

# **SIGMA Scientific Committee on Languages**

## **LANGUAGE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA**

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. The national linguistic situation**

##### **1.1.1. National languages**

The official languages in Austria are German, Serbo-Croat and Slovene (the latter two apply specifically to parts of provinces). There are other long-established ethnic minorities in Austria, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Roma and Sinti, but their languages are not officially recognized. In this context it must be remembered that Austria looks back on a long multicultural history as part of a broad empire. This heritage is reflected in the presence of these minorities and even in the Austrian usage of the German vernacular. In the light of its geographical position, its size and the need to underline its sense of identity abroad, Austria needs to present itself as particularly open to the world and other cultures.

##### **1.1.2. Language policy**

There seems to be no consistent language policy at present in Austria. Such a language policy should distinguish between two clearly defined objectives: measures concerning the languages of ethnic groups, including language instruction of the children of guest workers and refugees in their mother tongue, and, secondly, foreign language instruction as a whole. As regards the languages of ethnic groups legal regulations do exist, but their full implementation has yet to be achieved.

German is the first language in Austria, and minority languages are only taught to a small extent. In elementary/primary school these minority languages are Slovene in Carinthia, Serbo-Croat and Hungarian in the Burgenland, and Czech in Vienna. A variant of Serbo-Croat is spoken in the province of Burgenland which is not identical with the standard employed in Croatia, which is, however, taught in the upper forms of advanced secondary schools (see below) in some districts. There is only one secondary level school leading up to leaving certificate (see below) in Carinthia in which Slovene is used as the language of instruction. In addition, in the same province there are two advanced secondary schools with vocational orientation in which both German and Slovene are employed as languages of instruction.

Among foreign languages English has assumed a dominant position, while other world languages and the languages spoken in countries adjacent to Austria are taught to a more limited degree. It must, however, be conceded that projects sponsored by the Austrian Ministry for Science and Research have to some extent begun to redress this balance, especially as far as the so-called reform countries of Central and Eastern Europe are concerned.

## **1.2. The system of higher education**

In all, there are several strands or levels of tertiary education in Austria. Twelve universities exist (the Universities of Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Linz and Klagenfurt, the Technical Universities in Vienna and Graz, several specialized Universities for Mining etc. in Leoben, for Agriculture etc. in Vienna, for Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, and the University of Economics and Business Administration in Vienna). In addition, there are six Academies of the Fine Arts (e.g. of Music, Applied Arts, Performing Arts, etc.).

On a different level there are institutions for the training of teachers in primary and secondary modern schools (see below), plus for the training of social workers and medical assistants of various sorts. Leaving certificate or, alternatively, for those without leaving certificate, a special examination entitling students to begin tertiary level study ("Studienberechtigungsprüfung") are the prerequisites for admission to this type of institution.

At present there are about 220,000 students enrolled at universities (or academies of higher education). Apart from the above-mentioned institutions of higher education, a small number of postgraduate centres and programmes have recently been established, e.g. at the Niederösterreichische Landesakademie in Krems, or at the Centre for International and Interdisciplinary Studies in Vienna (ZIIS). In 1994 a new university was founded in Krems (Donauuniversität) which is intended to specialize in specific disciplines, particularly at postgraduate level.

## **1.3. The impact of secondary education on language studies in higher education**

### *Secondary education in Austria*

In the Austrian educational system, after the primary /elementary level pupils (aged 10) can choose between two basic and fundamentally different strands of schooling.

1) On the one hand, there is Secondary Modern School ("Hauptschule"), which takes pupils up to the age of fourteen, or in conjunction with a broad vocational programme ("Polytechnischer Jahrgang") to the age of fifteen, at which compulsory school education ends. They may then, for instance, start an apprenticeship, or transfer to one of the other two types of school (the latter may also be done at an earlier age).

2) The second strand takes pupils up to the age of eighteen or nineteen. At this age they take School Leaving Certificate ("Matura"). The second type of school is known as the Advanced Secondary School ("Höhere Schule") in Austria. It is subdivided into two branches: Advanced Secondary Schools for General Education ("Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schulen") and Advanced Secondary Schools with Vocational Orientation ("Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen"). In 1993/94 about 27 % of the age group of pupils between 10 and 14 attended the lower forms of the advanced secondary school, and about 47 % of the age group 15 to 18/19 attended the senior forms of the same type of school. The remaining 10 to 13-year-olds were pupils at secondary modern schools. The remaining 14 to 18-year-olds presumably started an apprenticeship in which provision is made for limited instruction in languages during one school day per week. However, a recent ruling by the Constitutional Court has abolished foreign language instruction at trade schools on formal grounds. Teachers at the two types of advanced secondary schools are required to have university training.

