



FIFTEENTH GENERAL MEETING

Freie Universität Berlin, 29 November 2013

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Delegates,

Colleagues and friends,

Dear Honorary Member Régis Ritz,

The reports I delivered at the 13th and 14th General Meetings were rightly considered to be a bit on the long side. This is one of the reasons why the report I am presenting today is a bit shorter – but only a bit. Moreover, it is not really for me to outline a work programme for the coming twelve months and beyond, or to reflect on what services the CEL/ELC could and should provide to its active and associate members. However, I very much look forward to hearing your ideas and proposals regarding the ELC's mission in the period 2014 to 2020 – both at this General Meeting, and later on in Workshop Three.

The CEL/ELC's working groups

I started off last year's Report of the President by providing an overview of the CEL/ELC's working groups. I mentioned the Working Group on Higher Education Language Policy, chaired by Karen M. Lauridsen, the Special Interest Group on the Future of Language Degrees, chaired by Mike Kelly and Boris Vejdovsky, and the Consultative Group on Rethinking Multilingualism, chaired by myself. Those of you who attended our 2012 Forum will remember that outcomes of the three working groups were presented at the Forum. A few months later, the final reports of the two first-mentioned groups were published in our Journal. At last year's General Meeting I held out the prospect of the Rethinking Multilingualism group finishing its report in the early months of 2013. Unfortunately, we failed to do so – and I have to blame myself for this. That said, I have not yet given up hope that some of the group's lead experts will draft a final report in the first half of 2014. I am glad to say that earlier this year Hannah Dunham prepared an overview of the main outcomes of the group's deliberations, which can serve as a starting point for the preparation of the final report.



The publication of the final report of a working group does not necessarily mean that we have said it all. It is, therefore, not surprising that the first workshop held yesterday was devoted to modern language degrees.

As those of you who attended our second workshop yesterday know, we are soon going to have another working group – to be more precise, a Task Force on “The Role of Languages in the European Higher Education Area”, again chaired by Karen M. Lauridsen. The initiative marks a new development in that we hope that a number of leading stakeholder organisations, such as EUA, EURASHE, ENQA, ESU, and ACA will see fit to join the group. In addition, the Board came out in favour of setting up an internal Task Force devoted to this theme, comprised of Board members, in order to make sure that member institutions and organisations can both inform and be informed by the work of the European Task Force.

European projects co-ordinated by CEL/ELC member institutions and by the CEL/ELC

Projects funded under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)

In last year's Report, I provided an overview of past, ongoing and possible future LLP projects. At present, there are two major LLP projects running that are co-ordinated by CEL/ELC member institutions –

- *IntlUni – the Challenges of the multilingual and multicultural learning space* – a three-year Erasmus Academic Network, co-ordinated by Karen M. Lauridsen of Aarhus University. IntlUni officially started on 1 October 2012. Most of you will have been informed about the project's aims and activities at yesterday's Workshop Two. What Karen finds fascinating – and I share her view – is the fact that among the partner representatives there are quite a few young PhD students. Let's hope that some of them will also become involved in future CEL/ELC activities. I hasten to add that Karen also has a large number of experienced colleagues in her project – in other words, a good mixture.
- *MAGICC – Modularising multilingual and multicultural academic communication competence at BA and MA level* – a three year Erasmus Multilateral Project, co-ordinated by Brigitte Forster Vosicki of l'Université de Lausanne.

Information about these projects is available on the project Web sites, which can be accessed via the CEL/ELC Web site. The same goes for two LLP projects that came to an end this year - the three-year OPTIMALE project – an Erasmus Academic Network for Optimising Professional Translator Training in a Multilingual Europe, co-ordinated by Daniel Toudic of the Université Rennes 2 - and the two-year SPEAQ Erasmus Multilateral Project, co-ordinated by the University of Southampton, which explored the ways in which quality in higher education is viewed and practised by three main stakeholder groups: students, academics and quality managers. I had the honour and pleasure of attending the OPTIMALE symposium and final conference held at Rennes 2 on 6 and 7 June respectively – two truly successful events.

