



Network project for the decentralised and centralised dissemination of TNP3 results and outcomes

SYNTHESIS REPORT “EAST” (SUB-PROJECT 3)

Languages as an Interface between the Different Sectors of Education

1. Aims and Issues of the Subproject

The Concept of the Subproject: Subproject 3 of TNP3 has focused on a new concept in language learning and teaching. It has dealt with issues concerning areas where the different sectors of education meet and interact, i.e. where communication and cooperation take place between different actors/players in language learning and teaching. They are junctions, where on one hand different levels of language education interact and where on the other hand different players, i.e. decision-makers and language providers, both on the vertical axis of formal language education and on the horizontal axis of other language providers or language learning opportunities (could) meet. We were interested in the modes, effects, issues and structures, i.e. if and how teachers at different levels, learners, stakeholders and any other partners cooperate and communicate with Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in order to ensure the common goal of enhancing and improving language learning and multilingualism in a life-long-learning (LLL) perspective.

Rationales for the New Concept: In spite of the fact that the learning of languages is generally acknowledged to be a life-long process par excellence and in spite of the various instruments being developed and actions undertaken on the European level to ensure more effective, transparent and comparable language learning results Europe-wide (e.g. CEFR and ELP), language specialists working in the different sectors of education are largely unaware of each other, as are the different sectors of education, the decision-makers and other providers. The goal of the subproject was to look into the practices and experiences of successful interlinking, to detect and analyse the needs and possibilities, where cooperation is not yet in place and could bring about synergetic effects, and to demonstrate, how communication between the different players would benefit both learners, institutions and countries in order for their citizens to attain the goal of mastering at least 1+2 languages. This goal is tied up with general European endeavours: the raising of employability

through mobility, the creation of social cohesion, and the fostering of the European dimension.

General Themes and Aims: Three main issues are at the very heart of the subproject's activities, reports, analyses, and recommendations:

- Facilitating the continuity of language learning (and teaching) by making it more coherent and efficient, a goal to be attained by removing obstacles for a smooth progression and transparent and efficient learning paths.
- Making space and enhancing motivation for learning more languages encouraging and enhancing multilingualism and attaining the European goal of every citizen speaking at least 2 foreign languages. Fostering individual and collective language-awareness processes in the life-long-learning perspective.

The new perspective ties up with the orientation towards outcomes: particularly in language learning the outcome of the learning process must be competence, i.e. the ability of applying knowledge. This is of primary importance for the individual learner and for professionals in language teaching. With every step of his path towards multilingualism the learner should be able to check the stages of competence reached, and accordingly should be able to choose from a large set of offerings to continue efficiently and without unnecessary delay in the direction set and with the language(s) he/she decides to learn or improve. In order to ensure such a transparent, efficient, individually diverse, therefore satisfactory linguistic progression, professionals from diverse sectors of the language industry and decision-makers are expected to step out, talk to one another and by concentrating on the outcomes of learning processes and to optimise the results of their common endeavours. Such an approach will result in raising the awareness for learning languages and making European citizens see the advantages of knowing more languages as well as the need to take them up at different stages of their life.

Role of HEI in this Process: One of the main objectives of the subproject was to identify the role of HEI in these processes. As HEI occupy a central position in the process of life-long-learning, both in terms of provision for the language learner and of producing the human resources needed for language education, they should take the lead in designing language learning scenarios encompassing the whole spectrum of language learning. We wanted to find out how HEI might step in, take up, stimulate and initiate activities encouraging and involving contacts.

2. Outline of the Activities and the Course of the Subproject

In the course of work on the subproject the following main activities were carried out and the following results achieved:

Stage 1: Introduction, clarification and identification of relevant issues concerning the concept of interface: decisions on the structure of the national

reports dealing with the mapping of existing and needed contacts and interaction, reports on possibly existing examples of good practice. Product: National Reports (NR) and questionnaires on existing interaction on the national level.

Stage 2: On the basis of the national reports a synthesis report (SR) was produced, discussed and evaluated; it was used as a reference paper for the production of a questionnaire in a Europe-wide survey. The questionnaires were translated and a list of respondents was produced. Products: Synthesis Report (SR), workshop reports, questionnaires in 11 languages.

Stage 3: On the basis of the information gathered recommendations and proposals were formulated and discussed in workshops. Products: Consultation results, recommendations and proposals, Final Report.

For concrete examples of interaction and solutions, please consult the NR, the SR, the workshop reports, the Southampton reports on teacher training, and the extensive Final Report on the TNP3 website.

3. Mapping of Interfaces

In order to make the NR comparable and to get a clearer overview of the various kinds of overlap, the different sectors of education and the various foreign language (FL) teaching providers were structured into a system of coordinates. The vertical axis represents the three (or more) levels of the formal educational systems, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. The horizontal axis brings together all the other formal or informal language providers, such as adult education institutions, foreign cultural institutes, language schools and private language institutions as well as distance and e-learning organisations.

4. Results of Consultation

As described in the Synthesis Report the general outcome of the survey is that on the vertical axis the interface between HEI and Secondary Education plays the most important role. This interface includes teacher training, with teachers in secondary education acting as mentors, in-service training, cooperation in research and in developing teaching and assessment methods. Little is done, however, to encompass the full circle of FL learning and teaching. In early LL for example there is little cooperation between HEI and language providers, so this is an urgent need. Another area in need of developing is the LLLL-concept. The horizontal axis describes existing cooperation between HEI and language providers outside formal education. The most prominent areas here are Foreign Cultural Institutes, e.g. the Goethe Institut, Alliance Française, Distance and E-learning and internal organizations, such as EUROCALL, COIMBRA, LINGUA,

AILA etc. The countries of East and Central Europe are no exceptions here as they follow the same pattern, both on the vertical and the horizontal axis.