In addition to these two strands of advanced secondary schools, with their specific language offers, in which English is the main foreign language, there are a number of bilingual or international schools in Austria. English is the language of instruction in the American School and in the International School in Vienna, and in recently established

experimental bilingual schools, e.g. in Vienna, Graz or Linz. In Vienna, the Lycée Français provides instruction in French and according to the French school system. Some bilingual experiments are also being conducted at primary/elementary school level. About 50% of the pupils in primary schools in any given year have English as a subject. In addition, an experimental project has just been undertaken to introduce English at primary/elementary school even from the age of six (realized in more than 130 forms in 1992/93). The scientific assessment of this project stresses the need to mediate language in a playful manner and to appeal to all the senses in class.

After finishing school and by the time they reach university, students will generally have been taught English for two years at primary/elementary school level and eight years at advanced secondary school level as English represents the first foreign language in Austria. (There are a very few private primary schools and some secondary modern schools in which French is taught instead of or in addition to English. This was to less than 1% of all pupils in 1991/2.) Hence, irrespective of the future direction of students' studies or their choice of field, a high level of proficiency in English can be expected from the outset at university. This is not the case with other languages like French, Italian or Spanish. Usually, secondary school pupils only take French as their second or third language. In the case of second foreign languages at school, e.g. French, advanced secondary school pupils will have had only four, or at most six, years of instruction before reaching the tertiary level. In advanced secondary schools with vocational orientation Italian and Spanish continue to gain ground, especially in the south of Austria.

For the last five years, a curriculum reform in secondary schools has provided for a number of electives, a fact from which French, Italian and Spanish have benefited. In certain cases shifts in the curriculum have prompted the replacement of compulsory Latin for six years by six years of compulsory French.

## **2. LANGUAGE DEGREE PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY UNIVERSITIES**

### **2.1. Traditional language/literature programmes**

#### **2.1.1. & 2.1.2. Content and objectives - Structure of programmes**

In the case of many university subjects, the academic degree of Mag. phil. (M.A.) can be achieved in one of two forms: either the degree with a teaching qualification or one without it. The former is only possible if the subject is taught at advanced secondary school level (i.e. is a "Schulsprache"). Hence, there are academic degrees for language teachers only in the subjects English, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Slovene, Serbo-Croat, Czech, and Hungarian, but not at present in Greek, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish, or Danish. As the two forms of the academic degree of Mag. phil. are so closely inter-related, the study programmes are identical for all languages in the first stage of the university course, which consists of four semesters.

It is only in the second stage of the course of studies that a differentiation takes place. For the degree without a teaching qualification another four semesters are demanded, while future language teachers for advanced secondary schools are required to take an additional semester (i.e. five in all), including teacher training, pedagogy, methodology, etc. For both forms of the academic degree of Mag. phil. a thesis has to be submitted in the primary subject.

Like other philological programmes, the curriculum leading to degrees in English and American Studies or Romance Languages, e.g. aims at achieving a high level of oral and written proficiency in the language and at conveying an extensive knowledge of linguistics and literary scholarship, with a focus on modern literature. The course of studies is also intended to provide students with a fair knowledge of the history,

civilization and institutions of the anglophone world. Assessment usually takes the form of written or oral exams at the end of semesters and individual courses, plus a final thesis and oral exam for those taking English (or another language) as their first subject. Before these final exams on specific aspects of the field may be envisaged, within the first stage of the curriculum students (e.g. of English) are required to take eight hours in linguistics, eight hours in literary studies and two to four hours in civilization, in addition to courses in language skills. In the second stage, between six and eight hours each are needed for credit in linguistics and literature, depending on the specialization.

Generally speaking, students must combine two subjects to achieve their degree. Future teachers have to combine two regular curricula of subjects taught at school. For students not aspiring to a teaching qualification, the second subject may consist of another philology, a non-language subject, or, on application, a logical and composite set of different courses. This is true of all philological disciplines.

Among the philological disciplines which are not yet taught in schools, Netherlands Studies are only offered at the University of Vienna. No teaching certificate is so far foreseen, nor any instruction for future translators and interpreters, although efforts are currently being made to set up such a programme with the support of Dutch and Belgian authorities. The regular programme leading to a degree, as usual an M.A., is the same as with other philological courses. Scandinavian Studies are equally available only at the University of Vienna. Similar restrictions apply as to Netherlands Studies.

The situation in the Department of Finno-Ugrian Studies at the University of Vienna generally resembles that in the two departments just mentioned, though there is provision for a teacher qualification in Hungarian. An application for the funding of an expanded diploma programme for Finnish Studies is being submitted to the authorities responsible to redress the balance somewhat, which has so far focused largely on Hungarian.

The discipline of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies is only offered at the University of Vienna. The programme is in itself not merely philological, but involves extensive historical and cultural studies, especially in the medieval and modern periods. Within this discipline there is a four-semester course entitled "Systematic Introduction to Modern Greek". The successful passing of the first two stages of this course is a prerequisite for completing the first phase of the discipline. Preliminary knowledge of ancient Greek and Latin are, of course, preconditions for taking this discipline. As Modern Greek is not taught in the Department of Translators and Interpreters and no more advanced language courses are offered at the university, students are obliged to seek further language training outside the scope of the university.