Finally, the two-year CELAN Network project – CELAN standing for Language Strategies for Competitiveness and Employability. As I explained last year, CELAN was a rather special case. It was a baby of the Business Platform for Multilingualism, which was launched by the Commission in September 2009 and chaired by the CEL/ELC. CELAN was the outcome of a non-published call; it was comprised of



higher education associations, specialist organisations, such as the CEL/ELC, individual universities and business representative organisations. It was co-ordinated by the CEL/ELC; however, the administrative side was in the hands of FU Berlin. Again, I do not want to go into detail. I described the project at considerable length in last year's Report. I should just like to add four points. (i) Towards the end of the project, we managed to get a three-month extension, which allowed us to finish the outputs we had promised to deliver. (ii) During the final months, we managed to achieve proper integration of the four content work packages. (iii) Although the principal aim of the project was to provide input to the activities of the Business Platform, there are a number of outputs that are of general interest – for example, the Language Needs Analysis Application, designed by Mike Hammersley; the Language Policy/Strategy Management Toolkit For Solving Language Problems, prepared by Infoterm in Vienna; the Vademecum prepared by myself; and the Report Of the Results Of a Survey Conducted Among Networks of Higher Education Institutions, prepared by Hannah Dunham and Angelica Lanzilotti. I should be grateful if you could have a look at these outputs, available on the CELAN Web site, and let me know what you make of them. (iv) Earlier this month, we were informed by the Executive Agency that following the evaluation of the Final Report and project outputs, we would receive the full grant originally awarded by the Agency; in other words, we can expect another 60,000 euro. Of course, part of this amount will have to be passed on to several project partners; but a substantial part will remain with FU Berlin, and the registrar has decided that this money can be used for funding the CEL/ELC Secretariat. More about this later. Just a footnote – the Business Platform for Multilingualism has been dormant since mid-2011, and although the Commission repeatedly announced that it would re-launch the Platform, I have now come to the conclusion that this will not happen.

Unfortunately and quite unexpectedly, two LLP project proposals prepared and submitted by members of our Board were not successful. Daniel Toudic had applied for a one-year accompanying measures project for the exploitation of OPTIMALE outcomes and outputs, and Maurizio Viezzi had applied for a three-year Erasmus Multilateral Project for the development of Innovative Approaches to Training Translators and Interpreters for Society (TRAINS), which was based on the report of the CEL/ELC Special Interest Group on Translation and Interpreting in Public Services – SIGTIPS. I am glad to say that the European Commission continues to be interested in the CEL/ELC initiative. Maurizio describes the situation as follows: “Since the SIGTIPS experience, the European Language Council has closely followed developments in the field of public service interpreting and translation (PSIT) and might play a role in influencing EU policy in that field. The newly-founded European PSIT Network led by Pascal Rillof sees in the European Language Council (with its experience and expertise) a possible precious ally in its campaign aimed at inducing the EU Commission to reproduce in public service settings what has been achieved for court and legal settings (cf. Directive 64/2010). It looks like a battle worth fighting for - something to which the CEL/ELC may decide to devote part of its energy over the next few years.”

Allow me to mention just two more projects – projects which could not be more different in scope. The two-year LINCQ project – Languages in Corporate Quality -, supported by the Council of Europe's European Centre for Modern Languages, is



nearing its end. It has been carried out by four experts and four associate partners, among them the CEL/ELC. Isabelle Ortiz presented the project at last year's Forum. Up-to-date information, especially about a workshop we staged in Graz last week, will soon be available on the ECML Web site.

And finally MIME – Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe. In last year's Report, I referred to a pertinent topic for a large-scale integrated research project included in the 2013 Work Programme of the FP7 Specific Programme Cooperation - "The multilingual challenge for the European citizen". I mentioned the fact that a number of colleagues from CEL/ELC institutions had created consortia with a view to preparing project proposals. The good news is that the Commission decided to fund two projects under this topic. The sad news is that only one of the proposals prepared by colleagues from CEL/ELC member institutions was successful – the MIME project prepared by François Grin of the Université de Genève. Unfortunately, François was unable to join us here in Berlin due to more urgent commitments.

I think it still holds true that projects and policy development are the two pillars of the CEL/ELC. Speaking personally, I have always been impressed by the interest aroused among our members by our working groups. However, I think we now also have to address the issue of impact. In a personal conversation at the Vilnius Unity in Diversity Conference, Michel Lefranc of the French Ministry of Education expressed some doubt about the effectiveness of EU projects in the area of languages. I would not want to go as far as that. But I think we have to ask ourselves what impact our projects and working groups have had in CEL/ELC member institutions and beyond. I think it is not surprising that Brussels is beginning not just to emphasise the importance of "dissemination", but to place special emphasis on the issue of "impact" – both in regard to education and training projects and to research projects.