5. The Eastern Region with Germany and Austria

The countries being dealt with and presented in this decentralised dissemination conference are in contrast to the preceding three ones especially varied, thus making it hard to lay out common characteristics. They range from Poland in the North, that is, however, not represented by a member in the subproject, then Germany with its own specific situation, mirroring the diversity of Europe's reality in its educational systems and language learning through the differences in approach in the different "Länder", Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary in the centre to Slovenia in the South. Though feeling very strongly about their national languages, they cannot be considered countries with a "monoglot mentality" (as it was the case for a very long time with the romance countries), as they have understood relatively early the importance of the spreading of foreign languages and multilingualism. The reasons are as varied as the countries themselves and their traditions: Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia are remnants of a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual empire with the corresponding tradition. Though they might have gone through long phases of insisting on monolingual national development, the multilingual past seems to linger in the "collective" subconscious, thus making either foreign language learning or the decision for opening up to other languages easier. Germany is again a special case: there the awareness of destructive and fatal consequences when forcing one language on others has left a strong imprint, that might sometimes swing into an undesirable extreme by inhibiting a natural, unbroken relationship of (some) native speakers and by leaving its care in the hands of non-natives - this being of course a perception from outside. All the above countries can however be joined through a double common experience. On the one hand they are all part of the European Union now and thus they know, that in order to be active members of the international community and be competitive on the global scene foreign language and intercultural skills are a must. On the other hand some of them, though not being multilingual, have a remarkable history of immigration or/and of dealing with minority languages. - In the past migrants came from Europe's East and South; now we are faced with an other common phenomenon, the fact that migration cannot be pinned down to singular regions, but it is truly international and consequently demands different approaches. In contrast to some states in the West and South, where large/scale immigration has to be dealt with (e.g. Spain, France, United Kingdom) this kind of new immigration in most Eastern countries is still relatively small (possibly with the exception of Germany). Thus the Eastern region has first to work on the change of public awareness concerning the range of foreign languages to be dealt with and might prepare itself for new developments by taking up and making use of experiences and

solutions that are being developed at the very moment in France and Spain as well as in some Nordic countries.

The Slavic and Central European countries have a distinct specific tradition in HE concerning foreign language teaching and learning, as in the past the influence of linguistics and competence acquisition has had a stronger impact on language learning than literary history and theory. Moreover in some of the states transition has prompted not only sudden changes towards other foreign languages, but the adoption of EU standards has resulted in general transformations of the HE area by conferring to Bologna models and redesigning curricula at a large scale, i.e. on a national level. Even there, where thorough changes encompassing the whole HE area are attempted, teaching and learning of foreign languages as well as fostering multilingualism mostly remains marginalised.

To counterbalance and react to this situation and because of the above reasons HEI have to become active and start playing a central role. To what extent cooperation with the different sectors of education and with other language providers is already in place and can be developed, however, also depends on factors outside the educational system. Such factors are for example national language policies, the allocation of resources for teacher training, in-service and specialist training, the general attitude in society and on the labour market to the needs of language and cultural skills, especially in more than one FL, and the recognition of the common European goal that every citizen should master 1+2 languages, i.e. mother tongue and two FL, up to level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference.

5.1 Interface Structures in Existence

The following data are based mainly on the Austrian, Czech, German and Hungarian NR as well as questionnaires, the Hungarian updated version of the NR and the Slovenian questionnaire.

5.1.1 Language policies and consultation bodies

Central to the area of FL learning and teaching is the concept of language policy. A general language policy refers to the official status of the language(s) spoken in a specific country, whereas a FL policy outlines the framework for FL planning and provision. In all countries of the Central and Eastern European region there are some national language policies in place, dealing especially with the official language(s) and the minority languages, if they are not already regulated by law. Not in all minority languages, however, education is provided and certainly not in immigrant languages. Measures and systems differ from

country to country.¹ FL policies on the national level might not be the rule, but mostly since 2001, the European Year of Languages, there are quite a number of promising initiatives on the regional level or in special sections of FL education: Austria prides herself on having been the first country in Europe in 1998 to introduce by law a foreign language – English – from the first grade at primary school as a compulsory subject. If the aim of motivating interest in a foreign language, to open the way for communicative skills in English and to lead to a greater openness towards speakers of another language has been achieved, has yet to be proved, as English does not necessarily encourage multilingualism. Difficulties were encountered also in the implementation of the concept, that second language teaching should be integrated into the general curriculum and is to be seen as an integrative part of lessons, as some groups of teachers were not comfortable with English. In 2001 an Austrian Language Committee was created which helped to develop a National Action Plan on how to implement the European objectives within the Austrian educational system in view of national priorities and life long learning. – Hungary's World Language Programme, which officially started in 2003, was launched by the Ministry of Education. This is an excellent example of the creation of a comprehensive national language policy by covering all areas of language education and systematically developing people's language competences irrespective of their

¹ To cite a few examples from the NR:

Austria: In the mixed-language districts of Carinthia and Burgenland, Slovene, Croatian and Hungarian are by Austrian school law admitted as further official languages to German. In Carinthia, instruction in the first three grades of *Volksschule* (primary school) is bilingual for the Slovenian minority. From grade 4 of primary school onwards and in general secondary school, instruction is in German. For members of the Slovene minority, Slovenian is taught four hours a week as a compulsory subject. Similar rules apply to the Hungarian and Croat minorities. Instruction is split equally between German and Hungarian and German and Croatian in the first four years of primary school. Further to the Slovenes, Croats and Hungarians, the Czechs and Slovaks (in Vienna) as well as the Roma (in Burgenland) and the Sinti (in Carinthia) exist as minorities.

Czech Republic: Traditional national minorities include Slovaks (1.8 %), Poles (0.5 %) and Germans (0.4 %). Moravians (3 %) and Silesians (1 %). Due to low numbers and lack of concentration of these minorities their right to be educated in their language is organised by the public administration only for the Polish minority in the North of Moravia - from nursery school to gymnasium. No interest has been expressed in education in Slovak, the reason probably being the close similarity of both languages and cultures.

Hungary: 98.5 % of the country's population speaks Hungarian as mother tongue. Minorities have the legal right to learn and use their own language at school. In settlements local minority governments can be established upon the request of at least five members of any minority community. The most important national and ethnic groups of Hungary include the Croatian (80,000-90,000 people), the German (200,000-220,000) the Romanian (25,000), the Serbian (5000), the Slovak (100,000-110,000) and the Slovene (5000) population. According to estimates the Gypsy (Roma) population without a native language is about 500,000 and the number of those who speak and use their language is about 142,000. Education is offered for them in educational institutions for the minorities from kindergarten to university level.

Slovenia: Education from nursery to the end of secondary education is offered in the two minority languages Italian and Hungarian. There are special measures for Roma children, but none yet for the migrant population.

age, social status and/or profession, Within the programme long-term projects are to be elaborated and at the same time the World Language document tries to pinpoint critical areas and outline recommendations.² – In Slovenia there is not yet a national FL policy or action plan, but the learning of foreign languages has been moved towards early learning for a few years (and starting a foreign language in first grade is being debated) on primary level and a second foreign language is to be reintroduced as compulsory at the same level due to the European FL Action Plan. – In Germany mapping of FL measures and policies is almost impossible due to the federative structure of education. Initiatives, many of whom go back to the nineties or were instigated at the beginning of the second millennium, are in general regional and local. On the one hand there are quite some general declarations by governmental bodies or institutions (e.g. the Kulturministerkonferenz, the DAAD), laying down the principles and aims of FL learning and teaching on different levels, but having no direct and overall impact, on the other hand there are, as the NR shows, many partial activities and single initiatives to enhance multilingualism and FL learning in a life-long-learning perspective. These are often scattered, reduced in size and time, have a limited range of impact, but could serve as examples of good practise.

A general trend towards a much more centralised, systematic and harmonised approach to FL teaching and the tackling of FL issues can be noted also in Central Europe and the East on the level of creating general, nationwide frameworks. It goes hand in hand with decentralisation and greater autonomy on institutional level, where individual schools and institutions – or regions – are instigated to decide on their own FL policies and thus design their own profiles. In some countries, such as some German Länder, but increasingly also in other countries, especially there where private schools are being established, profiling through the choice of FL is quite common. – At university level some institutions are already implementing exemplary, even if not all of the them formally passed FL policies, to name a few, the Freie Universität Berlin, some departments at Klagenfurt University and the Romanian university of Babes-Bolyai in Cluj. The need for a transfer of knowledge on how to create FL policies was met and taken up in one of the most acclaimed sub themes of the ENLU-project (cf. www.fu-berlin.de/enlu/) and will be followed up by a network.

Little is known about the functioning of cooperation and communication between the different sectors of education in the frameworks of centralised national policies, even if they offer a great opportunity for the different sectors of education to talk to one another and to decide together on language issues and the redesigning of curricula. There is a lack of data also on university FL policies in the region. As regards to consultation bodies on national, regional or local level the Austrian Language Committee³ was already mentioned, in

² http://www.tpf.iif.hu/pages/content/index.php?page_id=59

³ The Austrian Language Competence Centre is an interface between the European Commission, the Austrian Language Committee and the Federal Ministry for Education,

Slovenia a Council for FL to the Ministry of Education, in which HE representatives with other stakeholders discussed matters of strategic importance and implementation problems, connected the different educational sectors, dealing with FL teaching, but was unfortunately dissolved by the present government, in Hungary there seems to be no regular national consultation body in place but cooperation is encouraged through the above mentioned programme and its current system of project funding. In Germany a diverse range of different boards, consultation bodies and associations could be identified:

- In 2001 the Federal German Government established an advisory board (Beirat) consisting of HE, *Länder*, federal government, economy associations and trade union representatives; they formulated *Ten theses of an action plan for language learning*, identifying goals of language policy across the different educational sectors; the board stresses the linking of the different educational sectors and a coherence in language acquisition (http://www.bmbf.de/_media/press/Akt1116_01Thesen.pdf)
- An important forum for cooperation, exchange of experience and information is the AKS, the *Arbeitskreis* of language centres, language teaching and FL institutes; it is the only association in Germany, representing FL teaching in German HE comprehensively. Its addressees are individuals and institutes active in practical language acquisition in HE, working in the field of language didactics, inset training as well as in research of the respective fields. The AKS organises conferences, workshops, publishes research and action results, offers accreditation for the HE FL certificate *UNlcert*[®] and carries out surveys. (<http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/aks/>)
- The Federal Government encourages cooperation across the *Länder* by financing cooperation projects (Verbundprojekte) for quality enhancement in the educational sectors. It chooses strategic areas and innovative measures, not specifically in FL teaching and learning, such as »Life-Long-Learning«, »IT in education« etc. Some additional information was given in the TNP2 report, available at http://www.taalnet.rug.ac.be/tnp/national_reports.html.
- On regional level the frameworks and action plans in the area of language policy of the *Kulturministerkonferenz* (KMK, the discussion and coordination platform of the *Länder* ministers of education) and the *Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* (HRK, rectors' conference) instigated many activities between the educational sectors and other stakeholders. In this context regional platforms or bodies for the enhancement of multilingualism play a leading role; cooperation, often initiated and lead by HEI, connects cultural and political institutions as well as different businesses. The predominant areas of cooperation are: networking of language provision institutions to promote regional interests, organisation

Science and Culture. Synergies with the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz/Austria and all other Austrian institutions involved in language developments have been established

of events to promote multilingualism and multiculturalism, early learning, promotion of innovative research project in the field of language learning innovation. Two noteworthy examples of regional language councils are the SPRACHENRAT Mittleres Ruhrgebiet and SPRACHENRAT Saar, cf. <http://www.sprachenrat.de> and <http://www.sprachenrat-saar.de>.

- The FL Round Table (Runder Fremdsprachentisch) aims at networking in the field of FL learning and teaching, esp. teacher training and in- service training, project work for innovative teaching and learning methods, production of teaching materials and cooperation in the implementation of language portfolios. The cooperative partners are universities, school administration and schools in Bonn, Köln and Bremen, the firms Bayer and Deutsche Telekom.

5.1.2 Vertical axis – cooperation and communication of HEI with the formal educational sectors

In general an increase of collaboration between HEI and the levels of the formal educational sectors could be detected: the higher up on the educational ladder a school type is the better are the chances for regular or occasional cooperation. Thus the **pre-elementary** sector is still very much detached from HEI even if opportunities to collaborate in the field of very early language learning have been taken up in some research initiatives. Moreover some countries signalled cooperation via staff involvement, teaching and assessment methods and learning resources as well as in-service training. In the Czech Republic some universities, specifically faculties for education, offer study programmes of teaching foreign languages at preschool-level. But due to the paramount importance of this sector – for many children FL courses in nursery school represent their first contact with other languages – a more pro-active and engaged response of HEI is necessary. FL teachers, working in pre-school education, are “interfaces” in person: in their activities they have to combine many competences that normally are separate. As curricula for this sector do not exist, it is up to them to create course programmes, come up with appropriate learning methods as well as materials and resources. In many cases being graduates of FL studies and working in locally, community run institutions they are very well acquainted with the different needs, not only those for appropriate training and transfer of experience, but also social ones. HEI should respond to this challenge that is quickly moving out of the public sphere into private hands, and they have to react fast if they want to ensure insight into the entire progression of FL learning from its very start.

It is the importance of **continuity and progression** as a tool to a more efficient and better way of learning FL, enhancing multilingualism and thus enabling to reach the European goal of 1+2 languages that stands at the very heart of many debates and discussions between school practitioners, HE representatives, representatives of associations and sometimes also of government officials: Often these “interfaces” take the form of working groups in

charge of designing or renewing school curricula. Curricular Commissions, appointed on a ministerial level either on national or on “regional” level (in Germany this is the competence of the *Länder* educational bodies), were identified in Austria, Germany and Slovenia. They mostly consist of the above representatives, often they are joined by government and school-board officials as well as experts from pedagogical/educational institutes. In Hungary experts from the HE area are also involved in preparing curricula throughout the whole range of formal education. The Austrian “Lehrplankommissionen” and other cooperation bodies have attempted to make clear strands running through the concepts of language teaching from the beginning of primary to the end of secondary, thus connecting all learning steps. They try to achieve their goal by: 1. formulating clear concepts for the whole of formal education and thus ensuring coherent curricular changes 2. using the CEF as a tool. i.e. referring to the framework of language learning as a whole, by the embedding of the CEF overcoming the isolation of single learning steps 3. making teachers pay special attention to the competences, their learners have acquired on another level or in another school environment, in order not to underestimate or overburden them. Moreover single initiatives of cooperation and communication between the formal educational sectors have been identified in Austria that unfortunately have not resulted in systematic networking, but prove how productive interfacing can be.⁴

Though language provision on **primary level** and also the training of FL teachers for this level varies widely from country to country – as the Hungarian update shows, the changes are not always expected to gain better outcomes – there is a clear trend towards early learning of FL and also slight changes towards a broader range of languages besides English. Here it is the task of HEI to step in and develop systematically adequate training programmes and resources with the cooperation of educational institutes and practitioners. Going back to the identification of types of communication between HEI and the primary sector besides research and curriculum development or amendment all countries identified in-service training as a strong interface, some of them also the joint development of portfolios and cooperation in assessment methods. Here, as our subproject tried to point out in several recommendations, HEI have to take the lead and find ways of putting initial training into place that has been developed by several partners, create appropriate in-service training, prepare materials, especially also in the field of e-learning, where cooperation already

⁴ The Austrian NR reports a few remarkable initiatives from Tyrol, where teachers from the Lower Secondary school and from the Upper Secondary Grammar school in Telfs met on a regular basis for several years to discuss content and to gain an overview of teaching and learning in the reciprocal areas. The initiative was considered successful by all, but ceased to function with the growth of the town. In Innsbruck, there were attempts at co-operation between English teachers at these two levels by bringing teachers together to exchange perspectives. The meetings resulted in some mutual classroom visits, which proved to be most enriching and enlightening for all those involved. Such cooperation, however, can only reach a few teachers and ceases with the professional commitments of those involved.

exists and make communities aware of the language issues to be taken up in different ways.

Close contacts between HEI and school teachers traditionally exist in the secondary educational sector as universities usually train teachers, they might organise different forms of inset-training together, cooperate by mentoring students in pedagogical practice⁵ or provide resources.⁶ It is interesting that all the four countries, where questionnaires were filled out, identified communication between HEI and the secondary sector in almost all types of cooperation: in the area of learning and teaching (curriculum development, entry and exit qualification and in-service training), of organisation (co-operation via staff, in policy development, in consultation bodies and in research) and of materials and resources (teaching and assessment methods, teaching materials, learning resources, language portfolio and e-learning), the only exception, where no cooperation was detected, in some countries being validation and recognition as well as relations with external stakeholders. – In Austria upper secondary teachers are explicitly required by the general curricula to take into account the problem of contact points and of learning continuity between primary and secondary school, but as the same paper concludes, there is no legal obligation or provision of communication either in initial training, in-service training or in school practise on the two sectors talking to one another. Therefore recommendations to overcome this lack of interfacing are given, e.g. by all future teachers on the initial training level to share courses and thus be informed about the curricular demands of both school sectors.⁷ This, however, as experiences in other countries show, e.g. in Slovenia, where primary school goes on for nine years and comprises also Lower Secondary and where FL teachers are educated for Lower and Upper Secondary alike,

⁵ Mentoring might work both ways: on the one hand school teachers take over mentoring student trainees on the other hand HE lecturers or professors can help pupils to write scientific papers in upper secondary classes. Such forms of cooperation were identified in Germany (Universität Aachen, Landesinstitut für Schule und Weiterbildung, Gymnasiums: <http://www.learn-line.nrw.de/angebote/gymoberst/medio/doku/facharbeit>) but they exist also in other countries, e.g. Slovenia. The University in Potsdam cooperates with secondary schools of the region in various activities: they tutor pupils to use ICT for FL learning and autonomous learning, prepare exchange-pupils etc.

⁶ In Hungary teachers from primary and secondary schools are trained to be mentor teachers for various teacher training institutions of HE. Mentoring teacher trainees requires all sorts of cooperation between the primary/secondary schools as well as HEI in field of organisation, management, evaluation, curricula and teaching and assessment methods. There is a cooperation via staff, in policy development and methods. If students of a teacher training institution choose to write their thesis work in the field of FL teaching methodology, one of the assessors – usually the second reader – is a primary or secondary school language teacher who can assess the work from a more practice-oriented point of view. It is very similar in Slovenia and Austria.

⁷ See: Draft version of the Language Education Policy Profile – Country Report Austria. Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and Federal Ministry for Science and Research, 2007, p. 51-53. p 52. http://www.oesz.at/oesko/dat/LEPP_ENGLISH_endversion070403.pdf

might not result in the desired effects of interface-awareness, on the contrary. School types tend to be competitive and heighten the tension between the levels, therefore communication and cooperation in many possible forms, orchestrated and moderated by HEI, but also by educational boards, in in-service activities, curricular and policy development activities etc. are highly desirable. Where teachers are aware of the contact-point problems and are willing to deal with it, they normally stumble into other, unbridgeable obstacles: the rigidity of the school-system and the logistics of school-organisation. In most countries it is unthinkable to form FL classes or courses according to the competence-level and disregarding the age of the pupils; this more individual and much more effective approach would call for complicated logistics, heads of school are not prepared to risk. Thus FL teachers on higher levels end up with heterogeneous classes and have to disregard individual progression. This is a problem that would have to be tackled systematically and on a wider, regional or national level: examples and experiences, how these problems can be dealt with, would be especially welcome for the new European countries, as the rapid changes and amount of reforms in all social and economic areas create huge resistance towards additional reforms.

Such insecurity has been identified in Hungary, where the number of HEI has risen considerably and, according to the NR this area has become a regular battlefield. **Teacher training** is drawn into this battle for survival, where financial matters gain ground over professional ones, because the trend is changing from experienced teacher training institutions to more academic HEI, where expertise and practise might get lost in favour of more theoretical and less applied approaches.⁸ On the other hand the state of flux of teacher training regulations

⁸ In her update of the Hungarian NR of 2007, Klara Szabo explains: »Especially sensitive is the area of teacher training and there is the danger that instead of the more experienced teacher training institutions, the more academic HE institutions, that is the most traditional – and conservative – universities will take over the job which would definitely mean a great loss of expertise and practice. It would also mean that the direction once again would turn toward theory instead of becoming more life-like and practical, as it would have been more desirable. Unfortunately the primary and secondary schools, local governments, parents' organisations have never been asked what kind of teacher training they would prefer in their communities and local schools.

Due to demographic changes (number of school-age children nationally is going down) and the relatively high number of college and university graduates with teachers' degrees means that the degree currently has a low prestige on the job market. The situation will soon arise that there will be far too many teachers in the school system with out-of-date pedagogical knowledge and skills. Their in-service training will mean a major task. As far as initial teacher training is concerned the desirable tendency would be to move from the quantitative aspect of teacher training to the qualitative aspect. The prestige of the profession will grow since the degree in the future can be obtained only on the master's level. The programmes are currently being elaborated but – theoretically - officials encourage HEIs to launch teacher training programs in foreign languages, that is to train teachers who will be able to teach their subject (geography, maths etc.) in a foreign language. Whether or not these programmes will materialise – it remains to be seen.»

and provisions due to the Bologna reforms, the Lisbon strategy and European standards, especially the competence and outcome driven approaches as well as the necessity for quality enhancement, should result in positive developments: In Slovenia HEI are traditionally responsible for initial teacher training for all subjects on the secondary level, but also for all languages on the primary level, i.e. upper secondary. Partner projects between schools and HEI (not only educational!), sponsored by European funds, as well as “Bologna projects” for curriculum innovation and other qualitative changes in their implementation have brought about a systematic approach to cooperation and communication between HEI and schools on the one hand and have resulted in the creation of a 60 ECTS, a one year “pedagogical module”, for all future teachers. It is much more practise-centred, by introducing new areas and promoting new competences it corresponds to contemporary teacher profiles and European standards. The current system of teaching practice for students of teacher training colleges in Hungary often uses external schools (other than the university or college practice school) as venues for the teaching practice. Students often go back to their own regional or local school for their teaching practice and this way a broader cooperation can exist between different schools and school types within one location or between schools in different locations. This is true also for other countries, e.g. Slovenia. In Germany a project group in Hamburg formulated a core curriculum for FL teacher training by linking up training for a specific subject part with pedagogical issues. The problem, how to relate exit examinations on the secondary level to the tertiary one, that the project does not address, has been solved by the new teacher training bachelor programmes for English, French, Italian, Polish, Russian and Spanish at the Freie Universität Berlin and the University Potsdam (Brandenburg), where modules were designed in accordance to the CEF and the exit standards at secondary level. In Austria relevant changes are under way, information on them can be found in the already cited Austrian policy profile paper.⁹

It seems that the **CEFR and the portfolios** are gaining ground in the countries of Central and East Europe: assessing all language skills with relevant criteria in accordance with the CEFR, the introduction of portfolios at different levels, often in cooperation with HEI, especially when research has to be done on these tools, is being taken up in several regions, we have positive reports from Austria, where the CEF functions as curricular basis, similar changes are expected in Slovenia, the Czech Republic reports on the use of portfolios in single schools, while in Germany a three-year project on the topic of “Learning and teaching languages as a continuum” has been running. Projects partners of the ambitious (2,5 Mio €) initiative are several *Länder* (Hessen as coordinator and Bayern, Brandenburg, Bremen, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Thüringen), their goal is to produce and study a federally used, Council of Europe accredited Language portfolio as a tool for documentation and evaluation in the primary

⁹ Cf. http://www.oesz.at/oesko/dat/LEPP_ENGLISH_endversion070403.pdf, p.19.

sector, that would help to ensure continuity of FL learning at the interface to the secondary level.¹⁰

In general it must be stressed that projects or networks (or simply working together on a task), especially if they are international, (co)funded by European initiatives, function as important interface-creators: They bring together people from different surroundings with different experiences talking to one another and finding solutions on the same level, irrelevant of their respective background. This fact has been especially noticed in the Hungarian NR.¹¹ The only drawback of these and similar activities are the poor dissemination results and the dissolution of the cooperation once the results have been reached.

As our colleague from Hungary points out, **in-service training** is a traditionally good example of an interface between different sectors of education since language departments or institutions of higher education, regional or local pedagogical institutes, as well as the private educational sector all offer in-service training programmes. Informal links exist between these sectors; more guidance, more formal bodies and dialogues would be needed, not only to coordinate the events, materials and programmes, but especially to take full advantage of the cooperation and communication that is already in place. Her findings apply to all discussed countries. The German NR identifies structured cooperation between educational sectors in in-service training for intercultural, self-directed and autonomous learning as well as early learning and adult FL education.¹²

In the past ten years a remarkable number of FL provision institutions have sprung up, either as university language centres, departments or other units, providing courses in FL for all those students that are either individually interested in learning languages or take them as part of their study programme. Cooperation and communication in this area has to work intra-university, i.e. inside the HEI itself and be connected to the disciplines they deal with. Due to their openness to the wider interested public – most centres are just partly financed by university funds and have to secure their own means –, university language centres represent an institution belonging to the vertical as well as the horizontal axis. In Austria such centres have been founded at most universities

¹⁰ Cf. <http://www.blk-bonn.de/modellversuche/sprachenlehren.htm>

¹¹ The current system of applications for project funding in Hungary also encourages the establishment of consortia from different spheres of life and types of educational institutions. (Schools often cooperate with the business sector or some type of managerial organisation). Projects with the aim of writing/developing teaching materials, workbooks, practice books, portfolios or multimedia CDs also include the elements of piloting and evaluating the new material. This phase of project work requires close cooperation between language- often subject- teachers at primary and secondary schools and materials writers who work in institutions of higher education.

¹² The Kassel English Colloquia (KEC) is organised twice a year: the invitees are students and members of HEI, graduates, trainees and teachers from 180 schools in the region. Once a year HEI of Berlin and Brandenburg organise a conference to discuss current problems of learning and teaching in a subject-encompassing manner.

and they offer a wide range of courses. Since the nineties German universities, in particular their language centres, have been working on an overall certification system for FL for special purposes and they have developed a framework in cooperation with different stakeholders (Rahmenordnung für eine studienbegleitende Fremdsprachenausbildung an Universitäten und Hochschulen) and accredited accordingly over forty universities. The UNIcert® - system is based on the CEF; as it is adapted to the needs of university education the first “degree” is on then B1-level, the others according to B2-C2.¹³ The Freie Universität Berlin and its Sprachenzentrum under the lead of Wolfgang Mackiewicz represents a role model for many a German and European university: an exemplary FL policy has been implemented, obliging all students to dedicate some credits to FL as well as numerous international activities (networks – TNP, ELC, dialang – the e-system for FL self-evaluation, ENLU etc.) have been initiated and coordinated. Hungary also reports on language provision for students of other disciplines and points out the importance of the Budapest Centre for Languages. HEI in the Czech Republic and Slovenia seem to lag behind in this challenging field of work as they have not developed a systematic and structured approach yet. At Ljubljana and Koper University preparations for language centres and consequently to course programmes and certification have started.

Two other important developing areas, where interfacing seems to be paramount, are on the one hand all different forms of **CLIL, bilingual and multilingual education**, training CLIL-teachers, in-service training for teachers at all levels that offer lessons or courses in FL and on the other hand **vocational education** on different levels, one of the fastest developing areas of FL activity. The Austrian and Hungarian NR can be consulted for a detailed discussion and needs-analysis in these promising areas. Impressive positive effects could be registered in Germany after the introduction of the EUROPASS for vocational education as facilitating instrument.¹⁴

5.1.3 Horizontal axis – cooperation and communication of HEI with other language providers

Even if data on the horizontal axis with its extensive dispersion, the wide range of FL providers, and, moreover, with the irregularity of cooperation, were extremely difficult to gather there seems to be quite a large variety of cooperation going on in the field of non-compulsory or informal education. HEI make large use of cultural institutes' offers, they foster student mobility,

¹³ More information on this certification system and its goals can be found on the homepage and in the German NR <http://rcswww.urz.tu-dresden.de/~unicert>.

¹⁴ About 20.000 passes were issued in Germany by ten educational institutions. It is an easy and efficient instrument to confirm periods of practical training abroad.

cooperate with local and regional bodies, communities and sometimes also other stakeholders to motivate young and older people to learn languages.

Learning FL outside the formal educational system is traditionally flourishing, although competition – in the old and the new countries of the EU – makes it more and more difficult for language provision institutions to survive. Whereas FL providers in the old countries are mostly adult education centres (Volkshochschulen), chambers of commerce, church organisations, associations and of course language schools with a certain tradition, the new countries have been flooded by private FL schools.¹⁵ As the Hungarian NR observes accreditation and quality control is increasingly important for them, not only because participants expect results and quality, but also because of these courses they can get certain benefits (tax refunds, full or partial reimbursement of course and examination fees) if they enrol a certified and accredited programme.¹⁶ Not in all countries there is a similar national policy for life-long-learning in place, supporting further FL learning. In Hungary language schools are accredited and evaluated by specially trained teams of external evaluators of the Professional Association of Language Schools. Quality-oriented private language schools often work in close cooperation with consultation bodies which include experts from the business sector as well as from language departments or language centres of HEI. In Slovenia nationally accepted certificates in four languages up to level B2 can be issued by licensed schools; in the development of criteria, curricula and examination papers HE members are also included. Nevertheless this kind of cooperation was not yet used as a true interface. In the Czech Republic such quality assurance measures seem to be a need, especially as many HE feel threatened by the promises of course organisers as universities themselves offer a vast range of languages to the adult FL learner. (See above)

In the new countries many school-age children – especially in the urban areas – attend FL courses outside the school system, because their parents think that the official and free language programmes are inefficient. In order to guarantee continuity, progression and thus to ensure motivation for FL learning schools should consider the level of the pupils' language competence, even if it was reached outside the formal system. Cooperation between the sectors and adequate measures might lead to practical solutions for this important problem.

The increasingly individualised approach to teaching and learning, the demand for a broader range of languages offered and the diminishing financial means in HEI prompt task-sharing with external language providers. In Germany some HEI cooperate and accept certificates from other language providers such as

¹⁵ Hungary is claimed to have the largest number of private foreign language schools in Eastern Europe.

¹⁶ In 2004 approximately 20.000 learners were reimbursed for successfully passing an intermediate-level language examination. Entrance -Examination Information Service. In: Délmagyarország. September 1, 2004

foreign cultural institutes, language schools etc. For lack of adequate data we cannot report on any other country with a similar practise, but there certainly is comparable cooperation. However, as in many other identified interfaces task-sharing does not automatically lead to an exchange of experiences and to more complex communication.

This applies also to the other types of cooperation: in some countries external examiners (entrance examinations and final examinations of colleges and universities, school leaving examinations of secondary schools) are often teachers, experts from various types of schools (we have data for Hungary and Slovenia); they could ensure cooperation between different sectors of education. The subproject however has revealed that coordination of assessment criteria, of exit and entrance qualifications, as well as of curricula according to tools developed within the EU/EC are not yet enough widely used.

Collaboration with producers of teaching materials, e-learning and other resources within HEI that in general up to now have worked only on an individual level would make FL learning more efficient, stimulate autonomous learning, guarantee smoother progression, and benefit all parties involved. Hungary reports on successful cooperation of HEI in the production of e-learning-materials for CLIL and similar activities.

Other opportunities for people from different educational sectors to meet and to talk to one another are quite frequent; one would just have to use them properly. In many of the following HEI members have to take the lead:

- In-service training programmes as well as ERASMUS teacher mobility schemes provide opportunities for linking up primary and secondary school teachers with staff in higher education.
- Language teachers' associations are the best examples for cooperation between different sectors of education.
- Joint conferences and symposia organised for representatives from different sectors of education can also create opportunities for cooperation and they often result in exchanging teaching ideas and teaching materials. The number of conference opportunities is increasing, but joint publications of primary and secondary school teachers and methodology teachers of institutions of HE are unfortunately rare examples.

While the above opportunities are mentioned in the Hungarian NR, but can apply to all countries concerned, Germany developed 2001 a forum on „FL Training at HEI as an interface between Schools and Adult Education”, where HEI were represented by heads of language centres and FL teacher trainers, associations for modern languages sent also their experts as well as the Rectors' conference and the DAAD. Its published results were intended to be used as guidelines and benchmarks for institutional language policies concerning the linking up of FL training in schools, HEI and in adult education,

FL teacher training, (further) training of language teachers in HE, integration of language courses in all study programmes etc.

6. Needs, Obstacles and Recommendations for Communication and Cooperation between the Sectors of FL Education

The overall impression of the subproject findings in all interface areas on the vertical and horizontal axis can be reduced to a common denominator: many structural interfaces, points and ways of cooperation and communication between the partners engaged in FL do exist; they are, however, either undetected, scattered, have a reduced range of impact, are limited in numbers, size and effect, and – this must be explicitly stressed – they are not exploited to their full potential. Here HEI could step in and improve matters. The first need and subsequent recommendation aims at the additional and regular identification of functioning interfaces, their systematic promotion and support with adequate means and resources as well as their evaluation, recognition and the dissemination of the cooperation results.

We are aware of the many obstacles towards the above goal: they are not just a matter of lacking communicative skills and willingness, of lacking time and opportunity, but are, as the German NR points out, often due to structural impediments, e.g. the fact, that different government bodies are responsible for FL education and thus to the problems of allocating staff to both levels, to lacking integration in the educational system(s), to psychological inhibitions, to financial restraints and many more. The relative independence of HE institutions has been observed as an obstacle as well as Obstacles for cooperation can also be the system of financing HE and the cutting of grants for teaching and research, as institutions have to look for measures to make them competitive rather than cooperative. Nevertheless cooperation has to be taken up if the initially sketched goals are to be reached – the practise shows that it can be done, but this is certainly not enough.

The main needs and recommendations listed here might have special bearing on the countries of Central and East Europe - they certainly come across in the NR of this parts of Europe – but they are trends and deficits felt also elsewhere, therefore they can be addressed in a more global manner.

- Cooperation and communication between the three or four levels of education from pre-school to tertiary have to be facilitated, structured and integrated into the education system. Cooperation must work both ways, i.e. initiatives coming from schools and teachers should be taken up and supported, their expertise used in HE curricular matters, in-service training etc. Coherent and closer cooperation between the secondary and tertiary level must be specially taken care of as language teachers at secondary level have little opportunity to gain insight of current developments at tertiary level. The tension between the two levels originates often in the different expectations on the language competence

at exit/entry from one level to the other. This can be alleviated or even neutralized by communication and working together on the same tasks.

- Comprehensive and transparent FL policies and action plans are needed and should be implemented on all levels of education. Before that (more) cooperation of all stakeholders and all educational sectors is necessary. Such policies must stress the need for a greater diversity of FL learning and teaching. In order to make sound decisions on language policy and be convincing, teachers and other stakeholders should be able to rely on the results of applied research and on manageable implementation approaches.
- The subproject members have stressed the paramount need of consistently and widely implementing the European Language Portfolio and the Common European Framework on all levels, from pre-school to tertiary education as well as in the context of lifelong learning in FL. In order to guarantee course and outcome transparency as well as individual progression they want HEI to stipulate the overall use of CEF by practise dissemination activities. It is necessary to grant the comparability also in the private sector.
- In-service training for FL teachers must be organised on a regular basis, be better funded and take into account new findings in language acquisition and didactics. The implementation of the CEFR and the Language Portfolio is an important part of in-service training but takes time and effort and thus necessary resources must be allocated. Opportunities in in-service teacher training should be widened and teachers' actual needs in it considered. More systematic governmental, business and institutional participation in in-service training programmes needs to be strengthened. In-service training courses for university language teachers are needed; they should be tailored according to their special needs and in cooperation with other stakeholders.
- More coherent cooperation between the different actors, i.e. authorities, HEI and other institutions of formal FL teaching in curriculum development, entry and exit qualifications, assessment tests, and accreditation.
- More research in joint projects involving different sectors of the educational system, e.g. in the area of language acquisition or didactics is recommended. HEI must take the initiatives but state and municipal funding is a necessary condition. Language studies-related and applied language-related research projects should be elaborated and enhanced, their dissemination and the practical utilisation of research outcomes assisted.
- More joint publications by authors from different sectors need to be published, more conferences and meetings need to be organised with the participation of teachers, students, researchers and experts representing various sectors.
- More effort on national as well as on European level should be made to disseminate findings and products in the area of language studies, projects and issues.

- Greater diversity of FL in vocational and adult education as well as in languages for specific purposes is needed. More dialogue and joint action between HEI and institutions of adult education. Implementation of the Europass should be supported.
- More facilities for early LL and more coherence in FL language learning and teaching all through the educational system. Communicational functions of language and a vision of language as a socio-cultural phenomenon should be emphasised. Specialist knowledge and skills must be required for teachers in early LL.
- CLIL and multilingual education needs to be enhanced on all educational levels.
- Cooperation in the use of language technology should be taken into account more widely and be further developed.
- In order to ensure the quality of teaching at all levels the creation of a comprehensive and clear system of supervision and assistance for FL teachers by involving external bodies and experts is recommended.
- HEI need to open up their programmes and offers to other population groups besides students, especially when less spoken languages are concerned and a high academic level of competence is expected. Cooperation with the world of work, e.g. internationally active managers or lawyers could be helpful.
- By cooperating with other FL teaching providers, e.g. cultural institutes, private language schools, schools for adult education, additional capacities and offers for less widely used languages can be ensured. Motivation and encouragement for adult+ learners can be provided by developing cooperation with appropriate institutions, e.g. Third Age Universities, and by producing special programmes and materials. Life-long learning should be given more emphasis both in initial and in in-service teacher training programmes to meet these goals.