The discipline of Comparative Literature is available at the Universities of Vienna and Innsbruck. It requires students to have a good command of two modern foreign languages, but the discipline itself does not provide for language teaching or testing. As a whole, Comparative Literature has to be taken in combination with a philological subject.

Considering the ongoing process of European integration and the ensuing need for teachers who are experts in intercultural communication, "German as a foreign language" represents a special case among languages in the university curriculum. It aims, on the one hand, at mediating German language and civilization to people from other languages and cultures, and on the other, at providing German-language teachers both in Austria and abroad with additional teaching qualifications. It has not yet been established as an autonomous and regular discipline, but its current experimental status is intended to lead to recognition as an official subject.

### **2.1.3. Impact of community programmes to date**

Fortunately, over the last three years the establishment of ERASMUS programmes has resulted in the participation in ICP networks of an increasing number of students working towards language degrees. To date, 625 Austrian students at departments of philology and future interpreters have participated in programmes of this nature, including representatives of the smaller languages (e.g. Scandinavian languages and Dutch).

In 1993/94, for instance, there were more than 200 future purveyors of language among the roughly 1400 university students who took part (= less than 1% of student population) and in 1994/5 there are about 270 language students among the 1600 participating university students (equals about 1.5% of students in relevant disciplines). A significant outcome of the increase in student mobility is that the number of students taking a language as their first subject has noticeably risen. It is expected that participation in EU programmes will continue to grow substantially. Nevertheless, at approximately 1.5 % it is presently still far below the target of 10 % student mobility envisioned by SOCRATES. Working towards this objective will help remedy an existing deficiency in the philological programmes, which do not at present prescribe a prolonged sojourn in the target country as part of the curriculum.

This is certainly an area in which improvements could and should be made, for instance by providing language programmes to be attended by qualified and working language teachers, and students in particular, during vacations (a start has been made, see below under 3.2.).

Among the students of Netherlands Studies e.g. ten percent have benefited from an ERASMUS mobility programme in Holland and Flanders. In view of the future professional opportunities for graduates in Netherlands Studies, an expansion of these studies to include a greater number of civilization and business courses would seem desirable.

Students acquiring the EU languages Swedish and Danish have also participated in ERASMUS exchange programmes. This is an area in which substantial growth is to be expected.

As students of Modern Greek need advanced language instruction outside the university, the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies functions as a clearing house for scholarships to enable students to attend language courses in Greek universities (e.g. Thessaloniki) or elsewhere in Greece on a private basis. In the light of the sparsity of advanced courses in Modern Greek the ERASMUS programme has proved extremely helpful by enabling Viennese students to improve their proficiency in the language in Athens.

## **2.2. 'Alternative' programmes**

As yet there are no distinctive programmes in our system which could be subsumed under the term applied language studies. Nor have area studies been established in Austria to date.

## **2.3. Postgraduate programmes**

In Austrian universities postgraduate programmes in the philologies, generally leading to a Ph.D., are not rigidly structured. They foresee at least two years of study before a thesis can be submitted based on individual research. So far a substantial number of postgraduates have participated in ERASMUS programmes, to the great benefit of their research projects.

## **2.4. Career prospects for graduates of languages programmes**

Traditionally, philological students have tended to become teachers on concluding their studies. However, of late the job market for school teachers in advanced secondary schools has become increasingly tighter, leading graduates to seek employment in alternative fields, often with temporary contracts and insecure tenure. Over the last decade, an increasing number have tried to find employment in the media, in libraries and publishing houses, or have gone into business. On the job market in Austria the unemployment rate among graduates is increasing. Currently, about 10-15% of university graduates have experienced major problems in finding permanent positions, though job opportunities depend to some extent on the regional distribution, the subject taken at university and on civil service employment policies. As yet, systematic surveys have not been undertaken on job prospects and professional decisions taken by graduates. However, detailed polls on professional trends would be highly desirable, as they would enable universities or institutions of learning to identify future needs and to adapt future curricula accordingly.

So far, various universities have offered supplementary courses for additional qualifications in very specialized areas (the media, film studies, exhibition strategies, European law, environmental studies). This evidently mirrors a need on the part of graduates to acquire additional qualifications in order to be able to survive better on a competitive job market. Such initiatives ought to be encouraged.

### **3. INITIAL AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

#### **3.1. Initial training**

Primary/elementary and secondary modern school teachers of English receive their training in three-year courses at teacher training colleges ("Pädagogische Akademien"). Students at teacher training colleges do not receive an academic degree or diploma. At these institutions, students must take at least two subjects, one of which may be a living foreign language, primarily English. The syllabus of those seeking to obtain a teaching qualification for languages provides for practical language work in conjunction with didactic skills. Beyond these aspects, the curriculum makes little allowance at the moment for supplementary courses in literature (altogether only 3 to 4 hours are offered, and one hour has to be taken for credit), history and civilization (offer: two to four hours in the course of study, one hour to be taken for credit), applied linguistics (offer: one to two hours, one hour to be taken for credit). In the course of this curriculum, a written paper must be composed, to be followed by written and oral exams for which a limited reading list is required, and which is divided equally between didactic and subject-oriented aspects.

Usually between 200 and 300 students gain the teaching qualification annually, with the overwhelming majority taking English (95 %).

Over the last three years, the number of students at teacher training colleges who have actively participated in ERASMUS exchange programmes has continuously increased, culminating provisionally in the number of 200 in 1994.

All teachers for advanced secondary schools receive their training as part of a university programme. Some of the language teachers at these schools may already have benefited from community programmes such as ERASMUS during their course of studies at university. (See above under 2.1.3.) Various initiatives have been taken to improve teacher training, e.g. one entitled KLUG in the province of Styria, aiming especially at drafting a reform programme for teacher training at university level. A similar enterprise is in progress in the province of Tyrol, entitled ZULB, involving university teachers, practicing and trainee teachers, administrators and students.

As Austrian teachers of schools of various levels have not yet been eligible to participate in LINGUA projects, there has, unfortunately, been no impact to date.

### **3.2. In-service training**

As in some other countries, the responsibility for secondary and tertiary education lies in the hands of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Science and Research respectively. This is reflected in the arrangements for in-service training. While the training of language teachers for advanced secondary schools takes place at university and within the scope of normal undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered by the various departments of philology, there is no systematic or co-ordinated university provision for in-service training for teachers in the different kinds of schools.

Admittedly, after graduation prospective teachers have to spend a year as supervised trainees at advanced secondary schools ("Unterrichtspraktikum").

There are seminars organized by provincial educational authorities (the Pedagogical Institutes of the Austrian provinces and a Federal Pedagogical Institute, which has set up its own language centre, IFU) which can be attended by interested teachers.

The programmes furnished at the Federal Pedagogical Institute benefit from cooperation with cultural institutions like the British Council and the cultural sections or institutes of relevant embassies. These cultural bodies also offer short seminars or workshops in conjunction with the Ministry of Education for practicing teachers during the school year, and organize summer courses on various didactic aspects, both in Austria and in the target countries.

The teachers themselves are organized according to subject in various professional associations which assist their members through lectures, workshops etc. (e.g. TEA - Teachers of English in Austria -, Association of Teachers of French etc.) A recent project sponsored by the Vienna school authorities in conjunction with the British Council, the School-Based Teacher Development Project (SBP), aims at improving cooperation and teamwork between English teachers at individual schools by fostering a sense of corporate identity through fellow teachers acting as "facilitators".

Advanced in-service teacher training is certainly an area in which more co-operation between the educational authorities and the universities is called for. The above-mentioned KLUG and ZULB projects, for instance, are such endeavours being made to establish closer links between these bodies.

## **4. LANGUAGE PROVISION IN UNIVERSITIES FOR STUDENTS OF OTHER DISCIPLINES**

### **4.1. Language studies integrated into non-language programmes and language options offered in combination with non-language programmes**

#### **4.1.1. & 4.1.2. Content and objectives - Structure of courses**

As a general rule, it can be stated that language programmes (particularly English) can be combined with other courses of study as secondary subjects.

In addition, languages constitute a substantial part of university courses in institutions such as the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration ("Wirtschaftsuniversität"), etc. There, in specific areas of study, two EU languages have to be studied for a certain number of semesters (8-9). This applies to the programme for International Business Administration ("Handelswissenschaft"), where two business

languages are obligatory, one of them in both stages of the programme, the other only in the first. Several oral and written exams at the end of semesters and a comprehensive exam are foreseen in the curriculum.

In the programmes for Business Administration and Economics ("Betriebswirtschaft", "Volkswirtschaft") only one foreign language has to be chosen in the first phase. In the second stage, an additional foreign language can be chosen as an elective. The other requirements correspond to those in the first stage of the curriculum. Those students who have passed their language courses with excellent results have the option of submitting their diploma thesis in this foreign language.

Within the scope of the University of Vienna there is a programme similar in format to those offered by the University of Economics and Business Administration. Again, students of International Business Administration are required to study two foreign languages throughout their studies, one of them being English, the other either French, Italian, Spanish (or Russian). The requirements in the programmes at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics are similar to those demanded at the University of Economics and Business Administration ("Wirtschaftsuniversität").

At the Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics in Vienna, a considerable number of lectures and seminar courses on specialized economic and sociological subjects are held in English, e.g. "International Financial Management", "Process Management Systems" and "Recent Trends in English-Language Sociology". Comparable programmes are also offered at the University of Linz.

#### **4.1.3. Impact of community programmes to date**

Currently, the University of Economics and Business Administration in Vienna is involved in two major ERASMUS networks (CEMS and MOZART), in which the emphasis is naturally placed on economic training, and in which the students, of course, prefer those countries whose languages they have acquired in the course of their studies. Students at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics at the University of Vienna are also heavily involved in ICP networks.

