



Thematic Network Project
in the Area of Languages III

Arabic Language and Culture

Weaknesses in current HE provision in Europe identified

- 1 No attempt has been made to develop common standards for the study of Arabic at higher education level. (Many teachers of Arabic do not seem to be aware of more recent developments in modern language learning and teaching such as the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference.)
- 2 In many cases, provision is unsatisfactory both in terms of the number and qualifications of teaching staff available and of the quality of teaching / learning materials used. Frequently, provision is fragmented and lacks continuity.
- 3 Few attempts seem to have been made to make the study of Arabic and of Arabic/Islamic culture attractive to school leavers.
- 4 Courses in Arabic language and culture are often run by non-specialist administrative units (e.g. departments of philosophy and theology).
- 5 Most institutions / departments do not seem to regard as their business to promote student mobility into Arabic-speaking countries.
- 6 Many curricula in Arabic and Islamic studies still seem to be based on the assumption that graduates will either pursue academic careers or find employment in museums and the like. Higher education institutions seem to be largely unaware of the size and nature of demand in non-academic environments for proficiency in Arabic and for knowledge in Arabic / Islamic culture.
- 7 There is no such thing as a European forum designed to promote the study or Arabic language and culture, and the joint development of appropriate policies, curricula, and materials.