Before I turn to CEL/ELC internal matters, I should like to briefly report on co-operation with the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

Collaboration with the European Commission and the Council of Europe

The European Commission

As most of you will know, multilingualism policy has been downgraded and downsized in the Directorate-General for Education and Culture. Please remember – from January 2007 to February 2010 we had a Commissioner responsible for EU language policy – Leonard Orban. A footnote – the Commissioner's visit to Freie Universität Berlin on 13 February 2009 is still vividly remembered by colleagues, and former students of ours. His successor, Androulla Vassiliou, is responsible for a wide range of portfolios – Education, Culture, Multilingualism, and Youth. Until the end of 2012, we had a Multilingualism Policy Unit in DG EAC. As of 1 January this year, Multilingualism Policy is a sector of a unit, whose main emphasis is on "Skills and qualifications strategies"; in other words, multilingualism has become part of a skills panorama – skills for growth and jobs.

In my capacity as CEL/ELC president, I was invited to the annual conferences organised by DG Interpretation and DG Translation. Moreover, Maurizio Viezzi and I were invited to the Unity in Diversity Conference – languages for mobility, jobs and active citizenship – held in Vilnius on 25-26 September. Maurizio participated in a



panel under the general heading “Translation and Interpreting for Active Citizenship”; I was the rapporteur of a T&I panel on “Experiences from a decade of EU enlargement” and participated in a panel on “Languages for working opportunities”. At the invitation of the Commission, I also participated in the European Education, Training and Youth Forum 2013 – Working together for reforms, held in Brussels on 17-18 October. Of course, there is no such thing as a free lunch – at short notice I was requested to be the rapporteur of Workshop 1 – Transversal skills and employability.

You may also remember that the Commission invited me to participate in the meetings of the OMC TWG “Languages in education and training”. After the restructuring on 1 January, the mandate of the group was revised – the group is now to concern itself with the definition of a benchmark for the first and second foreign language and with comparative country analyses. The mandate of the group will expire in mid-2014. In early 2014, the Commission will set up a two-year Technical Working Group on Transversal Skills. Following the Forum I just mentioned, the Deputy Director-General of DG EAC invited me in my capacity as CEL/ELC president to nominate a representative to the new Technical Working Group. The Executive Committee agreed that I should nominate Manuel Célio Conceição. Colleagues at the Commission were very pleased.

Council of Europe

Multilingualism has also been downsized at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, which seems to have enhanced the role of the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz. The CEL/ELC continues to be a member of the ECML Professional Network Forum. The next meeting of the Forum will be held back to back with a conference on language education organised by the Austrian authorities within the framework of Austria’s presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. I would expect the new CEL/ELC president to participate in both events.

Cooperation with other stakeholder organisations

Cooperation with other European stakeholder organisations has always been on the CEL/ELC’s agenda. In the past, CEL/ELC representatives have repeatedly been invited to speak at meetings and conferences organised by, for example, EUA, EURASHE, and ACA, and the other way round. You will remember that one of the speakers at last year’s Forum was EUA’s Secretary-General Lesley Wilson. At the ACA 20th Anniversary Conference in June this year, Karen delivered a plenary speech on “Teaching and learning in English: how to make it work”. ACA Director Bernd Wächter is a member of the evaluation board of Karen’s “IntlUni” Network project, and Karen is a member of the expert advisory group for the one-year project “Rethinking the role of English-taught programmes in the EHEA” – a new survey of English-taught programmes in Europe.

Major issues addressed by the CEL/ELC Board and the CEL/ELC Executive Committee

Since the 14th General Meeting, the Board has held four meetings, and the Executive Committee six virtual meetings – the latter mainly for the purpose of preparing three of the Board meetings. Among other things, the Board evaluated the 2012 Forum



and prepared the three workshops surrounding this General Meeting. As you will have realised by now, the issue of the internationalisation of European higher education was a dominant topic in our deliberations. In mid-March, the Board held a two-day strategy meeting. Members discussed the present state of the CEL/ELC and reflected on various aspects of the association's future. I expect the new Board to continue this discussion.

The CEL/ELC Secretariat – activities in the period 12/2012 to 11/2013; the future of the Secretariat

The CEL/ELC Secretariat housed at Freie Universität Berlin has benefited enormously from the fact that FUB's Executive Board made extra funds available for the employment of a head of the Secretariat – admittedly, for a limited period of time only – but still. Originally, Hannah got a contract for half a position. On 1 January, her working hours were increased to 29.5 hours a week. This enabled her to continue cleaning out our files and, above all, to improve contacts with CEL/ELC members. She also helped to plan and prepare the minutes of the Board and Executive Committee meetings that I shall mention shortly. Needless to say, the best part of her time was devoted to the creation of our new Web site, in which she was supported by Angelica Lanzilotti.