The Faculties of Law and Medicine at the University of Vienna and the Technical University also strongly participate in ERASMUS networks. Students of European Law and International Law at the University of Vienna especially benefit on a large scale.

#### **4.2. General and subject-oriented language courses accompanying non-language programmes (service courses)**

Apart from language programmes integrated in courses of study at the University of Economics and Business Administration and with a focus on economic applications, the latter institution also furnishes courses in the following languages, which are not included in the regular curriculum: German as a foreign language, Swedish, Portuguese, Serbo-Croat (not regarding those languages not spoken in the EU).

At the University of Agriculture, Forestry and Renewal of Natural Resources, Vienna (BOKU), e.g., a new type of language programme is being developed which is tailored to match the needs of BOKU undergraduates and graduates, and which will in the future also cater to the needs of students from the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the University of Vienna and the University for Veterinary Medicine. The languages taught at present include English, French, Spanish, Italian and Hungarian. In addition to general service courses, the university offers programmes in technical English, French, Spanish and Italian adapted to the BOKU fields of study, i.e. forestry, civil engineering and water management etc. Spanish, Italian and Hungarian are being offered at beginner's level,

whereas English and French courses start at the intermediate level only. The former culminates in the subject "English for Scientific Writing" in the final year of study.

Service courses in languages, particularly English, are provided, albeit not on a systematic basis, in a number of disciplines and faculties, for instance the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Medicine, etc. in several Austrian universities.

In the cases of the Universities of Graz and Linz there are even special language centres to provide such services, and other institutions are to follow soon. So far, service courses in languages are offered for students of all faculties at the University of Vienna (ranging from Irish and Welsh to Modern Greek).

The Technical University in Graz also offers language courses open to students from all faculties. In most cases the courses are optional, with the exception of a course in "Business English for Civil Engineers", which is compulsory. The instruction offered ranges from the beginner's level to the more advanced, and keeps vocational requirements in mind.

## **5. THE TRAINING OF TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS**

### **5.1. Institutions responsible for training**

Schools of Translation and Interpreting ("Institute für Übersetzer- und Dolmetscherausbildung") exist at three Austrian universities, i.e. Vienna, Graz and Innsbruck.

### **5.2. Content of training programmes**

Students of this discipline must study at least two foreign languages. Courses are divided into two phases. At the end of each phase students take a diploma examination involving written and oral tests on general and specialized translation, written language skills, civilization, and for students who have selected the interpreting branch, consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. With the exception of English and French, the first phase of studies concentrates on ab initio language instruction, the development of advanced language skills, preliminary courses in translation, civilization, introductions to law and economics, and lectures and seminars on translation studies. In the second phase, the objective is to perfect language proficiency and develop advanced translation and interpreting skills. Students are also required to take seminars in translation theory and complete their studies by writing a thesis.

### **5.3. Structure and programmes**

Each phase of the course comprises four semesters. In addition to the comprehensive exams at the end of each phase, there are individual exams after courses, or continuous assessment in the courses themselves. As few students are able to complete their courses within the stipulated minimum period of time, due to their frequent lack of proficiency in the language when starting their studies, the three Schools of Translation and Interpreting have drafted a reformed curriculum providing for an additional one-year introductory course ("Propädeutikum") to allow intensive language study for ab initio students (cf. point 7 below). This reformed curriculum is due to take effect in October 1995.

### **5.4. Impact of community programmes to date**

All three Schools of Translation and Interpreting actively participate in ERASMUS, LINGUA and TEMPUS exchange programmes. These exchange possibilities (there are, e.g.,

regular links between the School of Translation and Interpreting in Graz and more than 40 university departments or special schools of translation in EU countries) are being utilised by a large and growing number of students. The Schools of Translation and Interpreting have come to regard both student and teacher mobility as major factors in improving cross-cultural awareness and co-operation for professional purposes.

### **5.5. Career prospects outside the areas of translating and interpreting**

In general, it can be stated that job prospects for full-time translators or interpreters are uncertain, as the supply of graduates exceeds the demand. This seems also to be connected with the fact that German does not play a major role in international organisations and that translation work is often undertaken by people without specialized training in this sphere. It seems to be the case that the job market requires graduates to have other professional skills and experience in addition to linguistic proficiency.

## **6. LANGUAGE STUDIES IN NON-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **6.1. Language programmes**

Strictly speaking, the newly inaugurated European Foreign Language Centre (EFSZ) in Graz does not offer language courses or programmes as such. It is intended to be a platform and a meeting place for representatives from throughout Europe who are experts in the fields of teacher training, linguistic policy or research. The centre has been established under the auspices of the European Council and is intended to support the latter's declared ideal of "foreign languages for everybody".

The European Foreign Language Centre's primary aim consists of presenting a forum in which decision-makers in the field of education and didactic experts can meet language scholars to discuss and resolve the tasks and challenges of the years to come. Emphasis will be placed on the exchange of information and the opportunity to meet colleagues from abroad dealing with similar issues.

The centre will organize seminars and conferences on specific and clearly defined subjects, which have been selected after a comprehensive analysis of requirements (e.g. "Teacher training for multicultural and multilingual education" or "Intercultural cross-border language learning" [young people and adults]). For the duration of such seminars the participants will receive the support of the centre and can get in touch with colleagues from abroad.

It is a declared goal of the EFSZ to promote the teaching of all foreign languages, especially minority ones. Seminars will not be restricted to individual languages, but will concentrate on issues affecting the teaching of foreign languages as a whole.

### **6.2. Language studies integrated in non-language programmes and language options offered in combination with non-language programmes**

Recently, ten new institutions of higher education, polytechnics ("Fachhochschulen"), have been established, which are vocationally and/or technically oriented and provide specialized training in vocational areas such as tourism, international economic relations (Eisenstadt), tourism management (Vienna), tourism and leisure-time management (Krems). All institutions offer English in some form, especially as ESP. They are in the process of being established and are intended to integrate instruction in the major EU languages.

At the International Management Center in Krems students are expected to possess an excellent command of one foreign language (either German or English, depending on the

student's mother tongue), a good command of a second (usually English, as this represents the teaching language for the first four semesters), and a working knowledge of a third (German, French, Italian, and Spanish are offered for choice). The course of studies, which leads to the academic title of "Master in Tourism and Leisure-Time Management", lasts a total of eight semesters, the fourth of which students must spend in a country in which their native tongue is not spoken. Exams are taken in writing and on the principle of continuous assessment. All language programmes (with the exception of English) are continued into the eighth semester.

The Institute of Higher Studies in Tourism Management (Vienna) offers two courses of study, hospitality management and tourism management, both of 7 semesters' duration and also leading to a master's degree. English represents an obligatory subject throughout these two courses, whereas either French, Italian or Spanish can be chosen as a second mandatory language. The sixth semester is devoted to supervised instruction at the institute and to on-the-job training in authorised private companies. Students are offered the possibility of gaining this practical experience abroad. Assessment takes the form of the evaluation of collaboration, group and project work, papers, case studies and written and oral exams in the course of the semesters.

The Polytechnic for International Economic Relations (Eisenstadt) aims at training internationally versed business persons with a special emphasis on the Central and Eastern European areas. For this reason two living foreign languages are obligatory components of the course. The first of these is English, particularly business English. The second foreign language derives from one of Austria's Southern or Eastern neighbours and may be chosen from one of the following options: Serbo-Croat, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and Slovene. The course takes eight semesters (also leading to a master's degree), the sixth of which is devoted to gaining practical vocational experience abroad.

Those responsible for Netherlands Studies argue that this language should also be offered at Polytechnics in view of the importance of Dutch for tourism.

## **7. NEW NEEDS IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE STUDIES**

### **7.1. New needs in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by universities**

A distinction has to be made between the languages taught at secondary schools and those in which university students in the philologies usually have to begin acquiring language competence at university itself. Here serious consideration is being given to establishing preliminary courses of study comprising one or two semesters and intended to raise the level of proficiency of future students of a language and culture. This applies in particular to translators and interpreters, who have already decided upon a curriculum reform to include a full year of preliminary studies ("Propädeutikum") (see below under 7.4.). Such preliminary courses of one semester's duration are presently being discussed by an inter-university committee for the study of Slavonic languages and literatures. Those responsible for instruction in Scandinavian languages are similarly considering such an option. The same applies to academic teachers of Romance languages like Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian, and even French. University teachers of English also see it as desirable that some form of language proficiency testing be introduced to ensure a uniform minimum level of language competence at the beginning of the programme of studies.

Academic teachers in various philological disciplines agree that a compulsory sojourn in the target country of the language being learned should be included in the curriculum, as is already the case in some EU countries. In this context, it must be pointed out that administrative and financial provisions need to be made to facilitate this improvement in the programmes. Though ideally students should spend their sojourn at university,

alternatively the number of existing posts for assistant teachers could be increased significantly, and these posts should be allocated to foreign students of the philologies.

Another distinction ought to be drawn between philological studies intended for native speakers of a specific language and studies designed for non-native speakers of the same language. As linguistic proficiency is not an issue for native speakers, provision should be made to substitute other scholarly and didactic topics for language training courses (e.g. in Slovene, Serbo-Croat and Hungarian).

Considering the professional requirements of graduates from the philologies it has been proposed that Economics or Law courses should be included among the set of courses that can, on application, be combined with the philologies.

## **7.2. Initial and in-service language teacher training**

In the future special attention should be devoted to the fact that language teachers are not merely the purveyors of skills and linguistic competence, but should also act as cultural mediators or ambassadors. In view of this fact it would be important to emphasize that Cultural Studies understood in the broadest meaning of the term should receive much more stress than has been the case to date, and that students and future teachers should be encouraged to acquire an in-depth knowledge of and familiarity with the culture of the countries speaking the language they are learning by visiting them. This would help reduce the risk of disseminating or consolidating stereotypes or prejudices.

The need to avoid cultural misunderstanding is, on the one hand, obvious to those involved in German as a foreign language, where intercultural communication and the introduction of the "foreign" angle upon language and culture are seen as facets which should receive more emphasis in language studies. This is most desirable in Austria, as the regular classroom situation increasingly confronts teachers with pupils of different cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, this would help future practising teachers of foreign languages to prepare their pupils properly for the challenges presented by the cultural exchange programmes, particularly after their projected expansion.

There still seems to be a need for additional seminars for the in-service training of language teachers at school which should provide them with updates on recent developments and trends in their respective academic disciplines. Such seminars should also be made accessible to more participants than have hitherto been able or willing to take part. In this context it needs to be stressed that further teacher training at present involves personal sacrifices for those taking part, while vocational and financial incentives ought to accrue. It goes without saying that consistent and coordinated strategies and policies taking these aspects into account would considerably improve the efficiency and application in practice of such in-service training.

Considering the increased demand for language programmes for adults generated by the economy, perhaps more attention should be focused on including the area of adult education within the pedagogical and didactic elements of the curricula in the philologies.

It must be pointed out that at present initiatives are being considered to abolish the clear division between the training of teachers for elementary and secondary modern schools on the one hand, and those for advanced secondary schools on the other. These considerations even envisage possibly transferring teacher training programmes from departments of philology to teacher training colleges. Considering the comprehensive teacher requirements mentioned above and the curricula referred to under 3.1., it must be warned that the implementation of such a policy would entail a dramatic loss in quality, unless the programmes at teacher training colleges were fundamentally upgraded in terms of objective, academic content, intensity, scope and teaching

personnel. Furthermore, attention must be drawn to the fact that teacher training colleges do not at present possess adequate infrastructure necessary for training teachers in the other major EU languages apart from English. Were the training of advanced secondary school teachers in English to be transferred to the jurisdiction of the teacher training colleges, a rift would be created between English teachers and university-trained teachers of other languages.

### **7.3. Language provision in universities for students of other disciplines**

As has been pointed out under point 4.2., the increasing demand for service courses offering language instruction for non-language students has led to the establishment of language centres. In some cases provision is also being made for services catering to the needs of students of other universities. Generally speaking, there is a shortage of such language courses, which is expressed in the fact that at the Technical University in Graz, e.g., about 40 % of the students interested in taking a language course cannot be accommodated. There is a special interest in subject-oriented courses and LSP.

### **7.4. Identification of needs in the training of translators and interpreters**

The necessity for preliminary courses of study has been emphatically stressed also by those responsible for translation and interpreting programmes (see 7.1. above).

For some time there has been no possibility in Austria to take Modern Greek as a language in the study programme for translators and interpreters. In view of Greece's position within the EU, it has been recommended that Modern Greek should be reintroduced as a language for translators and interpreters at the University of Vienna, as it possesses the necessary infrastructure and the expertise at the Department of Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek. Indeed, it has been suggested that all the EU languages should be represented at Departments for Translators and Interpreters, and that a first step in this direction would be to introduce more of these languages at school level.

The spokespeople of professional organisations for translators and interpreters have pointed out that at present there is no provision made for the formal training of court interpreters or conference translators, and that usually specialized courses in literary translation are not provided in Austrian universities, or in most parts of Europe, for that matter. The measures to be taken here are self-evident, and concerted international co-operation in this field is strongly recommended. Professional representatives have indicated that the Centre Européen de Traduction Littéraire (C.E.T.L.) in Belgium might provide a useful model for establishing such literary translation programmes. The professional associations also suggest that schools of translators and interpreters in Austria should give instruction in at least three foreign languages and not just two, as is presently the case.

In addition, it has been pointed out that in view of the future needs of graduates EDP instruction and practice in access to databases should be included as part of translation and interpreting programmes.

As most translators and interpreters are free-lancers, no institutional in-service training is possible. Update and postgraduate courses are recommended instead, which should be organised on an transnational basis, possibly in conjunction with EU institutions.

In this connection close links should be established between the teaching institutions and industry so that students may acquire skills in addition to language proficiency and curricula can be adapted to a greater extent to the needs of the economy. The proposal has been put forward that it would be beneficial to students to have facilitated access to EU-sponsored industrial training programmes such as COMMETT.

## **7.5. Needs in language studies in non-university institutions of higher education/for non-language students**

It is to be expected that in the years to come language courses will play an ever more crucial role both in non-language courses of study (particularly in the sciences and technologies) and in the field of adult education. Even now professional requirements and the necessity to communicate within a multilingual, uniting Europe have created a need for language courses, ranging from ab initio to the very advanced and with a special focus on LSP, which can be made accessible to broader sections of the population than traditional institutions have hitherto been able to cater for. Such programmes should be flexible and also make maximum use of the self-study aids made available by new technologies (for measures that could be taken in this context see 8.1. below). Generally speaking, it can be stated that service courses in the languages will gain more significance in the future than they have already had in the past.

## **8. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO MEET THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED**

### **8.1. Measures to be taken in the areas of initial and in-service language teacher training**

Most of the university departments which represent "non-school languages" recommend that their languages be offered at school level, at least in the form of electives. Scholars in Scandinavian Studies, e.g., have suggested that the teaching qualification necessary for this purpose could be gained at Scandinavian universities which have established special-purpose teacher training centres. To obtain such additional qualifications, which would have to be recognised by the home country, more scholarships should be provided. Those studying non-school languages should be encouraged and, indeed, required to attend mandatory, preliminary courses ("Propädeutika") to raise the general standards of proficiency before regular programmes are embarked upon.

In this context experts have recommended not only exchange programmes centering on the classroom (of one to three weeks' duration), but also exchanges during vacations with teachers preparing and accompanying such *rencontres des jeunes*. The mutual benefit of such encounters ("summer camps") could arguably be increased by locating such encounters in regions inhabited also by minorities or distinct ethnic and linguistic groups etc. It has been proposed, e.g., that French pupils of German could also meet the Croat minority in the province of the Burgenland during such summer schools and that Austrian pupils needing and desiring instruction in Spanish could meet Spanish and Catalan speakers on the Costa Brava. Such initiatives might also be beneficial by helping pupils to discover and explore the so-called "minor" languages with their major contributions to the common European heritage.

A related recommendation has been put forward that it would be mutually beneficial for pupils with different mother tongues but the same target language, e.g. Austrian and British children learning French, to meet so that both groups could learn from each other's linguistic difficulties and, at the same time, become acquainted with another culture in addition to the one associated with the target language. A significant byproduct of such encounters between three or more cultures is that they would greatly foster the idea of a common Europe among the young.

In this light, it is highly recommended that existing exchange programmes be expanded to include provision for the in-service training of teachers, including structured visits to the target countries, and to promote the participation of graduates in such projects. In addition, it would also be desirable to establish a network for the training of academic teachers, the training of trainers (cf. the possibilities presented by EFSZ).

The proposal has been put forward that German as a Foreign Study Language should be introduced as a compulsory element in the training of all German teachers.

### **8.2. Measures to be taken in universities (outside the area of teacher training)**

As pointed out under 7.4., structured training of court and conference interpreters and translators should be introduced in regular curricula at Departments of Translators and Interpreters. In addition, specialized literary translation is a field which should be offered in larger measure at universities. In view of the constantly shifting job market, it is recommended that provision be made for preparing students of Translation and Interpreting for non-traditional professional opportunities, e.g. as technical editors, language consultants etc.

As students of the technical disciplines are increasingly required to have a working knowledge of at least two foreign languages, it has been suggested that language programmes should be integrated to a much stronger degree in the ordinary curricula of technically-oriented universities. Here language instruction should cover areas such as technical usage, scientific writing and presentation techniques. Such teaching could be furnished in part by specially established language centres (as at Graz and Linz Universities, mentioned under 4.2.) and supported by a larger number of lectures being held in the technical disciplines by internationally renowned experts in their mother tongues.

### **8.3. Measures to be taken in non-university institutions of higher education (outside the area of teacher training)**

As was mentioned under 7.5., there is a growing need for highly differentiated and innovatively structured language programmes in the field of adult education. It was also stated that flexibility of application should also enjoy high priority. In this context the suggestion has been put forward that language courses could be devised and structured in the form of packages consisting of individual and self-contained building blocks. These building blocks would be adapted to the specific needs of different learner target groups ranging from complete beginners, those needing language skills for professional reasons to very advanced students with individual requirements. It has also been proposed that these programmes could be devised on an interdisciplinary basis, which would provide the additional advantage that ancillary information (provided e.g. by economists, technological experts, linguists, and experts in Cultural Studies, understood in the broadest meaning of the term) could be integrated to large measure. It goes without saying that the products of these packages should be made accessible to language teachers generally, both inside and outside institutions of learning and at all levels. These learning packages should also make extensive provision for application in the new self-study media (video and audio cassettes, diskettes, multimedia, CD-ROM etc.). The very flexibility of these programmes might also render them attractive to new target groups, particularly in industry. They might also furnish new job opportunities for university graduates, not just in the languages.

To devise, organize and implement such innovative packages and programmes it would be necessary to form work groups or committees of selected experts drawn from different disciplines in existing institutions of learning and government bodies. In view of the long-term effects and far-reaching potential of such projects, this is a field in which EU funding is seen as highly desirable and profitable.

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(The authors would like to express their thanks and appreciation to the numerous colleagues who have provided information and contributed working papers.)

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