne proposes a total of 12 ECTS devoted to languages over the whole Bachelor programme. In both cases, then, language learning receives an explicit place in the calculation of students’ overall programme and workload.

2. All Bachelor programmes offered by the Freie Universität Berlin cater for students being able to choose 30 ECTS (out of a total of 180) relating to ”professionally-oriented competences”, of which 18 can be devoted to languages. This case is worthy of note in that it situates language learning within a broader framework of reference, namely those competences which have a direct link with the needs of the workplace and thus with employability.

### **III. 3. iii. Language learning and teaching beyond the traditional classroom format.**

Traditional classroom-based language teaching will continue to play a role in most HELPs, especially when students enter HE with limited language skills. Nevertheless, language learning in HE should as far as possible be integrated into students’ academic programme so as to bring out the intimate link between the students’ broader academic and professional socialisation and their acquisition of the relevant intercultural communication skills. This can take many forms, of which the following are just a few: Reading lists in a L2; Projects which include information

gathering involving use of background material in another language or cross-border collaboration on shared projects; Participation in mobility programmes; Cooperation (eg. joint degrees) with other HEIs; Teaching courses in other languages; Inviting lecturers from other countries; Use of ICT potentialities. Many possibilities exist for integrating contact with other languages into students' mainstream academic programme, and these possibilities should be fully exploited, albeit in conjunction with more traditional modes of language teaching.

- ⇒ Which different forms does language teaching and learning take in your institution?
- ⇒ How many of the activities / learning possibilities listed above form a regular part of students' contact with other languages?
- ⇒ Which possibilities exist for extending these possibilities?

### **Good Practice**

1. In the Master degree in Fermentation Products Technology offered by the Agricultural University Plovdiv, one of the three main course modules is taught entirely in French, and the curriculum is identical to that offered by French universities. Graduates thus have an advanced command of French. They also follow courses in English throughout their programme – general English in the first two years and more vocationally oriented courses in English in later years. This means that they are highly competitive on the labour market.

2. The University of Freiburg, Switzerland, is exceptional in being one of the very few bilingual European universities and, on this basis, offers bilingual degrees. What is particularly striking in the case of the University of Freiburg, however, is that it does not reserve its bilingual degree programmes for those who are already bilingual on entry. Two points merit particular attention in this respect. The first is that the university distinguishes between productive and receptive bilingualism. The latter means that while courses are followed in the foreign language, examinations may be taken in the students' first language. The second is that the university has set up language learning facilities which allow students to achieve bilingualism in the course of their study programme. (This is referred to as the *Sprachrampe*, or “language ladder”.)

3. The Aarhus School of Business, Denmark encourages lecturers to include reference material in languages other than English in their reading lists. (English is already widely used as a medium of instruction at the Aarhus School of Business.) Furthermore, Danish and international students are required to work together in team work projects so as to broaden the language and cultural contacts to which they are exposed.

### **III. 4. TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED MODEL**

The situation with respect to the learning of other languages varies considerably from one European country to another. In some, it is fairly usual for students to enter HE with good levels of proficiency in two or more languages in addition to their L1. In others, few students enter HE with anything more than the basics in another language, and the notion that language study should be an integral part of HE has a very long path to make. In the latter case, advocacy with respect to the role of language skills in HE is probably the priority. In the former case, however,

the situation may be different in that the maintenance of the home language is a priority, as well as the teaching of this language to incoming students and staff.

### **III. 4. i. Maintaining the L1**

The importance of maintaining the full integrity of the home language is clearly most marked in the case of less widely used and taught languages (LWUTLs). An increasing number of academic publications are being written in English. There is also an evident trend for Master and even for Bachelor programmes to be taught in English, which often reflects the desire of the HEIs in question to attract the growing body of international students. While such trends are likely to persist, their dangers cannot be overlooked. One is that inadequate English language skills of both lecturers and students may impair the quality of education. Another is that certain languages may be marginalised from HE, even in their home countries, which can have many negative consequences (for example in terms of the ability of graduates to function effectively as teachers of their chosen specialisation in their native language). Furthermore, the goal of a truly multilingual and multicultural Europe is incompatible with the domination of any one language as the medium of academic and professional socialisation in HE.

- ⇒ Is there any reason to believe that the role of your home language is in any way threatened in HE?
- ⇒ If so, in which ways, and which measures can be taken to re-adjust the balance?
- ⇒ In which ways can teaching in the home language of your institution be combined with the teaching of courses in another language?

### **III. 4. ii. Catering for the teaching of the home language**

One of the goals of a languages for all policy is to encourage academic mobility within the framework of the EHEA. In part, of course, this entails fostering outward mobility by promoting the learning of languages other than students' L1. Equally, however, it involves supporting inward mobility by, for example, organising courses in the home language for incoming students and staff so that they can assimilate fully into the institution and the culture of the host country. Although in some HEIs or countries, the priority may be to raise awareness as to the importance of learning other languages, providing the necessary linguistic support for inward academic mobility, too, is a component of an integrated HELP.

- ⇒ Does your institution have a policy for supporting the learning of its home language by incoming students, staff, and their families?
- ⇒ Which measures could be taken to improve this situation and thus foster improved and more harmonious inward academic mobility?

### **Good Practice**

1. The Aarhus School of Business offers international students tailor-made courses in Danish, and all degree students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these courses in order to profit

fully from their stay in Denmark. It also offers tailor-made courses in Danish to all international faculty members. Indeed, international faculty are expected to learn Danish within two years of appointment: In this way, they can become full members of the academic community.

### III. 4. iii. Language skills of academic and administrative staff.

A HELP reflects the way in which the institution in question positions itself within the current international context with respect to both the academic mobility and the employability of its students. Developing a policy of languages for all undergraduates represents the linchpin of such a strategy by establishing a broadly based language potential in the student population and thereby the basis for the long term anchoring of languages in the academic community. A languages for all policy is, however, the reflection of a broader vision of the way in which a HEI positions itself within the current international context. Consequently, languages need to figure among the objectives not only of students, but also of the wider HEI community, including teaching and administrative staff. They too need language skills in order to participate in joint projects, to interact with colleagues from other countries, and to set up the networks of collaboration upon which the successful realisation of the EHEA depends. An integrated HELP therefore entails consideration of the language skills of all institutional actors, and the promotion of language learning among teaching and administrative staff as well as among students.

- ⇒ Does your institution have a policy for promoting language learning among its teaching and administrative staff as part of its strategy of internationalisation?
- ⇒ Which measures could be taken to reinforce language learning among these persons?

### Good Practice

1. The Aarhus School of Business actively recruits faculty with language skills in English and in other foreign languages.
2. The University of Jyväskylä offers credit in recruitment to staff who are able to teach in English or other international languages.
3. Although the idea is not as yet widespread, one HEI in Flanders mentions a pilot project in English for academic staff. This is linked to the idea of *International at Home*, ie. the creation of an international or, at least, a multilingual learning environment in the students' home institution. A possibly more ambitious expression of this goal is found in the draft language policy document produced by the *Language Policy Committee* of the University of Lausanne, which sets the goal of “une nouvelle culture de la communication sur le campus universitaire valorisant le plurilinguisme et l’interculturel”.

## **APPENDIX: BENCHMARKS AND FOCUS QUESTIONS IN SUMMARY**

### **1. THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION**

#### **1.i. Language teaching vs a language policy?**

- ⇒ Has your institution developed a language policy reflecting the manner in which it positions itself in the current European and international context?
- ⇒ Does it have a model, even if only “partial” (possibly faculty-level) one, which can offer guidelines and / or be generalised to the other parts of the HEI so as to contribute to the development of a coherent language policy at institutional level?
- ⇒ Do you consider that current reflection and action on languages in your institution is adequate with respect to the current European and international context and its demands?

#### **1. ii. Languages for all (undergraduates)?**

- ⇒ Which opportunities does your institution offer to students for learning languages?
- ⇒ Does your institution have or is it developing a languages for all strategy?
- ⇒ Which factors in your institution (or in the broader national or international context) could support the realisation of such a policy?

### **2. ENABLING CONDITIONS**

#### **2. i. Consultation and decision making structures.**

- ⇒ Are there consultative or decision making structures in place at your institution which are designed to promote the development of an institution level language policy?
- ⇒ Which decision making and planning structures are most widely used in your institution or country? Do they operate in a more top-down (being initiated by senior management) or a more bottom-up manner (on the basis of proposals and initiatives of practitioners)? Or are joint models more frequent? Could any such structures provide a model for the development of a coherent and effective language policy?

#### **2.ii. Pedagogical planning and coordination.**

- ⇒ Which structures currently exist in your institution for the practical organisation of language teaching (language centre or department, faculty-based, or other)? Are they currently viewed as being adequate and, if not, in which ways?
- ⇒ Which pedagogical structures would seem to offer the optimal combination of resource concentration, on the one hand, and effective communication between language teachers and other concerned actors (faculty heads, management, etc)?
- ⇒ Which possibilities exist for setting up such structures?

#### **2. iii. Emphasising the value and “status” of skill-oriented teaching of languages.**

- ⇒ What status does practical language teaching enjoy in your institution in academic and career terms?
- ⇒ Do practical language teachers have a career status which reflects the specificities of their tasks?
- ⇒ Do they enjoy access to decision making organs, and the possibility to enter into collaborative endeavours with “mainstream” academic staff?

## **2. iv. Teacher training**

- ⇒ Which structures exist for offering support and ongoing teacher training to HE language teachers in your institution or country?
- ⇒ If the current situation is less than satisfactory, which possibilities exist for setting up such structures?

## **3. PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES**

### **3. i. Creating a learning continuum**

- ⇒ Which forms of collaboration does your institution have both upstream and downstream, ie. with the secondary sector and with the world of work?
- ⇒ Does your institution make use of tools such as the Common European Framework of Reference or the European Language Portfolio to make objective and continuity based evaluations of students’ language competences?
- ⇒ Does your institution have a policy regarding the nature of the language learning goals set for students’ at different stages of their academic career (eg. Bachelor vs Master level)?

### **3. ii. Integration of language learning into students academic programme.**

- ⇒ In which way is language learning integrated into students’ broader academic programme?
- ⇒ Does language learning receive accreditation by means of ECTS in the same way as other subjects on the curriculum?
- ⇒ Do relevant and workable models exist in your institution for the integration of language learning into students’ broader academic programme?

### **3. iii. Language learning and teaching beyond the traditional classroom format.**

- ⇒ Which different forms does language teaching and learning take in your institution?
- ⇒ How many of the activities / learning possibilities listed above form a regular part of students’ contact with other languages?
- ⇒ Which possibilities exist for extending these possibilities?

## **4. TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED MODEL**

### **4. i. Maintaining the L1**

- ⇒ Is there any reason to believe that the role of your home language is in any way threatened in HE?

- ⇒ If so, in which ways, and which measures can be taken to re-adjust the balance?
- ⇒ In which ways can teaching in the home language of your institution be combined with the teaching of courses in another language?

#### **4. ii. Catering for the teaching of the home language**

- ⇒ Does your institution have a policy for supporting the learning of its home language by incoming students, staff, and their families?
- ⇒ Which measures could be taken to improve this situation and thus foster improved and more harmonious inward academic mobility?

#### **4. iii. Language skills of academic and administrative staff.**

- ⇒ Does your institution have a policy for promoting language learning among its teaching and administrative staff as part of its strategy of internationalisation?
- ⇒ Which measures could be taken to reinforce language learning among these persons?