The Board expressed its gratitude to FU Berlin for the support provided and expressed the hope that the Secretariat could remain at FU Berlin – at least for an interim period. As I indicated before, the CEL/ELC has benefited from the fact that the Executive Board allowed us to use the overheads of our EU projects co-ordinated by FUB for the running of the Secretariat. Of course, we were and are also grateful for the provision of office space and so on and forth.

What I can tell you today is that the director of our Language Centre, Ruth Tobias, has kindly agreed to have the Secretariat housed at the Centre. There is also the prospect of a new colleague to be hired by the Centre to run the Secretariat. If the new Board finds this agreeable, our new president will have to discuss details with Ruth Tobias.

Internal and external communication – the new Web site and another go at a CEL/ELC newsletter

The creation of a new Web site had been on our agenda for a long time. Eventually, in late November 2011, a two-day meeting was held at FU Berlin, attended by, among others, Erik Uytterhoeven, two colleagues from FUB's Centre for Digital Systems (CeDiS), and myself, at which we took a critical look at the old Web site and agreed on concrete proposals for the new Web site to be created.

I have to admit that I am not an expert on Web sites and that, for time reasons, I was unable to participate in the planning and development of the new Web site. The Board was grateful that FUB's Executive Board authorised CeDiS to provide its services to us free of charge, in other words, to transfer and integrate our Web site into FUB's Content Management System. What we did not realise at that time was the fact that FUB's CMS also has its limitations.



Moreover, what I have come to realise is that in 2013 the Web site of a European organisation is expected to be different from the Web sites we had ten years ago. In other words, it is not just a matter of updated digital technology, but of the functions an up-to-date Web site ought to perform. Hannah has provided me with a clear analysis of what has been achieved and is still to be done. Unfortunately, she will not be able to participate in the further development of our Web site, but we should certainly take her considerations into account.

I think I'd better stop here. I shall simply say that the new Board will have to focus in 2014 on developing a comprehensive communication policy for the years to come. This includes the issue of a newsletter. In March, the Board decided that we should have a newsletter – but what we failed to do was to consider what I have just said – to design a comprehensive communication policy.

The 12/2012-11/2013 Work Programme

In last year's report, I set out a comprehensive work programme for the following twelve months. My report is available on our Web site. Just have a look at it again. I should like to believe that we have not done too badly – but there is certainly more to be done.

Membership

As I admitted in last year's Report, the issue of membership had not been properly addressed in the past. However, Hannah Dunham and Angelica Lanzilotti understood that this was an immensely important issue. In last year's report, I stated that we had 136 active members and 12 associate members. What I have since learned is that 90 active and 9 associate members paid their membership fees for 2012, and that to date 71 active and 12 associate members have paid their fees for 2013. When it became clear that even fewer active members were likely to pay their membership fees for 2013 than last year, Hannah and I decided – backed by the Board – that we had to write to every single "silent" member representative to find out what was what. This proved to be a Herculean task because in many cases we got returned E-mail messages. To cut a long story short – in very few cases did we get positive answers, no matter how often and to how many different people Hannah wrote.

That said, we now have a clearer picture of which member institutions want to stay on board and which institutions want to resign. Five institutions have officially resigned, two colleagues in Australia became associate members, and due to Célio, Sorbonne Nouvelle has applied for membership, which was okayed by the Board yesterday. I am sure you will agree this is a rather gloomy picture, and the new Board will have to address this issue as a matter of urgency. I do apologise for being so blunt about this. As you can imagine, this is also relevant to the survival of our Journal – because I think we cannot deliver the Journal free of charge to members who do not pay their fees.

A message from our honorary member Noël Muylle

Dear Wolfgang,

As you discovered already I guess I cannot come to Berlin for the ELC meeting *helas*. I will be in St Petersburg .. for the good cause ...



As you know me well ... you will accept my apologies to you and the members of the Board, and even better, my sincere thanks for all you did all these years for the ELC and so many European projects you launched and steered for the benefit of people's understanding and real communication through one tool ... languages ... all different but equal ... characterising the individual.

My hope is that all this will be continued through the "new leaders" who will be designated and to whom I send my very very best wishes”.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION