European Language Portfolio:
Guide for Developers

by Günther Schneider and Peter Lenz

Lern- und Forschungszentrum Fremdsprachen

University of Fribourg/CH

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1. Introduction

In the mid-nineties the first European Language Portfolios (ELPs) were developed in Switzerland, Germany and France so that the feasibility of this kind of instrument could be established. Between 1998 and summer 2000 various ELP models were piloted in over 15 Council of Europe (CoE) member states, and much valuable experience was gained in the process. In 2001, the European Year of Languages, the ELP has been launched throughout Europe. A number of guides and studies were commissioned in order to provide enough information and guidance to develop and implement ELPs successfully in various contexts. The present *Guide for Developers of a European Language Portfolio* is one of these guides.

1.1. Purpose of the guide

This *Guide for Developers* is one element in a series of other sources of information and support. Its **main purpose** is to provide guidance in the creation of useful and acceptable ELPs by

- discussing **fundamental issues and options** developers need to be aware of and have to decide upon *before* they actually start developing an ELP;

- providing **background information** on the Portfolio and its different sections and elements;

- presenting and illustrating the **relevant provisions** and options stated in **the *Principles and Guidelines***;

- bringing together some of the **experience and know-how** gained by former ELP authors;

- presenting, discussing and recommending **examples** from existing Language Portfolios;

- outlining the **validation process** every ELP has to go through.

The present guide has two intended **groups of users**:
- current and potential developers of European Language Portfolios;

- (national) authorities which have to establish whether newly developed ELP versions drawn up locally meet the criteria set by the *Principles and Guidelines* and are in line with the practice adopted by the European Validation Committee.

1.2. Sources of information and support

Sources of information and support, other than this guide, are available to ELP developers:
- There is a growing number of validated European Language Portfolios available (in limited numbers) from the Council of Europe Modern Languages Division. Individual sections or the whole document may be used without modification, translated, adapted or used as a source of inspiration according to certain rules stated below. Translations of ELP core elements in a range of languages *(Common reference levels)* can be downloaded (http://culture.coe.int/portfolio) or ordered from the Modern Languages Division in Strasbourg.

- A number of documents is or will be made available on the Council of Europe Website or in print; these provide background information (such as for example the *Common European Framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment (CEF) and* other Council of Europe documents and articles), state standards (*Principles and Guidelines,* documents issued by the Validation Committee), or give practical advice (e.g. national reports on the piloting of a Portfolio). (See Bibliography for more information.)

- Council of Europe experts are available for consultation.

- Other ELP developers in your own or neighbouring countries may be willing to collaborate or to provide support.

- Further seminars for Portfolio developers will be organized by the Modern Languages Division, Council of Europe.

Since ELPs are intended for learners, specialized graphic designers and editors can provide valuable advice. It is recommended that they be contacted at an early phase of a project.

2. Principles, aims and functions of the European Language Portfolio

2.1. Overarching principles and aims

The European Language Portfolio must be seen as a recent addition to the Council of Europe's projects in the field of modern languages. Therefore, every ELP should reflect and, whenever possible, actively promote the overarching aims of the Council of Europe in the field of modern languages, in particular:

- the deepening of mutual understanding among citizens in Europe;

- respect for diversity of cultures and ways of life;

- the protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;

- the development of plurilingualism as a life-long process;

- the development of the language learner;

- the development of the capacity for independent language learning;

- transparency and coherence in language learning programmes.

It is necessary for ELP developers to consider whether they share these views. Obviously, European Language Portfolios may not represent views and promote practices which do not respect or are opposed to these aims; e.g. it makes little sense to develop Portfolios which are not intended to take into account out-of-school learning, are made for one target language only, or do not facilitate learner self-assessment.

2.2. Aims and functions of a European Language Portfolio

According to the *Principles and Guidelines* adopted by the Education Committee of the Council of Europe, the ELP project has two main aims:

a) to motivate learners by acknowledging their efforts to extend and diversify their language skills at all levels;

b) to provide a record of the linguistic and cultural skills they have acquired (to be consulted, for example, when they are moving to a higher learning level or seeking employment at home or abroad).

Points a) and b) refer to the two basic functions of the European Language Portfolio:

a) The pedagogic function

- Enhance the motivation of the learners
  - to improve their ability to communicate in different languages,
  - to learn additional languages,
  - to seek new intercultural experiences.
- Incite and help learners to
  - reflect on their objectives, ways of learning and success in language learning,
  - plan their learning,
  - learn autonomously.
- Encourage learners to enhance their plurilingual and intercultural experience, for example through
  - contacts and visits,
  - reading,
  - use of the media,

- projects.

b) The documentation and reporting function

The European Language Portfolio aims to document its holder's plurilingual language proficiency and experiences in other languages in a comprehensive, informative, transparent and reliable way. The instruments contained in the ELP help learners to take stock of the levels of competence they have reached in their learning of one or several foreign languages in order to enable them to inform others in a detailed and internationally comparable manner.

There are many occasions to present an up-to-date Language Portfolio, for example a transfer to another school, change to a higher educational sector, the beginning of a language course, a meeting with a career advisor, or an application for a new post. In these cases the ELP is addressed to persons who have a role in decisions which are important for the owner of the Language Portfolio. A learner may also be interested in having such documentation for him/herself.

Those who receive an ELP from a learner for assessment and similar purposes may be particularly interested in

- the results of relevant and reliable summative evaluation;

- diplomas and certificates;

- other "evidence", for example

    - up-to-date information based on self-assessment,
    - attestations/descriptions of bilingual education, schooling in a language other than L1, participation in student exchange programmes, practical training in other language regions,
    - attestations/descriptions of regular private contacts with speakers of other languages, professional correspondence in other languages,
    - information on objectives, curricula, etc.,
    - selected written texts, audio and video recordings of oral productions etc.

"Evidence" of this kind is important because successful language learning cannot always be documented by means of examinations or diplomas. For example,

- a learner may improve his/her language skills considerably through stays abroad *after* receiving a diploma;

- some aspects such as intercultural competence are rarely tested through examinations. For some languages no standardized examinations or certificates exist (this is often the case with languages of migrants and their children).

In order to be reliable, all information must be documented in a transparent manner, i.e.

- it should be clear and possible to verify who (person/institution) is responsible for a statement and would confirm its truthfulness;

- it should be related to a reference system such as the *Common reference levels* in the CEF wherever possible;

- a common language of description should be used.

Depending on the kind of use that is made of the ELP, the focus shifts from one element or function of the ELP to another:

Central concerns from a pedagogic and methodological perspective	Central concerns from the point of view of documentation and reporting
learning processes	results and products of learning
formative assessment	summative assessment
learning incentives	transparency
learning occasions	comparability

Portfolio versions for different target groups (e.g. age groups) may put more emphasis on one of the two basic functions and provide more instruments to implement it than another ELP version for a different target group. However, this should not go as far as to neglect one of the two functions completely.

3. Preliminary considerations for developers of European Language Portfolios

3.1. A Language Portfolio or another application of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages?

The first ELP models developed were pioneer applications of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEF) which is intended as a common basis for all kinds of products for planning, carrying through and evaluating modern language teaching and learning. The European Language Portfolio as one of its first practical applications has helped to spread many of its basic ideas, but it does not cover the same ground – even if it is sometimes thought to do so. ELPs cannot reasonably be conceived as a *substitute* for a foreign language curriculum, textbook, or language tests. Nevertheless, it may be helpful to have curricula etc. which correspond closely to the approach an ELP takes and to the elements it contains. It should not be forgotten that the ELP serves two well-described main functions, and that every ELP is made for use of the learners in the first place. A Portfolio as a whole, and the elements it contains, should be designed from this perspective. If the primary concern of potential ELP developers is not an ELP as such, they should produce other types of materials instead of or in addition to an ELP.

3.2. Why introduce a European Language Portfolio?

The relevance of the basic functions of the ELP has been established. In the course of the ELP project it has become clear that the documentation/presentation aspect of the ELP has the potential to play a key role throughout Europe in the attempt to introduce transparency and coherence into the description and documentation of proficiency in modern languages. Learners, teachers and parents, schools as well as employers and educational systems may benefit from this.

The pedagogic aims of the ELP correspond with the aims of other innovations in education, and the piloting showed that many individuals think that these aims are worth supporting.

Participating in the ELP movement adds value. Those who decide to "hang on" to the ELP movement after the official launch in the EYL may benefit from the wide recognition and good reputation the ELP has acquired. For example, a language school may be interested in basing its course programme on the Council of Europe system of levels, in using the ELP in its classes, and in "selling" these innovations as a commercial argument.

Whenever an institution or an educational system decides to join in, this again may have a positive repercussion upon the prestige of the ELP, which makes participation in the ELP movement even more desirable for others.

The ELP may trigger and support changes. The ELP piloting has shown that in some contexts an ELP functioned as a catalyst in so far as it accelerated impending changes in the fields of teaching practice, curriculum design and assessment. For example,

- the fact that there is space available in an ELP to record intercultural learning across borders exerted a certain pressure upon schools to start cross-border projects (cf. Gerling/Thürmann 1999, 41);
- foreign language curricula that were elaborated during the ELP piloting used the Council of Europe levels and corresponding descriptions from the ELP to describe objectives;
- schools which piloted the ELP decided to test the different skills more evenly, i.e. to accord more importance to listening comprehension and oral interaction.

Many other points could be added to this list. It is expected that ELPs – depending on their concrete contents – may strongly support and give value to the following:

- more comprehensive and complete forms of assessment (in particular forms of formative assessment),

- self-assessment,

- language awareness,

- intercultural learning,

- appreciation of migrant languages,

- self-directed/autonomous learning, reflective learning,

- project-based learning,

- out-of-school learning,

- pedagogy of exchanges,

- co-operation among teachers, in particular from different language subjects,

- plurilingual content-oriented language teaching/learning.

The ELP is a means of quality assurance: through its adherence to a common framework of reference the ELP promotes transparency concerning internally applied standards and guidance towards internationally recognized standards.

3.3.   Adoption, adaptation or creation?

The authors of the first ELP models took mutual advantage of one another's work. For the piloting, a number of national project groups adapted mainly the Swiss version for their purposes; other models were also used but to a lesser degree. Consequently, the ELP does not have to be re-invented every time an authority or group intends to issue an ELP in its own name. They are invited to build on the existing ELPs, i.e. to use, adapt or create elements according to their goals, the models available, and the time and effort they are prepared to invest. In principle they have a wide range of options:

a) they may use an existing model as it is;

b) they may print an edition of an existing ELP under licence;

c) they may translate an existing ELP in parts or as a whole;

d) they may use parts of an ELP, replace other parts with newly developed elements, possibly leave some instruments aside and add others;

e) they may develop their own ELP, introducing variations based on the provisions made by the Validation Committee concerning the basic principles and core elements; existing ELPs can be consulted as a concrete illustration.

All ELPs must be submitted for validation.
Now that the ELP is beyond the pilot phase it takes on a more official character and commercial interests are involved in some cases. Therefore, authors' rights and copyright questions are becoming more important issues. The following basic guidelines apply:

- The source of all materials produced by other authors, whether used in its original form or adapted, must be formally acknowledged.

- For elements taken from the *Common European Framework* permission should be requested from the Council of Europe.

- The copyright of the *Self-assessment grid* and the *Global scale* (in all languages) belongs to the Council of Europe. Editors must mention this copyright.

- The scales from DIALANG and ALTE contained in the appendices to the *Common European Framework* are not the original copyright of the Council of Europe but of the authors of these scales.

- The source of elements taken from other European Language Portfolio models must be indicated in the appropriate place in the document.

- If the checklists developed within the Swiss National Science Foundation project are used or adapted, permission must be asked from the editor and the source must be indicated. The editor is best contacted via the Web: http://www.languageportfolio.ch. - Sample acknowledgement: *The descriptors in the checklists were developed for the European Language Portfolio, Swiss version, in a Swiss National Science Foundation project: Schneider, Günther & North, Brian (2000): Fremdsprachen können – was heisst das? Chur/Zürich: Rüegger. They are reproduced / partly adapted / translated* [as appropriate] *with the permission of the authors and the editor BLMV (Berner Lehrmittel- und Medienverlag).*

- Authors may not claim copyright for simple adaptations of elements taken over from the *Common European Framework* or other European Language Portfolios.

- Newly developed additions to core elements taken from the *Common European Framework* should be identified as such (e.g. new descriptors).

The Council of Europe can provide more information on copyright issues and acknowledgement of intellectual authorship. The European Validation Committee is not responsible for copyright questions. It is the responsibility of the developers and publishers of European Language Portfolios to resolve copyright issues.

3.4.   Should Language Portfolios be adapted or newly developed?

On the one hand, it is obvious that a single ELP model could not satisfy the needs of all users in all different environments; the already existing variety of ELPs illustrates this fact clearly. On the other hand, there are good arguments for having as few different versions of ELPs as possible. Some basic arguments for both aspects are listed below in order to facilitate the decision by authorities or potential developers as to whether they should envisage a new ELP version or rather use an existing one.

Reasons for a variety of ELP versions:
- **Learners' age:** obviously the prime reason is the age of the learners: age-specific ELPs will take into account the personal and intellectual development as well as the changing environments and needs of learners as they grow up. (cf. Trim in Christ et al. 1997, 6 - 8).

- **Special groups:** special orientation in education or special social characteristics of target groups may suggest the development of more specific ELPs. Otherwise, such groups might not be reached at all (some groups of handicapped learners, vocationally-oriented language learners, learners who had little schooling, specialists such as translators, etc.).

- **Different environments/traditions:** for better acceptance of the ELP within an environment, specific preferences concerning design as well as cultural and educational traditions should be respected.

Reasons against a great variety of ELP versions:
- it makes little sense for a **learner** to own and use more than one ELP version simultaneously;

- the (national or even transnational) **currency value** of a model (and possibly the ELP in general) increases when there is little variety and competition among models;

- very **mobile learners** benefit from a small number of widely known and highly recognized ELP models.

A position that derives from these arguments may be briefly summarized as "Develop as few ELP versions as possible but as many as necessary!" From this position it would, in particular, not be acceptable if an institution decided to issue another distinct ELP version simply for commercial purposes. However, an ELP should not be developed to accommodate only one or a few specific target languages while other versions cover other languages within the same context. (Such ELPs would not be acceptable

since the promotion of plurilingualism and the recognition of (unpredictable) out-of-school learning are central ideas behind the ELP project which cannot be ignored).

Taking account of the various arguments, authorities or developers will often reach the conclusion that a special ELP version is necessary for their purposes. In order to minimize the negative effects of a proliferation of ELPs, they should, however, keep in mind the arguments mentioned above when they design their new version(s). This may help to minimize such negative effects in their case and also the need for yet more, very similar versions. In this context it will be useful to consider the following recommendations:

- Preserve comparability, do not make unnecessary and undeclared changes in core elements.

- Make your ELP as open as possible and only as specific as necessary; ensure transferability to other contexts.

- Examine a modular approach to ELP design for different groups in order to preserve unity in diversity.

- Think from the learner's perspective.

The main types of ELP, their typical properties and their relation to each other will be examined more closely in the following chapter.

4. Fundamental types

As stated in the last chapter, factors such as the age of the learners, other social characteristics and learning purposes as well as different environments make it necessary to develop various ELP versions. Accordingly, the *Principles and Guidelines* contain the provision to

> take into account the diversity of learners' needs according to age, learning purposes and contexts, and background, e.g. to develop where appropriate distinctive ELP models for different age groups whilst taking measures to ensure mutual recognition of all models and continuity between different educational institutions, sectors, regions and countries.

The prime reason for creating different ELP versions is certainly the **age of the learners**. In this chapter the following questions are discussed:

- How many (fundamentally) different ELPs should be produced due to the age of the learners? What age groups should be formed? What is typical of each of these groups?

- What aspects or properties of an ELP may vary depending on the group for which it is designed?

- How do successive ELP versions relate to each other?

4.1. How many fundamental types?

Initially, three fundamentally different types of ELP were suggested, according to the basic stages of individual and social development: childhood (up to around 12), adolescence (from around 12 to 20), adulthood (cf. Trim 1997). Language learning is often different in each of these stages, as concerns objectives, motivation, methods, places, contacts, "value", etc.

What is typical of language learning during **childhood**?
- Some children are hardly aware of the existence of languages other than their L1 while others are already bi- or plurilingual when school language learning starts.

- For many learners the use of a specific foreign language taught in school is strictly limited to the classroom.

- Developing plurilingual and intercultural *awareness* may be a primary objective.

- Motivation for language learning is a primary concern.

- Methods and tasks are adapted to the cognitive and emotional development of children.

- General pedagogic concerns such as learning to learn are important.

- Reporting achievements beyond the school and home context is hardly relevant.

- ...

It should also be remembered that,
- the approaches taken to early language learning are changing rapidly (e.g. early immersion);

- language learning at an early age has tremendous potential.

What is typical of the language learning of **adolescents**?
- Learning achievements and the attainment of higher levels of language proficiency become important.

- Learner autonomy becomes increasingly important.

- Learners pass through one or more educational interfaces; foreign language performance may play an important role at these points of transition.

- Language contacts may be intensified through intercultural projects or exchange activities.

- Reporting language proficiency to new teachers/school environments or employers may play a crucial role.

- ...

What is typical of **adult** language learning?

- Language learning is often determined through professional requirements.

- Very high and/or very specialized language proficiency may be required.

- (More) languages may be learned for cultural enrichment.

- The motivation to continue language learning may be a problem.

- Language learning is often self-organized (stays abroad, evening classes) or self-directed (self-study).

- Reporting language proficiency may or may not be important.

- ...

ELP models developed for each of these groups of learners have to take into account the particular circumstances of the respective group of learners.

Dividing up a series of Language Portfolios according to the three stages outlined above may be unsatisfactory. An ELP for adolescents would have to span many years of personal development and institutional change. It may not be possible or reasonable to create a model that could remain useful during all these years. Considering the fundamental cognitive, emotional and social changes that take place between early and late adolescence, it seems advisable to develop two rather different types of ELP for this group. The **ELP for older adolescents** may be combined with the ELP for adults. The similarities between the cognitive development and the needs of most adolescents older than about 15 years and many adults suggest one ELP model for these two groups. Practical arguments support this approach.

- It might prove difficult to disseminate a separate ELP version among adults who have already left formal education, or, if they could be reached, they might not want to make the effort to get acquainted with something new.

- It might be an advantage for the recognition of the ELP among employers if, essentially, they were confronted with one type of ELP only.

- It might be a disadvantage for young people entering the workforce if they had to present an ELP that is also designed for twelve-year-olds because it might be perceived as childish.

In view of these arguments it might make sense to develop ELPs which correspond approximately to the following groups of learners:

a) *Stage 1* Language Portfolios for very young learners possibly up to 10-12 years;

b) *Stage 2* Language Portfolios for use during the remaining years of obligatory schooling (11-15/16 years);

c) *Stage 3* Language Portfolios for young people and adults (15/16 years upward).

Obviously, the exact boundaries will vary depending on the (national) context. Educational systems are organized very differently in different member states and what suits one may not be appropriate in another.

4.2.   What aspects of a Language Portfolio vary?

Between the three fundamental types of European Language Portfolios a great number of aspects or properties may vary, for example,

- the degree to which the ELP is embedded in an institutional context (there is a tendency towards strong correspondence in primary school and towards independence from institutions and great versatility in adult life);

- the types of language learning that dominate;

- the cognitive demands an ELP may make (including the complexity of language);

- the relative importance of the two basic functions of the ELP;

- the importance and the concrete functions of the three parts (cf. Ch. 5);

- the degree of reliability that is expected;

- the examples that are given;

- the design and organisation of the document;

- ...

Caveats:

- All European Language Portfolios should be recognizable as such.

- The mutual comparability of results recorded in different ELPs should never be completely abandoned (the relation to the same identifiable levels should be maintained).

- Even in ELPs for younger learners, descriptions of higher levels (e.g. above B1) should be available in some form so that higher language competence acquired informally can be assessed and presented accordingly; in addition, most learners like to look ahead.

- The presentation function plays an important role even during obligatory schooling.

- The *Language Passport* section should not be neglected in ELPs for younger learners because it may motivate them also; moreover, its reporting function may become relevant when pupils move or teachers change.

- Pedagogic aspects should also be taken into account in ELPs for adults (even for strictly vocationally-oriented learners): motivation, planning of learning, the development of learner autonomy, etc. may be crucial for this age group.

- ...

4.3. How are successive Language Portfolios related?

First, it must be decided whether a **system** of successive ELPs for different age groups is to be designed, or **just one** ELP. Whenever the development of a new ELP version is decided, the vertical (and horizontal) relations to existing or other planned ELPs should be carefully examined. A minimum requirement for *every* ELP should be a certain degree of transferability. Although different, they should be recognisable, acceptable and relevant in other environments. This applies to school sector-specific ELPs in particular. They should be designed not only to suit the typical needs of pupils of one sector, but also to **ensure the transition** between neighbouring educational sectors. Informing successive schools and teachers as well as employers and vocational trainers about the language competence of the owner of an ELP is a model application of the ELP. In order to facilitate the reporting of previously acquired skills and knowledge across sectors, subsequent ELPs should be designed with a certain overlap. Whenever possible, an ELP model designed for use in a specific sector should be introduced and prepared *before* the transition to that sector takes place.

5. The three parts

All ELP versions should respect a basic division of the ELP into three parts:

- the *Language Passport,*
- the *Language Biography,*
- the *Dossier.*

The learners should have the possibility to use each of the three parts according to their particular needs in their different learning contexts. The three parts should, however, correspond to the general descriptions provided in the *Principles and Guidelines*.

Each of the three parts serves, in different ways, the overarching aims of the ELP, and its basic functions.

In view of learner mobility, it is recommended that the three parts can be identified in every ELP version, and that they normally carry the same names. However, if an ELP is mainly intended for use within one particular school system, as is often the case with *Stage 1* Portfolios, it may be more important to use adapted names which are meaningful to the owners of an ELP. The CILT (Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, London) took such an approach in its *ELP – Junior version* (MacLagan, 1999, 47):

1) *Languages I know*
2) *What I know and can do in languages*
3) *My Dossier*

In this CILT version the functions the *Language Passport* and the *Language Biography* usually fulfil are also distributed in a different way between parts 1 and 2, most probably on the basis of pedagogic considerations.

Each of the three parts has some obligatory features but beyond that, there is much freedom to put the emphasis on aspects that are particularly important within a specific context. Examples of optional components of the three parts can be found in several ELP models. Care has to be taken, however, that the parts of the ELP are not overloaded with too many different things.

Before elements are added to the ELP, developers should ask themselves,

- if the additional elements are compatible with the general aims, and what function they fulfil;
- in which parts these elements are best included;
- if it would not be better to make these elements available in another form, e.g. in a teacher's guide or as worksheets;
- if such elements are allowed in an ELP at all (e.g. pure advertising is not).

In the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* a fourth major section was added, which contains, as master copies, all forms and instruments, plus translations of some of these into the three other languages available. These forms and instruments are intended for (repeated) use in the three parts. It is, therefore, not a fourth part in its own right, which might exceed the limits set by the *Principles and Guidelines*. Other ELPs like the French version issued by the CRDP (Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique) de Basse-Normandie (France) took the same approach in order to cope with a situation where several copies are needed of some pages (e.g. one page for each language learned), and that certain pages need to be renewed over time because they are simply outdated or full.

Embedding the three parts

Being a document belonging to the learner and therefore likely to be used outside some well-defined institution, every ELP should be as self-explanatory as possible. This is an important requirement for *Stage 3* ELPs, in particular, which will be freely available. An ELP should also make clear to any user other than its owner (e.g. parents, teachers, schools, employers) what an ELP is, what status and purpose it has. That means that it needs one or more well-designed introductory pages serving that purpose. Also, the owner, the issuing institution and the link to the Council of Europe should be identified at the beginning of an ELP. For any type of user (including authorities) who have never heard of the ELP, short introductory texts providing the essential information at a glance can be very helpful and may contribute to overcoming initial reservations.

An example from the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* may illustrate what is meant by this kind of introductory text:

Figure 1: Introduction to the ELP, its affiliation and its uses; overview of the parts of the ELP (*Swiss ELP for young people and adults*)

The objective to make an ELP as self-explanatory and accessible as possible also has consequences for each part: introductions stating the purpose of each part should not be forgotten.

Again, an example from the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* may illustrate that point:

Figure 2: Introduction to the *Language Biography*, listing possible contents and stating the various purposes of this part (Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*)

For the *Language Passport* section, some information provided on the first pages of the ELP will have to be repeated so that it can be used as an independent presentation tool (cf. the *Standard Language Passport* provided by the Council of Europe).

Each of the three parts contributes to either of the two basic functions every ELP has: documentation/reporting and motivation/pedagogy. However, the parts do not serve these functions to the same degree. While the *Language Passport* is mainly a reporting instrument, the two other parts may serve both functions equally, depending on the instruments provided for the concrete target group, and the uses learners and teachers decide to make of them. It is important to understand that documentation and reporting are functions that are not only directed towards the "outside": parents, new teachers and even the learners themselves may be interested in an overview of a student's language skills and intercultural experiences. For this reason, the *Language Passport* part may play an important role even in ELPs for very young learners. In language teaching for very young learners the *Language Passport* may be a point of departure for every learning cycle and will be used at the end of each cycle to consciously sum up what has been achieved.

In the following chapters, provisions and options will be presented for each of the three parts. In order to give an idea of what the parts and their elements might eventually look like, examples are given and commented on.

The basic provisions are stated in the *Principles and Guidelines* (cf. Appendix C), point 3.2. Another important document providing more detailed and very useful guidance is the *Application for validation and accreditation of an ELP model* (cf. Appendix E) issued by the European Validation Committee. The relevant passages from the *Principles and Guidelines* will be cited in full below. From the *Application for validation* only extracts will be cited. Please check the Council of Europe Website for an updated version of this form.

5.1.   Language Passport

The *Principles and Guidelines* make the following provisions for the *Language Passport* section:

The **Language Passport** section provides an overview of the individual's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time; the overview is defined in terms of skills and the Common reference levels in the Common European Framework; it records formal qualifications and describes language competencies and significant language and intercultural learning experiences; it includes information on partial and specific competence; it allows for self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examination boards; it requires that information entered in the Language Passport states on what basis, when and by whom the assessment was carried out.

The application form which has to be submitted to the Validation Committee lists the relevant points developers of an ELP must respect:

The Language Passport should:

- allow an overview of the individual's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time;
- allow the recording of formal qualifications and all language competencies regardless of whether gained in or outside formal educational contexts;
- allow the recording of significant language and intercultural experiences;
- allow the recording of partial and specific language competence;
- allow the recording of self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examination boards;
- allow the recording of the basis of an assessment, when and by whom the assessment was carried out;
- take account of learners' needs according to age, learning purposes and contexts, and background;
- ensure continuity between different educational institutions, sectors and regions;
- respect the European character of the ELP so as to promote mutual recognition of Portfolios within and across national boundaries.

In addition, as is the case for the Language Portfolio in general, the *Language Passport* should be based on the Common European Framework of Reference with explicit reference to the common levels of competence.

The *Language Passport* is the primary instrument for presentation. While documenting and presenting language skills, intercultural and language learning experiences is an objective in the other parts, as well, the *Language Passport* is particular in so far as,

- it is generally more concise;
- it aims to give an overview of facts and figures at a glance;
- it includes fewer accounts of processes in favour of up-to-date information;
- it does not contain *concrete illustrations* or *direct evidence* of language skills (cf. *Dossier*).

To some extent, the *Language Passport* is a summary of the *Language Biography*. This means that the learners will have to repeat in the *Language Passport* selected information relevant for reporting.

The *Language Passport* in its standard format (see below) does not mirror or report the contents of the *Dossier*. However, ELP developers are free to include additional pages with the *Language Passport,* e.g. a form for an annotated list of pieces of work which illustrate best the present stage of proficiency in different languages.

When it comes to informing parents or new teachers, the *Language Passport* (alone) may not be the most appropriate reporting tool because it is relatively concise; a selection from the *Language Biography* and the *Dossier* may give a better impression of the actual stage of development. However, the *Language Passport* will be a more efficient means in most cases when a quick yet comprehensive overview of levels and experiences is needed. If interested parties require more information, a presentation of the *Language Passport* may be followed by a closer examination of other elements from the ELP.

Standard Language Passport **for adults**

In order to facilitate pan-European recognition and mobility, a standard version of a *Language Passport* is promoted by the Council of Europe for ELPs designed for young people and adults (15/16+). It is an attractively designed booklet in A5 format.

The *Standard Language Passport* for adults is an important contribution to the comparability of qualifications and experiences recorded in different ELP models. It contains reporting instruments in a common format and is easily recognizable thanks to its common graphical design. Taking over this Passport ensures wide acceptance and recognition for ELP holders and, at the same time, leaves enough freedom to the developers to make target-group - or purpose-specific adaptations in the remaining parts of the ELP.

The *Standard Language Passport* contains compulsory "hard pages" (which cannot be altered) and allows for the inclusion of a some (modifiable) "soft pages", which should contribute to the reporting function of the ELP; they should be non-commercial in nature and few in number (e.g. an overview of a particular national qualifications system). In an attempt to make the information provided by learners widely understandable, templates in which boxes can be checked were prepared for their entries, whenever possible. Text entries are kept to a minimum.

The *Language Passport* (reprinted in Appendix B) contains the following "hard pages":

- a front and a back cover that have a common design in all language versions;

- a first double page providing a brief presentation of the Council of Europe and its aims; a contact address and the accreditation number of the ELP version to which the Passport belongs;

- a double page that links the Passport to the ELP and the *Common European Framework*, and briefly presents the contents of the Passport. This also leaves space for the name and picture of its owner;

- a double page for the owner's *Profile of language skills*, providing grids (skills/levels) for recording the results of self-assessment in up to six languages;

- space to accommodate up to four language versions of the *Self-assessment grid* (Table 2) from the *Common European Framework* (CEF), on double pages.

  Compared to the one-dimensional *Global scale* (CEF: Table 1), which provides a combined description of all skills on six levels, the *Self-assessment grid* has the advantage of offering the possibility to draw a more differentiated profile, e.g. to make apparent a higher level of proficiency in listening comprehension than in oral interaction. Similarly, partial competencies can be described, e.g. if someone has acquired reading skills in a language but has not learned to speak or to write. The categories used in the *Self-assessment grid* are taken from the CEF (reception, interaction, production), and, at the same time, remain close to the classic division into four skills, with which users are normally familiar. In particular, separating Writing into *Written interaction* and *Written production* is avoided because this is a categorisation non-experts often have difficulty in understanding. It is recommended that ELP authors who do not wish to adopt the *Standard Language Passport* as it is use the *Self-assessment grid* instead of or in addition to the one-dimensional *Global scale;*

- two double pages entitled *Summary of language learning and intercultural experiences* providing a grid for systematic reporting of

  - school and course-based language learning, language use at work, language contacts, etc. in the **own** environment;

- course-based language learning, foreign language use for study or at work, etc. in **other** language regions;
- a double-page form for listing language certificates and diplomas obtained.

The graphic design of the *Standard Language Passport* was funded by the Swiss authorities. The Passport is available free of charge for translation and/or printing from the Council of Europe on CD-ROM. Its text may be presented in up to four different languages, at least one of them being either French or English (the official Council of Europe languages). Translations of the *Self-assessment grid* into several languages are also available from the Council of Europe. New language versions developed locally should be made available to others through the Council of Europe.

Using the *Standard Language Passport* in ELPs for adults has distinct advantages and is recommended but it is not compulsory. Developers who decide to create a *Language Passport* section independently are advised to follow the model provided as closely as possible.

The *Standard Language Passport* may only be distributed as an element of an accredited ELP model, i.e. not separately from an ELP. The main reason for this is the fact that the results of self-assessment would tend to be unreliable

a) without the supporting instruments provided in the ELP (especially checklists and other tools for reflecting language competence and related experience);

b) without the self-assessment skills acquired through working with the ELP.

Moreover, the *Dossier*, which is a very powerful complementary reporting tool, would not be taken into account.

Distributors of ELPs may face the challenge that some of their customers who already own an ELP have a legitimate interest buying the Passport booklet separately because,

- the information contained has become outdated and can no longer be updated;

- they have lost it or it is in poor condition;

- they have some knowledge of more than six languages other than their mother-tongue(s);

- they wish to own *Language Passport*s in more than one combination of languages (printed text) because they use them in contexts where the original version is not understood.

In view of this situation, developers/distributors have to consider (among other things)

- how to proceed in order to prevent a separately available *Language Passport* from becoming completely independent from a Language Portfolio;

- whether they can make *Language Passport*s developed in other countries available to those who wish to have other language versions of the Passport booklet.

One partial solution for the most common case – namely that pages containing entries have to be replaced, or that additional pages are needed – would be to bind the *Language Passport* booklet in a way that allows exchanging or adding pages. Substitute pages could then be distributed via the Internet. Printing of suitable quality may pose problems, however.

Experience has still to be acquired concerning the renewability of the *Language Passport*. The Validation Committee will be able to provide guidance.

The Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* and some versions based on the Swiss model contain an extended Passport section consisting not only of the *Language Passport* booklet but also of two types of instruments designed to facilitate reporting by means of the Passport:

a) instruments that help institutions (possibly in collaboration with the learners) to describe and to relate language examinations they offer to the *Common reference levels;*

b) forms that can be used to confirm that a learner has had relevant intercultural and language learning experiences:

- attestation of participation in an exchange programme,
- attestation of participation in bilingual teaching/immersion teaching,
- attestation of a language learning stay in a region where the target language is spoken,
- attestation of playing host to a foreign-language-speaking guest,
- attestation of participation in a sustained correspondence with a foreign-language-speaking pen friend.

These attestation forms may be used directly by learners and institutions or serve as examples for similar attestations for the same or other purposes. Like official language certificates, they can be used as "evidence" endorsing the *Language Passport* entries made by the owner of the *Language Passport* him/herself.

Language Passports **in ELPs for younger learners (*Stage 1/2* versions)**

ELP models for young learners have been developed for the ELP piloting in France, Germany, UK, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Portugal.

All of these ELPs are adapted to younger learners with regard to the pedagogic approach (design, complexity, expected background, etc.). Some ELPs were created for use in various contexts, others were customized for specific school systems and curricula. It certainly makes sense to tailor Language Portfolios for young learners closely to the needs and restrictions of the environment. For this category of ELP the *Principles and Guidelines* need to be interpreted more flexibly than in the case of Portfolios intended for the generally more mobile older learners. However, even *Stage 1* Portfolios should take into account out-of-school language learning. This means in practice that the instruments provided should give young learners the opportunity to assess not only their proficiency at the levels aimed at in school (i.e. often lower levels), but they should also allow them to assess higher levels of language proficiency (e.g. in heritage or community languages) and to present a wide variety of intercultural experiences they have had.

The main reason that is usually brought forward in favour of a limitation to the first of the six levels of proficiency is that learners might be demotivated when confronted with objectives they will not be able to reach in the near future. But this is just one side of the coin. Many learners like to look ahead. In the Swiss piloting, learners said that they enjoyed to see the whole "map" of the language learning landscape.

Some ELPs mention explicitly and reserve space for the languages learners are usually confronted with in school. It may be "realistic" to proceed in this way, but an undesirable message is implied in doing so; i.e. the languages named are important and those unnamed are not.

Accordingly, if we accept as a general rule the slogan "Adapt to the curriculum but value out-of-school learning!" we should ensure that, even when creating ELPs for a well-defined group of young learners, heritage languages, community languages, etc. and their speakers are *valued* through the role they are assigned in an ELP.

5.2.   Language Biography

The *Principles and Guidelines* make the following provisions for the *Language Biography* section of the ELP:

> The **Language Biography** facilitates the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his or her learning process and progress; it encourages the learner to state what he/she can do in each language and to include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside formal educational contexts; it is organised to promote plurilingualism i.e. the development of competencies in a number of languages.

The implications of these provisions are detailed as questions in the *Application for validation* questionnaire, as follows:

Does the Language Biography

- facilitate the learner's involvement in planning?

- facilitate reflection upon the learning process?

- facilitate reflection upon and assessment of progress?

- encourage learners to state what they can do in each language?

- encourage learners to include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside formal educational contexts?

Is the Biography organised to promote plurilingualism i.e. the development of competencies in a number of languages?

The *Language Biography* is the specific part of an ELP in which *processes* rather than final results and products are in the centre of interest. This part in particular builds upon the idea that conscious reflection on learning processes will eventually improve learning outcomes as well as the language learners' ability and motivation to learn languages. The function of the *Language Biography* is not purely pedagogic, however. The documentation of an individual's language learning process and accounts of intercultural experiences can be used not only to plan and prepare for further learning but also to provide detailed information for all those who are interested in more details and background information than the *Language Passport* provides.

Developers of ELPs should be aware that learners and teachers often have reservations about reflective activities in language teaching and learning. This means that the purpose and the usefulness of the instruments provided in the ELP should be clear not only to the developers themselves, but also to those who are to work with them.

The *Language Biography* section may consist of the following elements:
a) a personal and more or less detailed biography covering language learning and socio- and intercultural experiences;
b) checklists related to the *Common reference levels;*
c) checklists or other forms of descriptions of skills and competencies that are not related to the *Common reference levels;*
d) planning instruments such as personal descriptions of objectives.

a) Personal biography of language learning and intercultural experiences

As the title of this part of the ELP implies, a presentation of the linguistic identity and an account of the personal history of the Portfolio owner's language learning and socio-/intercultural experiences is an essential element of the *Language Biography*. The information given in the *Language Biography* is more extensive and – depending on the format chosen – more personalized than the facts and figures provided in the *Language Passport*. The *Language Biography* forms the basis for the entries in the *Summary of language learning and intercultural experiences* sections in the *Standard Language Passport*.

Extended information on the personal history of language learning (etc.) can be used to inform those who are particularly interested in the linguistic and (inter-)cultural background of a learner, such as new language teachers, superiors at the workplace, or hosts and advisors in exchange programmes. Taking stock of past language learning (etc.) experiences may also be a valuable basis for further planning by the learner him/herself.

The formats for the personal language learning (etc.) biography chosen by developers have varied to date between relatively open or closed forms.

Ex. 1: One *Language Portfolio* for primary school pupils starts with this section. It extends over four pages and eleven sub-headings prompting the learners to provide information about their language learning and intercultural experiences step by step. The headings are as follows:

- Language: ... For how long? ...
- How I learned the language(s) ...
- I use the language(s) ...
- Countries I have visited where this or these language(s) are spoken ...
- How I used the language(s) there ...
- I meet speakers of this or these language(s) ... sometimes   ... often
- I watch TV programmes, films or listen to the radio in this or these language(s) ... sometimes   ... often
- I read magazines, books and newspapers in this or these language(s) ... sometimes   ... often
- People and places
    - I have participated in these projects, excursions …
    - I have made these contacts, e.g. pen friend, letters, e-mail ...
    - I have friends who come from these countries and speak these languages ...
    - In the future I would like to go to ...
    - and I would like to learn these language(s)

(CILT (UK) pilot ELP for primary school children)

Another *Stage 1* ELP proceeds very similarly but uses a more closed form consisting of quite a few pages containing boxes to tick for each one of the five languages Portuguese, English, French, German and Spanish, plus one (or more) additional language of choice.

Figure 3: Personal language biography using boxes to be ticked and requiring very few text entries; the five languages most often learned in school are pre-printed (Portuguese pilot ELP for primary school children)

This ELP also explicitly takes into account the possibility that the ELP owner may live in a multilingual family while the CILT ELP is "neutral" in this respect. The Dutch ELP for elementary school children provides a whole page for the presentation of the language background, even encouraging its users to indicate the use of dialects. ELP developers should be aware of the fact that it is one of the goals of the Council of Europe to make visible and promote all language skills, including knowledge of languages spoken at home. Not surprisingly, young learners having a (usually unacknowledged) plurilingual background were among the most enthusiastic users of ELP in the pilot phase.

The ELP edited by the CRDP de Basse-Normandie adopts an approach similar to that taken by CILT, i.e. a compromise between a completely open form (an account written by the learner) and a personal

language biography in the form of a checklist; the rubrics provided are adapted to the range of likely experiences of secondary school students. On a first page the learners are asked to give an overview of language learning and sociocultural experiences, followed by two pages where they can note down activities they have undertaken in the respective languages. The rubrics used are:

- Enseignements suivis – Enseignement scolaire ou universitaire
- Autres types d'enseignement et d'apprentissage
- Expériences socio-culturelles
  - Stages effectués (lieu, date, durée, activités)
  - Actions réalisées à l'étranger ou en relation avec le pays étranger
  - Lectures d'oeuvres complètes en langue étrangère (titres, auteurs, nombre de pages)
  - Consultation de journaux en langue étrangère (titres, fréquence, média)
  - Films vus en version originale ou spectacles en langue étrangère (nature, titres, réalisateurs)
  - Échanges avec des locuteurs étrangers (par courrier, téléphone, visiophone, courrier éléctronique,...)
  - Exposés réalisés en langue étrangère (sujets, public, médias utilisés)
  - Participation à des expositions ou publications (thèmes, médias utilisés, formes de présentation, nature de la contribution)
  - Participation à des clubs de langue
  - Autres

Figure 4: Pre-structured overview of language learning and sociocultural experiences; a third page containing additional rubrics is provided in the ELP itself (ELP for upper secondary students edited by the CRDP de Basse-Normandie)

Learners are expected to fill in one of these 3-page records for each language separately.

The ELP for adults developed and edited by Trinity College Dublin adopts a similar approach. In the *Language Biography* brochure a very concisely pre-structured one-page form is provided for an overview of *learning and experiences* and *current progress and objectives* in one language. The same form is provided four times for different languages. It is complemented by a similarly structured page (provided twice in the brochure) where learners can enter information in more detail about *Linguistic and intercultural experiences*.

Figure 5: Concise pre-structured overview of language learning, experiences and objectives (pilot ELP for adults edited by the Centre for Language and Communications Studies, Trinity College, University of Dublin)

These forms provided in this ELP have the advantage that they do not require much writing and that they give an overview per language at a glance. In some other ELPs, where learners did not have the benefit of an introduction by teachers, it was considered necessary to provide more detailed explanations.

The North Rhine-Westphalian (NRW) ELP designed especially for use in lower and upper secondary schools, lists in some detail concrete language learning activities that could be undertaken by the learners: they appear in checklists that extend over four pages in the appendix to the *Language Biography*. The various activities are organised according to four different headings:

- Handling of texts/media (*Umgang mit Texten/Medien*)
- Exercises, forms of activities, projects (*Übungen, Arbeitsformen, Projekte*)
- Oral communication (Mündliche Kommunikation)
- Writing/authoring texts (*Texte schreiben/verfassen*)

Figure 6: Checklist containing ideas for learning activities (NRW *Europäisches Portfolio der Sprachen* for lower and upper secondary students)

On a fifth page, in the same checklist format, topics are listed in which learners could have been or could be involved. The learners are expected to work through these five pages of checklists and to indicate whether they were involved in the activities and topics described *often, occasionally, rarely* or *never*. These lists are not only meant for stock-taking but also for planning: learners are asked to identify those activities and topics they neglected earlier and to draw the necessary conclusions. In the NRW ELP the planning of language learning is mainly based on these checklists while in other ELPs checklists containing descriptors related to the *Common reference levels* form the basis for objective-setting and planning of further learning.

The format chosen for the personal biography instruments in the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* is less pre-structured than most other models. The fold-out that explains the uses that can be made of the forms belonging to the *Language Biography* and provides some concrete advice on how the form *My personal language learning biography* may be filled in. These points are briefly repeated at the top of the form itself:

- In order to inform others about your language learning biography, choose a table format
- Write down the languages you grew up with and the language regions you lived in
- Inform briefly about language learning in school, about courses taken, duration, intensity and type of teaching
- Indicate where and how you learned (or are still learning) languages outside school
- Note down when and how exactly you use (or used) other languages at work, for study, with acquaintances, when travelling
- Update your language learning biography regularly

Figure 7: Suggestions and example for a personal language learning biography (Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*)

The authors of the Swiss ELP suggest drawing up a table very similar to a general CV, but focussing exclusively on the various language learning experiences. While the French ELP discussed above favours a separate presentation per language, the Swiss ELP proposes an integrated approach (but does not exclude the other option) by focusing on the learner and his/her history of language learning and use.

The *Language Biography* part of the Swiss ELP contains two more forms that allow further elaboration on language learning and also on intercultural experiences:

- *Information about important linguistic and intercultural experiences* (form 2.3)

- *Information about foreign language teaching in schools and language courses* (form 2.4)

Information about Important Linguistic and Intercultural Experiences

2.3

This is the place for you to give (more in detail than on the "Personal Language Learning Biography" page) information about important intercultural experiences and activities which have contributed to widening your knowledge of other countries and the people, society and culture of foreign language areas. The information can be organised as you wish: separated according to language, or chronologically.

Intercultural experiences (encounters with the country, culture and speakers of the language)

Other activities which have contributed to a greater knowledge of the society and culture (art, music, literature, history, media, etc)

Practical use of the language in specific situations (work, study, school, free time, with friends and acquaintances)

Important pieces of work and projects in a foreign language

Figure 8: Instructions at the top of the form Information about important linguistic and intercultural experiences (Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*)

Information about Foreign Language Teaching in Schools and Language Courses

2.4

Objectives, contents, programmes

The description can be distributed by the schools as a printed form, or can be filled in by the school / course organisers (possibly with the learners' participation).

1. Please report in note form and as concretely as possible what objectives the teaching in the foreign language(s) is intended to achieve. Refer if you wish to official documents (syllabuses etc.) in the process. Please also state where particular emphases are set in each foreign language.

2. Please give information about the methods employed in order to reach the objectives stated. Please indicate the allocation of classroom hours at the different levels, the learning opportunities provided (such as intensive phases, interdisciplinary projects, exchange programmes, immersion teaching), the means to promote extracurricular learning, and the type and style of the examinations.

Figure 9: Instructions at the top of the form Information about foreign language teaching in schools and language courses (Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*)

Form 2.3 is intended as a continuation of the concise personal language learning biography introduced above. Information may be added, important points may be stressed, anecdotes may be related, questions and reflections may be noted down, cultural (e.g. literary) knowledge and achievement may be proven, etc.

Form 2.4 focuses on the description of language classes and courses in order to make transparent contents, levels, books and material used, etc. It is included in the ELP and it can be filled in by the learners themselves or with the help of teachers but often an equivalent pre-printed form will be issued by (language) schools. Having the character of an *attestation* (cf. *Language Passport*), such descriptions of school language teaching and language courses may be kept in the *Language Passport* folder instead of the *Language Biography*.

Working with loosely-structured forms may be highly beneficial to the learners themselves because they have to become involved personally. On the other hand, as soon as longer texts are written, a language problem may arise when they are to be understood by someone who does not read the language of the ELP owner. It also takes some effort to write the kinds of text required.

Every ELP should be piloted with its intended target group in order to find out which form(s) best suit(s) their needs and preferences. Pilot versions could vary open and closed formats or offer alternatives in order to receive the necessary feedback from the users. In the Swiss piloting, writing the personal language learning biography was one of the activities that learners carried through most often, especially in school contexts. Positive feedback was frequent but it was suggested repeatedly that forms which involve a lot of writing and need to be updated from to time should be made available for use with a word processor.

b) Checklists related to the *Common reference levels*

One instrument often used in ELPs for (formative and summative) assessment and planning is that of "checklists". It is helpful to distinguish between two basic types of checklists: those related to the *Common reference levels* and others which relate to skills and competencies that have not been or cannot be described by means of calibrated descriptions.

Checklists based on the *Common reference levels* describe the skills involved in language proficiency at certain levels in more detail than overviews such as the *Self-assessment grid* do, thus providing more support in setting concrete goals.

Checklists are attractive to many categories of learners and teachers because they describe concrete and worthwhile objectives and allow for learner self-assessment.

Since checklists may be used for summative as well as formative assessment (and planning), they may be used in the context of both: the *Language Passport* and the *Language Biography*. Consequently, in the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* suggestions on how to use the checklists are included in both parts. For reasons of clarity the two respective pages are reproduced in full:

Assessing your own language proficiency (2)

After you have found your level on the Self-assessment Grid, you can use the Checklists to test your first estimate. There are Checklists for all 6 levels of the Council of Europe (A1–C2). They are organised according to the skills—Understanding (Listening and Reading), Speaking (Spoken interaction and Spoken production) and Writing—and contain a number of descriptions of what one can typically do at each level.

How can I use the Checklists?

▶ Put your self-assessment in column 1:
  - Take the relevant Checklist from the Photocopiable Forms and copy it.
  - Read each description and ask yourself if you can do that under normal circumstances or if you can do it easily.
  - If your competence in some skills, for example Listening and Writing, lies above or below this level, you can use the next higher or lower Checklist.

▶ You can also use the Checklists to have your competence assessed by other people, for example a teacher. This should go in column 2.

▶ You will get a profile of your language skills which you can now put in the Language Passport *(Profile of Language Skills).*

The Checklists can also be used to plan learning objectives. This will be described in the Language Biography.

Filled in Checklists should be put in Folder 2 (Language Biography).

3

Figure 10: Description of the purpose and the use of the checklists in the context of the *Language Passport* (Swiss *ELP for young people and adults)*

Assessing your language skills and setting objectives

With the Checklists you can assess your language skills yourself. You can get your estimates checked by other people, for example a teacher, and have them verified. The Checklists also help to find out and fix what objectives are important for you and what you would still like to learn. There are Checklists for all 6 Council of Europe levels (A1–C2). They are organised according to skills—Understanding (Listening and Reading), Speaking (Spoken interaction and Spoken production) and Writing.

Self-assessment Checklist — Level B1 — 2

Language: German

Use this checklist to record what you think you can do (Column 1). Ask someone else, for example your teacher, to also assess what they think you can do (Column 2). Use Column 3 to mark those things that you cannot yet do which you feel are important for you (Column 3 = Objectives). Add to the list—perhaps with your teacher—other things that you can do, or that are important for your language learning at this level.

Use the following symbols:
In columns 1 and 2
✓ I can do this under normal circumstances
✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3
! This is an objective for me
!! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level B1.

Listening
I can extract relevant information from short official texts.

Reading
I can extract relevant information from short official texts.

Spoken interaction
I can give and accept business orders over the telephone.

See "Photocopiable Forms"

When and how often should I use the Checklists?

▸ On the one hand you can use the Checklists to draw a line under what you have done so far, and to fix your level in order to record it in the Language Passport (see pages 2 and 3 of the fold-out page for the Language Passport).
In this case, the Checklists are best used at the beginning or end of a fairly long learning period, for example, at the end of a school year, a semester, or before the start of a language course. When you do this, go through an entire Checklist.

▸ However, you can always refer to the Checklists during the school year or a language course in order to check your progress. In this case, you can concentrate on single skills, for example reading or writing.

What can I do in a language?

(Columns 1 and 2 of the list)
▸ Record your self-assessment in column 1.
Copy the relevant Checklists from the Photocopiable Forms. You can decide which of the 6 Checklists is probably the right one for you with the help of the Self-assessment Grid. (See tips for the Language Passport, page 2.) You can also ask your teacher to advise you or to help you choose the Checklists.
Read each description through, and ask yourself if you can do what is described. If you are not sure, you can try it out with a small task or test, perhaps with your teacher's help.
At each point you can decide how well you can do something: Can I do it under normal circumstances, for example if I can use

some kind of help, or if people don't speak too quickly, or can I do it easily, for example, under time pressure?
If your proficiency in certain skills (for example listening and writing) lies above or below the level of the chosen Checklist, you can make use of the Checklist of the level just above or below.

▸ Use column 2 to have your proficiency judged by other people, for example a teacher, and discuss it together if the assessments vary widely.

▸ There is room in the Checklists for extra descriptions. Write down what else you can do.

What would I like to be able to do? What is important for me?

(Column 3 of the list)
▸ If, while you are going through the Checklists, you realise that you cannot do something, or that you cannot do it very well, then you should consider
▪ whether you would like to learn what is described there;
▪ whether it is an important objective;
▪ when you would like to reach that objective.
Mark your objectives in column 3 on the Checklist.

▸ Consider—perhaps with a teacher—what means you will use to reach your goals.

▸ You can find suggestions on page 6 "Setting yourself objectives".

You can put completed Checklists in this folder.

3

Figure 11: Description of the purpose and the use of the checklists within the *Language Biography* (Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*)

Developers intending to include checklists in the *Language Biography* need to consider how they intend to combine the assessment and the planning aspects.

The Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*, for example, uses a system of ticks for assessment and exclamation marks for setting priorities, as explained at the top of each checklist.

Space is provided not only for self-assessment but also for assessment by a more competent speaker of the language, usually a teacher. On the one hand, this satisfies the desire of many learners to have self-assessment confirmed, on the other hand, confronting self-assessment and assessment by others encourages and facilitates negotiations between learners and (usually) their teachers.

Figure 12: Instructions and columns provided in checklists (Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*)

The draft ELP for adults by EAQUALS/ALTE uses a simpler format for the indication of skills and priorities. It recommends starting with priorities.

Figure 13: Instructions and columns provided in checklists (draft ELP for adults by EAQUALS/ALTE)

The Swiss version offers two grades for indicating how well a learner is able to do something (*under normal circumstances* vs. *easily*), or how much of a priority something is (*an objective* vs. *a priority*). The North Rhine-Westphalian (NRW) version uses three grades for assessment (A = very well; B = well; C = not so well). Similarly, the Slovenian *Stage 2* ELP also suggests three grades but uses "Smileys" instead of text:

Jezik									
Datum									
Lahko se sporazumevam na enostaven način, z gibi in s posameznimi besedami.	☺	😐	☹	☺	😐	☹	☺	😐	☹

Figure 14: Smileys indicating the degree of mastery in checklists for younger learners (Slovenian pilot *Stage 2* Portfolio)

The accredited NRW version for students at the lower and higher secondary levels uses the same type of descriptors in checklists but omits the *assessment by others* and the *objectives* columns. Four columns for learner entries following the descriptors provide space for assessing the skills in four different languages. Clearly, these checklists are meant for self-assessment only. The learners are expected to plan their further learning on the basis of a list of proposed language learning activities (also available in the Portfolio) that are not directly linked to the target skills described in the checklists. Most ELP models combine the planning element, which forms an integral part of the *Language Biography*, with self-assessment checklists. Descriptions of language proficiency can facilitate goal-setting considerably; as does the list of valuable language learning activities provided in the NRW Portfolio, but from another perspective.

In the NRW version, the checklists are appended to the main section of the *Language Biography*. In the main section an empty grid is provided accompanied by instructions asking the learners to reflect and to write down what they already know in each of the categories Listening, Reading, Talking together (= Spoken interaction), Writing, and Accuracy. The checklists in the appendix are recommended as a source of inspiration for that task. (Note that this choice of categories does not correspond exactly to the categories used in the *Language Passport* section: Spoken Production is missing, Accuracy (including negative statements) was added.) In the appendix, the learners are introduced to self-assessment quite extensively before the checklists are presented. It is also shown how self-assessment results may be confirmed with the help of peers. The extent to which the North Rhine-Westphalian ELP is pedagogic in the *Language Biography* part, and almost takes on the character of a workbook, is quite unique among the existing ELPs. Developers of ELPs for school-bound target groups will find it very inspiring. Before simply taking over this approach, they should, however, consider and try to find out together with learners and teachers whether such workbook-like elements should in fact be part of the ELP itself, or whether they should be available in accompanying materials for learners and/or teachers.

Checklists are generally well-suited to the assessment of progress. This aspect is implemented in different ways, depending on the ELP version. The Swiss authors expect learners to keep filled-in checklists in the ELP folder and to go over the same lists again whenever it makes sense to do so (beginning/end of a learning cycle; after training specific skills intensively; before and after stays in the target language region, etc.). Learners seem to agree with this procedure. Since the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* does not provide columns for consecutive assessments on the same checklist, learners use the same lists again, highlighting assessment at different points in time with the help of different colour pens.

Checklists serve as indicators of levels that are fairly broad (particularly if six levels are distinguished). The descriptors contained in a checklist describe what learners at a certain level are *typically* able to do (and how well). Since languages are always learned under "*specific*" circumstances, and different individuals want to learn different things, space should be provided to give learners the chance to note down what else they are able to do or want to learn at a given moment in time.

The Russian ELP for upper secondary students provides the three columns for self-assessment, teacher assessment and objectives-setting in every checklist three times; and each set of three columns can be dated at the top.

Figure 15: Dateable columns for repeated assessment using the same checklists (Russian ELP for upper secondary schools (middle schools), issued by the Moscow State Linguistic University, 2000)

It makes sense to adapt the number of descriptors contained in the checklists to the target group. Having to work through long lists of carefully worded descriptions may become cumbersome, for young learners, in particular. During the pilot phase some learners and teachers in Switzerland complained that using checklists promoted a book-keeping mentality. The descriptors to be included in checklists should be carefully selected, adapted to the learners if necessary, and presented as attractively as possible.

The Czech pilot version for 8 to 15-year-old pupils provides its version of checklists adapting the exact wording and the graphical presentation quite clearly to the intended target group(s), in particular the older learners. The way in which the learners should use the descriptors exactly (note date, mark priorities, ask teacher for confirmation) is explained in the instructions.

Figure 16: Instructions for using an equivalent of a checklist for younger learners (Czech pilot ELP for learners aged 8-15).

Figure 17: Equivalent of a checklist for younger learners not using columns for pre-defined entries (Czech pilot ELP for 8-15)

Space is provided for the learners to add personal descriptions of what they have learned on an additional form attached to the "checklist" pages. They are also encouraged to add even more descriptions in whatever format they choose.

The Russian ELP for children aged 6-10 attempts to enliven the strict checklist format by using symbols that correspond to the skills described. As in other ELPs for young learners, the number of items has been reduced, and space is provided for the learners to note down what they are also able to do.

Figure 18: Checklist adaptation for young learners (Russian pilot ELP for learners aged 6-10 developed by the Moscow Linguistic State University).

The ELP version for primary school pupils developed by the CIEP (Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques) in Sèvres, France, presents its equivalent of checklists in a rather original format: a board-game consisting of a colourful square chart with four parts corresponding to the four basic skills.
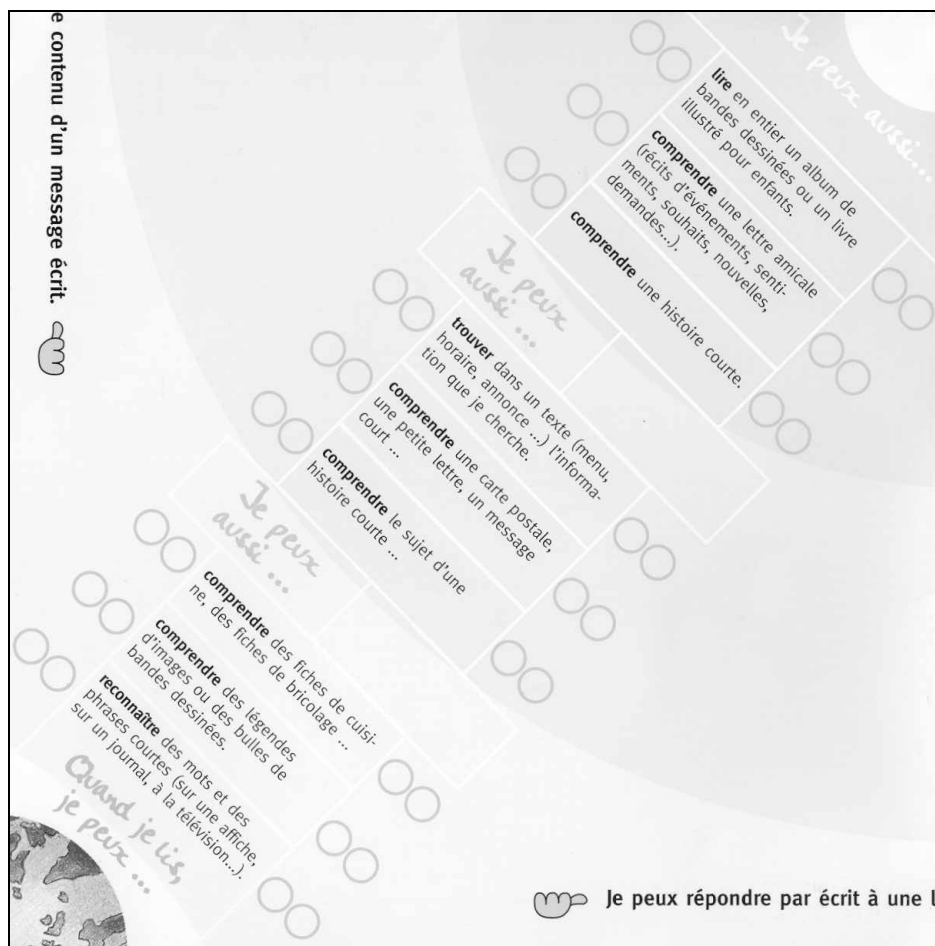
Figure 19: Self-assessment "board game" (Reading) for pupils aged 8-11 (CIEP, Sèvres, France)

The descriptors used were adapted from the *Common reference levels* in a transparent manner and cover a range from A1 to A2/B1. (Issues involved with the adaptation of descriptors are discussed extensively in chapter 6.) The authors of this ELP model decided to limit the range of levels provided – no doubt for practical reasons. Those learners who have acquired languages outside school should also be given the possibility to present their plurilingual competence in the Portfolio.

When using these checklists, learners start in the corners (level A1) and move up towards the middle of the board as they progress. Whenever these young learners are able to do one of the tasks described, they receive a coloured sticker which they can place on to a pre-printed circle. Four circles are available next to each descriptor, accommodating four different languages.

Some other issues concerning checklists related to the *Common reference levels:*

The great majority of the items in the Swiss checklists are based on items that were validated in the same project as those underlying the *Common reference levels*. These items are now available in Schneider/North 2000, in the CEF or on the Internet (www.languageportfolio.ch). Many developers will feel the need to customize their checklists to the specific needs of the intended users of their ELP(s). This may mean that they:

- provide checklists simply for selected levels (caveat: the learners should still be able to assess language skills acquired outside school);

- leave free space on the checklists so that learners (possibly together with teachers) can add items in order to show that they have learned or would like to learn things which are not described on the checklists;

- make checklists available in an electronic format that can be easily modified (and in particular complemented) by institutions, teachers and learners;

- develop checklists for narrower (intermediate) levels or specific purposes (cf. Ch. 7).

If exhaustive checklists are provided for several levels, they take up considerable space in the *Language Biography* section. Therefore developers may wish to consider whether they prefer to make the checklists available (in full) e.g. in a resource file for teachers, on the Internet etc. It should be clear, however, especially to independent learners, that checklists are provided since reliable self-assessment and concrete planning is difficult, for example, simply on the basis of the *Self-assessment grid*. Developers should also keep in mind that the learners should have access to new checklists because:

a) plurilingual learners need several copies to assess their skills in several languages and

b) checklists need to be replaced after a while. For this reason, the Swiss and other ELP developers made them available in the form of master copies.

Developers should also consider the possibility of indicating the availability of checklists from other projects, especially when they are available on the Internet. This may be one way to provide more language versions than could be established within one project only.

c) Checklists or descriptions of skills and competencies that are not related to the *Common reference levels*

It was shown in the Swiss research project that teachers and learners attributed quality descriptors of language proficiency to their respective difficulty levels very reliably. Therefore, it was possible to define *Common reference levels* of language proficiency. However, other competencies which are elements of a language learner's competence could not be linked to specific levels of competence consistently. Examples of such competencies are:

- sociocultural and intercultural competence including explicit knowledge about history, literature, art, the "way of life", etc. of the regions where a language is spoken;

- awareness of the variety of existing languages and their differences and common features;

- learning techniques and strategies.

Such skills and competencies are not any less important within a language learning curriculum than language ability in a narrower sense. Therefore, it makes sense to make descriptions of such competencies part of the *Language Biography*, particularly in ELPs that are developed for use in schools. Alternatively, material supporting these competencies may be provided in accompanying materials, or links may be made to existing material.

The North Rhine-Westphalian (NRW) ELP, which has a highly detailed *Language Biography* section, also features instruments covering some of these aspects:

1) Learning techniques and strategies

The first section of the *Language Biography* is entitled *I as a language learner*. It contains a form with the rubrics:

- How I organize my work
- How I learn words
- How I improve my pronunciation
- How I improve and assess my listening comprehension
- How I check and improve my reading comprehension
- How I revise and further develop my texts
- How I learn grammar and make sure I do not forget
- What I have decided to do in the future

The authors suggest that the learners either use this form or (preferably) write a text on these topics. Again, support is provided in the appendix to the *Language Biography*, where examples of useful activities are listed for each rubric.

2) Language awareness

For this aspect the NRW ELP focuses on learning by projects which bring learners in contact with speakers of other languages. This kind of project was a priority in language education in NRW even before the ELP was introduced. The ELP thus builds upon and supports curriculum innovation. Project ideas appropriate to different age groups of learners are described in the appendix to the *Language Biography*, e.g. it is suggested that pupils compare the words for the same thing in all languages the pupils in one class know. A form entitled *What we found out about language(s) and their variety* is provided in the main part of the *Language Biography* in which the pupils can enter a brief summary of the insights they gained when they worked on such projects.

3) Intercultural and sociocultural competence

Information provided in the personal history of language learning and intercultural experiences can be an indication of the degree of intercultural and sociocultural competence a learner has attained. However, since the early days of the ELP, it has appeared desirable to both ELP developers and teachers working with an ELP to further elaborate these aspects and, in particular, to develop descriptions of the competencies that can (and should) be attained. No descriptors exist to date for these competencies which have been empirically calibrated. It is obvious that levels for these kinds of competence are not directly related to the levels of language competence. It is possible for example, to have extended cultural knowledge simply from reading translations. It would nonetheless be valuable to have lists of objectives detailing:

- aspects of sociocultural knowledge (knowledge of history, politics, culture etc.);

- components of intercultural competence that should be acquired (ability to handle differing norms and culturally induced misunderstanding, ability to prepare for and benefit from stays regions with different cultures, etc.).

ELP developers have tried to create such instruments in the past, for example based on the Council of Europe publication *Sociocultural competence in language learning and teaching. Studies towards a Common European Framework of reference for language teaching and learning* by M. Byram, G. Neuner, and G. Zarate. Checklists similar to those that exist for communicative language competence do not exist so far, but some ELPs encourage reflection and provide ideas and examples of what personalized descriptions of intercultural experiences and knowledge might look like.

d) Planning instruments, personal descriptions of objectives

There is no doubt that it makes sense to write down objectives that emerge from reflection and assessment. An explicit statement of objectives to be attained, including learning paths to be followed, helps to focus learning and to make realistic planning possible. Such statements may take on the character of learning contracts between teachers and learners. Statements of objectives may also be included in subsequent evaluations in order to improve one's ability to plan further learning.

The planning function of the *Language Biography* is usually implemented in combination with self-assessment and/or accounts of previous learning experiences. Instruments used for these purposes have been discussed earlier in this document.

Objectives may be formulated concerning different aspects of language learning. Many of these are listed in form 2.5. of the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults:*

My Objectives

Formulate the objectives and plans for language learning: the pages can be organised individually.
What do I want to learn? How do I want to learn?
Why do I want to learn a language, what do I need to be able to do in it, and how would I like to
go about it? Am I learning the language for my job, for travel, or for study? Is it more important for
me to understand, to read literature or to write? Do I want to attend a course, learn in a tandem
partnership, or have a stay in a foreign language area?

2.5
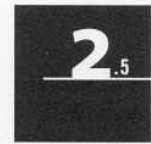
Figure 20: An instrument that helps to formulate objectives explicitly (Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*)

The developers of the Swiss ELP chose a very open form for this instrument, providing little structure and demanding some writing effort.

In other ELPs the setting of objectives is usually part of those instruments that are used for stock-taking. In these cases, planning is more focused on single aspects each time. For example:

- *Which learning techniques have you used recently – which ones do you want to try out in the next term?*

- *What type of activities did you carry out or not in the past – which ones do you want to stress in the future?*

The NRW Language Portfolio, which is directly linked to well-defined groups of learners and their curricula, adopts such an approach. It recommends directly certain activities or projects for pupils of a certain age. Such a procedure seems appropriate (indeed to be recommended) if an ELP is developed for a well-defined group of learners, usually pupils, as long as both school learning and out-of-school learning are taken into account and suggested as possibilities.

Some pilot ELPs did not implement the planning aspect in the *Language Biography* explicitly. Since teachers and learners should not always be expected to reflect on and to set objectives automatically, it is strongly recommended that instruments for planning are provided (cf. *Principles and Guidelines*). Even in school language learning, where curricula are sometimes very rigid, learners should have the opportunity to be involved in planning processes, even if this relates to certain aspects only. The planning aspect should in any case be integrated in the measures and materials accompanying the introduction of an ELP, and teacher training in particular.

Generally, developers should ensure that learners have a certain choice between different activities – or ways to work on one activity – as long as they are connected with the specific functions of the *Language Biography*. One learner may prefer pre-structured worksheets while another learner may wish to work on the basis of an idea only, choosing his/her own format and procedure. For one learner reflecting upon intercultural aspects may be paramount because he/she has just come back from a stay abroad, while for another learner formulating a learning contract for the next school term is important.

If the developers of a *Language Biography* intend to offer choice, they should make this clear to the users. Otherwise, working with the ELP may become very time-consuming or even frustrating. Users should be told that a variety of instruments and ideas all serving the same basic functions of the *Language Biography* are provided, but that they are encouraged to use them selectively according to their needs and preferences.

5.3.   Dossier

The *Principles and Guidelines* make the following provisions concerning the *Dossier* part of an ELP:

> The **Dossier** offers the learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the *Language Biography* or *Language Passport*.

The application for validation questionnaire asks the following questions**:**

> Does the *Dossier*
> * offer the learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences?
> * allow for up-dating and re-organisation?
> * encourage the development of plurilingualism?

The full range of functions the *Dossier* may have and the importance it actually did have for learning and teaching during the piloting in some countries greatly exceed the brief characterisations above.

There are two differently focused approaches to the *Dossier* both of which are compatible with the original ideas:

a) the *Dossier* mainly as a companion to everyday language learning (stress on the pedagogic function);

b) the *Dossier* mainly as an exemplification, illustration and endorsement of information given and claims made in the *Language Biography* and in the *Language Passport* (stress on the reporting function).

For approach a) the *Dossier* is the process part of the ELP that accompanies, organizes and documents the learning process in a very comprehensive manner. This means that worksheets and texts that come out of language work, reflection, planning, tests; self-assessments etc., even at a micro level, would all be included in the *Dossier*. They would be sorted and selected for documentation and reporting purposes only in the next phase. Option a) may be preferred in those environments, in particular, where an ELP is used within a tradition of "portfolio learning" and "portfolio assessment".

For approach b) the only products included in the *Dossier* are those that might be interesting as an illustration of the learning process and the present level of language and intercultural competence. Such "products" may be, for example, written texts, audio and video recordings, (old) checklists, tests, attestations and certificates. With approach b) suitable materials for presentation will be selected from the whole *Dossier* when a particular occasion arises.

Approach a) accords greater importance to the *Dossier* and to the ELP within language learning in general and includes the functions approach b) gives to the *Dossier*. It is for the ELP developers or even the users to decide which of these approaches they favour. There are no ELPs available at present that have a *Dossier* section that indicates from the pre-printed materials it contains that it is intended for approach a). However, during the piloting, e.g. in Finland, the ELP was used in such a manner. In fact, approach a) may be implemented through teacher training and guides for learners and teachers rather than a large amount of ready-made materials that can often be taken from existing textbooks in any case.

The provisions made for the *Dossier* do not state *exactly* what materials that "document and illustrate achievements or experiences" should be kept in the *Dossier*.

* Should checklists, formulations of objectives, accounts of language learning or intercultural experiences be kept in the *Language Biography* or in the *Dossier*? – The majority but not all ELP developers, chose the *Language Biography* as the place where these materials ought to be located.

* Should confirmations of stays abroad, language contacts etc., language certificates and diplomas be filed in the *Language Passport* section or in the *Dossier*? In this case, the *Dossier* was preferred by

most ELP developers. One notable exception is the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* where the *Standard Language Passport* is contained in a folder that may also hold more or less official documents serving as evidence for claims made in the *Language Passport*.

The organisation of the ELP in these respects is left to the discretion of the developers or even the users. A common approach may develop in the future.

The more comprehensive the *Dossier* part is intended to be and the greater the variety of materials and functions it is to accommodate, the more detailed its classification system ought to be. Developers of ELPs will need to consider:

- if they make a fundamental sub-division – also physical – between a process-oriented or pedagogic *Dossier* and a product-oriented or reporting *Dossier*. Another basic sub-division could be between a first section containing certificates/diplomas, and a second section containing personal "products";

- if they provide a finer classification system, also in order to incite learners to produce and/or collect a variety of material (e.g. written work, project work, audio and video recordings);

- how learner products will be presented so that they will be perceived as evidence pertaining to claims made in the other two parts of the ELP; will learner products be registered and commented on (e.g. indicating the status of the examples provided through attributes such as "previous stage", "current stage of development"; "final product after correction", etc.);

- what physical format they expect the *Dossier* to have and whether they provide space using a folder large enough for the ELP, or recommend to the learners to maintain a *Dossier* separately that has a variable format that suits their needs;

- how they explain to learners and possibly teachers the uses and the handling (especially updating and making choices for reporting) of the *Dossier*, for example, through instructions in the *Dossier* itself or in (additional) guides; by providing examples.

The main objective of the *Dossier* is to achieve *visibility*. The *Dossier* provides a chance to show (and see) directly what a learner is able to do in different languages. Keeping a piece of work in the *Dossier* gives it a value it would not have otherwise, or at least not for long. Having a *Dossier* can be motivating, especially in school language learning. Knowing that the results of a project will be in the *Dossier* as an example of what one is able to do can be an additional incentive to creating an attractive-looking product a learner is proud to present.

In most existing ELPs the authors provided little more than a cover page and a page where the contents may be listed by the learners. Some added an explanation stating the purpose of that section and/or a form where the contents of the *Dossier* may be listed. Obviously, in school contexts, the uses to be made of the *Dossier* were often left up to the teachers.

This tendency towards minimalism can, on the one hand, be interpreted as evidence that in the *Dossier* part there is room for imagination and creativity. On the other hand, however, it does not reflect adequately the important role the *Dossier* may play:

a) when learners need "evidence" to support claims made, especially in the *Language Passport*;

b) when an ELP is to be fully embedded in language learning, especially in a school context. Using the ELP on a regular basis in school means integrating the "*Dossier* perspective", if not the *Dossier* itself, in daily work.

In the Finnish ELP a *Reflection form* is provided in addition to the contents page which can be used to make clear to the learners themselves, and to others, the status of a piece of work contained in the ELP.
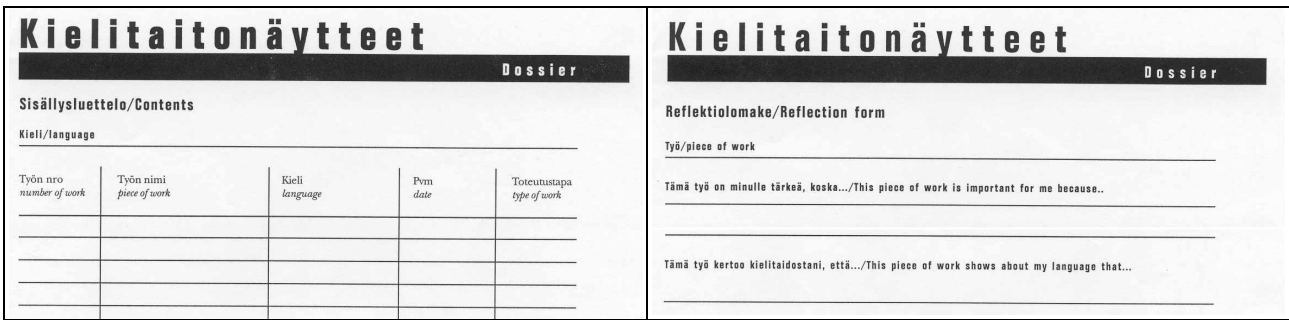
Figure 21: *Contents* page and *Reflection form* (Finnish ELP for upper secondary students)

The Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* states very briefly, as for the other parts, the purpose of the *Dossier* and the uses that can be made of it. In addition, quite extensive instructions are provided for the learners. The contents page introduces a rather complex but quite sophisticated coding system in order to indicate the status of the respective piece of work. The Swiss contents page is somewhat like a combination of the Finnish contents page and the *Reflection form* belonging to each piece of work.
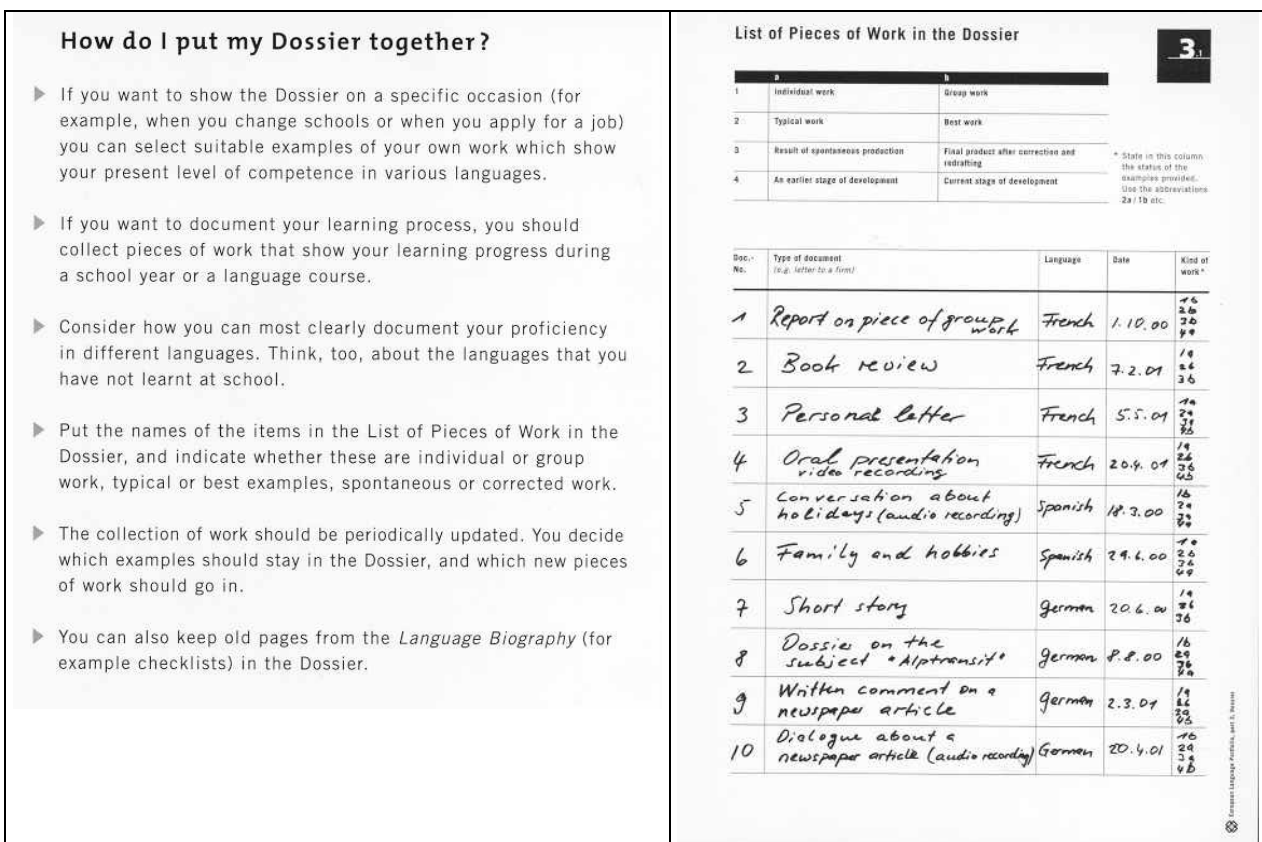
Figure 22: left: instructions for learners concerning the *Dossier*; right: *Contents* page using a coding system to indicate the status of each piece of work (Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*)

The instruments presented briefly only scratch the surface of what the *Dossier* is or might be in actual teaching. If extended use is to be made of the *Dossier* in schools, this aspect will need to be stressed when teachers are introduced to an ELP. A study by Viljo Kohonen: *Developing the pedagogic function of a European Language Portfolio: the "Dossier" part and student guidance* will be of considerable help to all those involved in teacher training.

6.   Developing, calibrating, adapting descriptors

Within the ELP different kinds of descriptions fulfil important functions. The existing ELP models contain different kinds of descriptions, e.g. descriptions of language proficiency, descriptions of learning objectives, descriptions of learning strategies as well as descriptions of language learning and intercultural experiences.

It is important to distinguish between two fundamentally different types of descriptions:
1) scaled descriptions, i.e. descriptors which belong to a scale. Examples of such descriptors are: the descriptors in the Self-assessment grid, the Global scale, and the checklists contained in the Swiss ELP version, for example;
2) descriptions which are not scaled (or have not yet been scaled). Some of these descriptions may not be scalable, or scaling is not important in their case if they are to be used in the ELP; lists of learning strategies or descriptions of cultural or intercultural experiences belong to this group.

When new ELP versions are developed, consideration should be given to:
- which descriptors or which *types* of descriptors should not be changed if possible;
- what sources of descriptors are available;
- under what conditions and how descriptors can be adapted;
- how (using what methods) additional descriptors can be developed;
- what requirements good descriptors should fulfil;
- whether finer or narrower levels should be distinguished within the six-level scale of the *Common reference levels*;
- by what kinds of procedures descriptors can be related to the *Common reference levels*;
- for what purposes descriptions are desirable which are not related to levels or not scalable.

6.1.   Instruments containing scaled descriptors that should not be changed

The descriptions of levels that are used in several ELPs are based on the *Common reference levels* in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEF).

The *Common reference levels* of the Council of Europe provide a common standard against which the assessment of modern language attainment in different educational sectors, target languages, linguistic regions and states can be referenced (cf. North 1999, 25).

This common standard is described by
a) the *Global scale* (CEF: Table 1) and
b) the *Self-assessment grid* (CEF: Table 2).

The *Global scale* and the *Self-assessment grid* were constructed using the most typical and stable descriptors; these level descriptions are drawn from a bank of "illustrative descriptors" developed and validated for the CEF using a rigorous methodology in the Swiss research project described in Appendix B to the CEF. "The formulations have been mathematically scaled to the levels by analysing the way in which they have been interpreted in the assessment of large numbers of learners." (CEF: Ch. 3.4) Projects by DIALANG and ALTE which used these descriptors confirmed their quality (cf. Appendices C and D to the CEF).

The original descriptors may be changed, if necessary, but the exact status of the descriptors used should be made transparent. The exact wording of the *Reference levels* should only be changed a) if important

reasons exist; b) after a thorough analysis; and c) in collaboration with experts. It would make little sense and impair their credibility considerably if ELPs were disseminated in which the *Reference levels* are formulated in different ways as *Reference levels*. At the same time, there *are* good reasons for adaptations since the descriptions of the levels must be comprehensible and accessible for the users of the respective ELPs. For younger learners reformulations are necessary to make the descriptors more easily comprehensible and better adapted to their experience. When an adapted *Grid* or *Global scale* is disseminated, it should be made clear that it is not the original version.

Where additional descriptors are needed, tailored to specific domains, e.g. language use in the vocational sector or in higher education, it is preferable not to change the existing instruments (*Global scale* and *Self-assessment grid*) which represent a common scale for a wide range of learners and thus allow for comparability, but to add (perhaps in a parallel form) a tool with level descriptions that take into account the specific objectives and which can be related to the *Common reference levels*. Accordingly, it is recommended to add what is specific but to retain what is common in order to guarantee comparability.

The descriptors used on the checklists of some ELP versions (including the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*) do not have the same status as the descriptors in the *Global scale* or the *Self-assessment grid*. The individual descriptors in the checklists function as indicators in the sense that they can be used to show the extent to which someone has met the standards described in the standard description of the level (cf. North 1999, 25).

The descriptors on the checklists should be typical and reliable indicators. Therefore, it is advisable also in the case of checklists to use as a basis descriptors that have been assigned to a level by the use of more than intuitive methods – unless they are designed for in-house use only. For example, most descriptions in the checklists of the Swiss ELP version are slightly adapted descriptors that were originally scaled for the *Illustrative scales* in the CEF.

Experience has shown that good translations of the *Self-assessment grid* and the *Global Scale* are not easy to achieve. They have to be true to the original and understandable by non-specialist users at the same time. Since it is sometimes not possible to mirror the exact wording of the original text in other languages, developers should make sure that either the original English, French or German version is taken as a point of departure for translations.

Developers should also ensure that they use the *Self-assessment grid* and the *Global scale* in their latest versions as published in the CEF (2001). The German version reproduced in the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* (2001) may also be considered an original version. Existing translations should also be counter-checked with the original versions before they are adopted and published.

6.2.   Sources that may be used to formulate descriptors

Empirically scaled descriptors are available:
1) in the *Illustrative scales of descriptors* in the Common European Framework. The method used for developing each of these scales is noted there. Before adopting or adapting descriptors from the *Illustrative scales* for use in an ELP, the type of descriptor should be clarified, i.e. whether it is *constructor-oriented*, *assessor-oriented* or *user-oriented*. It can then be decided for what purpose a descriptor can be used, and, in particular, whether it is suitable for self-assessment. Descriptors will have to be transformed into *I can* statements for use in learner self-assessment. They may also have to be simplified or split up;
2) in the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults*. These descriptors were selected and adapted for self-assessment from a bank of validated descriptors that resulted from a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) research project, and were included in the CEF as *Illustrative scales*. The checklists for Reading and Writing also contain descriptors that were assigned to levels through a series of teacher workshops but without using expensive statistical methods. The Swiss checklists are available in

English, French, German and Italian. They were translated into other languages for use during the pilot phase, (e.g. Russian).

The Swiss checklists exist in two versions: 1) the version printed in the pilot ELP (1999), which was reproduced or adapted in other ELPs; 2) the revised version contained in the accredited *ELP for young people and adults* (2001). The checklists were changed on the basis of the feedback obtained during the piloting. The following modifications were made:

- the wording of some descriptors was changed in order to make them clearer, simpler, more user-friendly. Some new descriptors were added on the basis of the *Illustrative scales* in the *Common European Framework;*
- the number of descriptors for the different levels and skills was balanced, sometimes through merging or splitting of existing descriptors;
- the German, French and Italian translations were improved;

3) in the DIALANG scales in Appendix C of the CEF. The descriptions from DIALANG, contained in Appendix C, are on the whole slightly rephrased, sometimes simplified descriptors from the *Illustrative scales* that were transformed into 'I can' statements for self-assessment. These descriptors have been translated into 14 European languages. The calibration carried out by DIALANG confirmed the results obtained when the *Illustrative scales* were developed;

4) in the ALTE *'Can Do' statements* in Appendix D of the CEF. In Appendix D the ALTE *'Can Do' statements* are described, which serve "to demonstrate equivalences between the examination systems of ALTE members, in meaningful terms relating to the real-world language skills likely to be available to people achieving a pass in these examinations." (CEF, Appendix D). The ALTE scales of 'Can Do' statements have the advantage that they exist in three versions, one for each basic domain of language use stated in the CEF: 1) the personal and public domain; 2) the occupational domain and 3) the educational domain (school, vocational training, study, further education). When the scales were developed these three domains were linked through common "anchor items". The *'Can Do' statements* are also related to the *Common reference levels* of the Council of Europe. When the 'Can do's' were scaled, items from the *Self-assessment grid* were used as anchors together with a number of other descriptors from the CEF which had proven to be particularly consistent and stable in the SNF project. This was the case especially for *fluency* descriptors. The *'Can Do' statements* are available in the twelve languages of the present ALTE members: Catalan, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish (for more information see: www.alte.org);

5) in Appendices V and VI of the research report on the SNF project (Schneider/North 2000). These appendices contain all descriptors that were scaled successfully in that project and then taken over into the CEF. Additional information can be found that may be helpful in the selection and adaptation of descriptors: 1) indications on the quality level of each of the descriptors (i.e. which descriptors were interpreted equally, independent of school sector, language, etc.); 2) information on what sources, what other scales each descriptor is based on; 3) the mathematical difficulty value for each descriptor; 4) further statistical figures concerning the use of the descriptors in two different years. The descriptors are contained in Appendix VI in English, French and German. (See also North 2000.)

Permission should be sought before reproducing, translating or adapting descriptors from the different sources. (See chapter 3.3. for details.)

6.3.   Adapting descriptors

While it may be advisable for some ELP versions to use existing descriptors or checklists in part or as a whole, in other cases adaptations seem desirable.

Reasons for adaptations may relate to the intention to:

- adapt the descriptors better to a specific context (e.g. compatibility with curricula);

- tailor the descriptors to specific domains of use (work, study);

- make the descriptors more easily comprehensible for certain groups of users (e.g. young learners);

- differentiate between finer (narrower) levels;

- rephrase the descriptors for different purposes (e.g. self-assessment, definition of objectives).

For adaptations of existing scaled descriptors the following methods have been used successfully:

- combining two or more descriptors;

- dividing descriptors in which more than one task or aspect is contained into two or more individual descriptors;

- specifying descriptors by indicating a context of use (e.g. "at my workplace ...");

- supplementing a formulation by giving examples ("I can ... e.g. in a restaurant" / "I can ... e.g. through looking up words in a dictionary", etc.);

- linguistic simplification (adaptation to language which is comprehensible for children or persons who have had little schooling);

- combining scaled descriptors with formulations e.g. from curricula or other scales;

- attributing descriptors to narrower levels: for the levels in the region of A2, B1 and B2, the information contained in the *Illustrative scales* can be used. The cut-off points between A.2.1 to A2.2, between B1.1 to B1.2, and between B2.1 to B2.2 are marked in the *Illustrative scales* with a horizontal line. In addition, North 1996/2000 and Schneider/North 2000 may be used for information on the mathematical difficulty values of the items;

- adding a scale with gradations like "very well"/"well" (as in the German ELP) etc., or "I can do this under normal circumstances" / "I can do this easily" (as in the Swiss version). (Sometimes elements may have to be removed from descriptors that make gradation impossible.);

- rearranging the descriptors and checklists.

Whenever larger-scale adaptations are being made, the difficulty values of the descriptors used should be verified. This should be done using empirical methods.

The ELP Validation Committee requires that the relationship between newly developed descriptors and the *Reference levels* be made transparent. The CIEP in Sèvres, France, did exactly that in its User's Guide to *Mon premier portfolio des langues*. An example is given and commented on below, showing those changes which had to be made to descriptors developed primarily for adults in order to make them accessible for children.

I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

I can use simple expressions and phrases to describe the place where I live and people I know.

Figure 23: Original descriptors for Spoken interaction on level A1 (first paragraph was is taken from the *Self-assessment grid,* second paragraph was taken from a Swiss checklist)

When I speak, I can …:

- *answer* questions, say who I am, say that I do not understand, ask someone to repeat something.

- *ask questions*, *ask* how to say something, *talk* about the place where I live, people I know.

- *ask* for something or ask to do something, say "thank you".

Figure 24: Final versions of the same descriptors adapted for children (French ELP for children aged 8-11, edited by the CIEP in Sèvres, France)

The central strategy used in simplifying the source descriptors was to reduce the content to concrete communication tasks. Modifying elements were removed. This way of proceeding entails a certain risk that the degree of difficulty is changed.

Example:
> *I can ... talk about ... people I know*

is not necessarily equivalent to
> *I can use simple expressions and phrases to describe ... people I know*

although it is very likely that to young learners this interpretation is self-evident in the context of a foreign language.

This example has the merit that the CIEP made their adaptations on the basis of experience gathered by pilot teachers in the classroom and then made the process of adaptation transparent to those who need to know.

6.4. Developing and calibrating new descriptors

Descriptors of language proficiency can be developed using intuitive methods, qualitative methods or quantitative methods. In the case of an instrument to promote mobility and designed to be used across educational sectors and in various contexts, including transnationally, it is important to avoid problems of author subjectivity and the limitation of validity to one context. If descriptors are intended to provide more transparency, they need to take into account aspects of language proficiency which are relevant and typical of the levels described; moreover, they need to be interpreted in the same manner by as many people as possible.

Therefore the descriptors which form the basis of the *Common reference levels* and the core of the original ELP checklists were developed following a rigorous methodology. As described in the CEF a combination of intuitive, qualitative and quantitative approaches was used (CEF 3.4, Appendices A and B).

The development of the descriptors:

- built on international experience concerning the development of such descriptors and standards: collection of proficiency descriptors from existing scales; breaking up complex descriptors; creation of new descriptors as necessary for some categories (e.g. communication strategies); organizing the descriptors in/by categories for interaction (oral/written), production (oral/written), reception (listening comprehension and reading comprehension);

- incorporated the experience and opinions of representative groups of teachers in an extensive series of workshops to pre-test thousands of descriptors. The purpose was to find out which descriptors are easily understood and interpreted similarly; which descriptors are suitable for learner self-assessment, and which types of descriptors are preferred or rejected;

- used a very reliable measurement model to scale the best descriptors mathematically. This scaling is an analysis of the way in which the descriptors were interpreted by almost 300 Swiss teachers from different language regions and educational sectors in an end of school year assessment of 10 representative learners in their classes. The process is described in more detail in North 2000 and Schneider/North 2000.

In the bank of descriptors produced, not all categories and levels were covered completely. In order to fill these gaps for the *Illustrative scales* and the Swiss ELP, more descriptors were developed, but this time with the help of less time-consuming and less expensive methods. Future ELP developers may adapt these alternative approaches for their own purposes.

Example 1

As indicated in Appendix B of the CEF, illustrative scales were added for sociolinguistic competence and for note-taking on the basis of a follow-up project for the University of Basel. The new descriptors were scaled to the CEF levels using the methodology described above. The correlation of the scale values of the CEF descriptors between their original scale values and their values in this study was 0.899 (of a maximum of 1).

Example 2

For the checklists in the first draft of the Swiss ELP version not enough descriptors were available for Writing. Some teachers had also expressed a desire for more descriptors for Reading (especially literature and longer texts in general). In order to develop more descriptors for Writing as well as Reading literary texts and Extended reading, the following procedure was chosen:

- on the basis of existing, as yet non-validated items from the initial pool, a group of experienced teachers formulated items they felt were relevant;

- against the background of their experience, the experts who had conducted the Swiss project selected the most promising items for piloting, other items were rephrased, systematic gaps were filled with new items;

- groups of teachers were given different sets of descriptors including already scaled descriptors. Every item was given to at least two groups; the teachers then sorted the descriptors into levels; they also noted down comments explaining problems that occurred;

- the assignments to levels and the comments made were evaluated. Some descriptors were rephrased on the basis of the comments, others were eliminated;

- in a final round, the experts decided on the suitability of the descriptors and incorporated them in the checklists.

The calibrated descriptors published in the *Framework* itself provide a 'hard core' around which developers of ELPs can add descriptors of their own. It will in fact be necessary to continue the development process also in the context of new ELP versions because:

- for some levels there are gaps in the *Illustrative scales* and in the existing checklists that may need to be filled for the ELP to be used in certain contexts;

- no subscales exist for some categories, e.g. telephoning, sociocultural competence;

- certain tasks or aspects/components of tasks that are relevant in some curricula or in the view of some teachers should be added;

- more descriptors for narrower levels have been requested so that the learners can assess their progress more often;

- mediation (interpreting, translating), which has not been covered so far in the *Illustrative scales* of the CEF and in the existing ELP models should be taken into consideration, depending on its importance for some groups of learners and practical contexts.

Since intuitive methods are not sufficient when checklists or similar instruments are developed for wider use, a minimum empirical confirmation of the quality of descriptors and their attribution to levels is required. The following is recommended:

- whenever possible a procedure such as that described in Example 1 above should be applied;

- the procedure described in Example 2, which uses limited resources and fulfils *minimum* requirements concerning empirical validation;

- the methods used to develop descriptors should be explained to their users in a transparent way. This information should be made available in the ELP or in the documentation that may accompany an ELP;

- in any event, the methods used should be declared in the application for validation of an ELP. The twelve methods described in the CEF (Appendix B) may serve as a point of reference.

6.5. Requirements for good descriptors

Descriptions of language proficiency which are formulated according to the spirit of the CEF and which fit into an ELP should fulfil the following requirements:

- **Positiveness** - descriptors should be formulated using positive descriptions of what learners are able to do; negatively worded descriptions tend to be de-motivating.

  It is more difficult to formulate proficiency at low levels in terms of what the learner can do rather than in terms of what they can't do. But if levels of proficiency are to serve as objectives rather than just as an instrument for screening candidates, then positive formulation is desirable." (CEF: Appendix A).

- **Definiteness** - descriptors should describe concrete tasks and/or concrete degrees of skill in performing tasks:
  - descriptor should contain as little vagueness as possible;
  - distinctions between steps on a scale should not be dependent on replacing a qualifier like "some" or "a few" with "many" or "most". "This may result in gaps where meaningful, concrete distinctions cannot be made." (CEF: Appendix A).

- **Clarity** - descriptors should be transparent - not "jargon-ridden". They should be written in simple syntax; they should be comprehensible without special introductions and usable without previous training.

- **Brevity** - descriptors should be short, i.e. they should not span more than two or three lines.

- **Independence** - the interpretation of descriptors must not be dependent on other descriptors at the same level, or on descriptions of neighbouring levels; they should allow for clear *yes/no* decisions ("Yes, I can do this").

When descriptors are adapted for younger learners, there is a danger that they may be simplified or shortened too much so that they no longer belong to the same level or depend very much on the concrete interpretation that is made by the user. Simplifications of the following type should be avoided.

	Original descriptors in the *Self-assessment grid* (Listening)	**Problematic simplification**
Level B2	I can understand <u>most</u> TV news and <u>current affairs</u> programmes. I can understand the <u>majority</u> of films <u>in standard dialect</u>	I can understand films and documentaries
Level C1	I can understand television programmes and films <u>without too much effort</u>	I can understand - TV programmes - films

It becomes quite obvious from this example that stripping descriptors all modifying information that provides indications concerning the degree of task difficulty is a simplification that does not allow for relating concrete learner performances to the reference levels, nor does it help learners to see progress.

6.6.   Introduction of narrower levels

There is a need for narrower (or finer) levels in various contexts. In the case of the use of the ELP in class, it seems necessary to provide descriptions of narrower levels. Developers will have to decide whether it is important in their context to have intermediate levels (according to the "branching principle" presented in the CEF) for the complete range of the *Common reference levels* or only for selected levels.

Narrower levels were introduced e.g. in the French ELP edited by the CRDP de Basse-Normandie. The levels A2 and B1 most relevant to learners on the upper secondary level were each divided into three sub-levels for use in the checklists: A2.1, A2.2, A2.3; B1.1, B1.2, B1.3.

Reasons for narrower levels (cf. North 1999):
- they may be relevant to certain groups, institutions or contexts of learning;

- they make it easier to provide appropriate objectives for the end of the different school sectors;

- they can serve as course planning aids for particular school years (or months for intensive courses) as they will be closer to normal progress over that time scale. 'Milestones' within those narrower levels can serve as objectives for semesters or terms (or weeks on intensive courses);

- with narrower levels, learners can use an ELP more often and see progress. Visible progress gives a feeling of success and provides motivation for further learning.

Reasons for a limitation to six broader reference levels:
- it can be quite difficult to relate one set of narrow levels to another set of narrow levels. For example, one local system might divide A2 into two, another into three. The co-existence of ELP versions with a different number of levels may lead to confusion;

- if the checklists are limited to the six reference levels, the relation to the six reference levels (and to compatible examination systems like ALTE) is obvious;

- more levels may obscure the link to the *Common European Framework*;

- the *Self assessment grid* which is the common element in most versions of the ELP would become too complex;

- without the development of a great number of additional relevant descriptors, too many gaps would appear on checklists; descriptors would be lacking for certain categories at certain levels;

- relatively frequent use of the checklists is possible even with six broader levels because the checklists contain 1) a great number of individual objectives or descriptions of competence which may be attained successively; 2) the degree of difficulty is not identical for all tasks described and 3) it is possible to introduce gradation into a level by adding a scale that uses modifiers like *"under normal circumstances"* or *"easily and well"*;

- if more checklists are included, the document becomes bulkier.

If narrower levels, or scales using a different number of items and/or a different subdivision of levels are introduced into an ELP, the relationship to the *Common reference levels* should be stated clearly.

6.7.   Relating descriptors and alternative scales to the *Common reference levels*

Appendix D of the *Framework*, where the relationship between the ALTE system and the Council of Europe system of levels is discussed, demonstrates how institutions can relate their own scale to the *Common reference levels*. Essentially, descriptors from the *Common reference levels* (e.g. from the *Self-assessment grid*) are chosen as anchor items and then used to relate the two systems of levels to each other.

This procedure is recommended whenever empirical research is possible.

It will not always be possible to apply such rigorous methods. In these cases, careful analysis should be combined with procedures such as those suggested in the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* (form 1.2) for relating existing examinations to the *Common reference levels*. In any event, the relationship between the levels used by an institution and the *Common reference levels* must be clear to the users of an ELP (and mentioned in the ELP, if possible).

The qualifications mentioned have been calibrated to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages on the following basis:		
Collective judgement by the teaching staff of the institution concerned.	*	
Checking the relationship by comparing examples of learner work with the official performance samples for the Framework Levels.	**	
Comparative studies relating the achievement of learners to their results in examinations already calibrated to the Framework.	***	
Scientific study with statistical analysis of comparative data.	****	

Figure 25: Information about methods used for relating examinations to the *Common reference levels* of the Council of Europe

6.8.   Descriptions not related to levels of communicative language proficiency

The instruments using scaled descriptors of language proficiency are important elements of the ELP. However, these kinds of descriptions are not the only way to make language proficiency and language experiences transparent, and they are not the best means for every purpose. For this reason, other possibilities are suggested in the ELP, such as the description of experiences in a language learning biography or the documentation of language proficiency through samples of work done in other languages (*Dossier*).

There are aspects of communicative competence which are not, or not necessarily, related to one specific level of language proficiency. These include learning strategies as well as sociocultural and intercultural competence.

Descriptions or even checklists relating to such competences should not be omitted from an ELP simply because they cannot be scaled and attributed to levels in the same manner as descriptors of communicative language proficiency. Since they are important for pedagogic reasons, it is desirable that such descriptions and checklists be included in the ELP. The North Rhine-Westphalian ELP project has been greatly concerned with these aspects from the beginning and this ELP can be used as a source of guidance (for details see chapter 5.2, *Language Biography*).

Where such descriptions are included, it should be made clear, especially in ELPs for adults, that these descriptions are not related to the *Common reference levels*.

7. Language issues

This chapter focuses on options and constraints concerning language use in the published version of ELPs. Some issues concerning the languages that may be entered are also discussed.
The *Principles and Guidelines* (under point 3) state the following:

The authorities which undertake to produce an ELP for one or more target groups of learners should [...]

3.3. adhere to terminological conventions, standard headings and rubrics as specified by the Council of Europe in at least one of the official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French) in addition to any other languages;

3.4. make the ELP and related documents available in the national language(s) and as far as relevant and practically feasible in the target languages and in the languages of the learners.

7.1. Common headings

The European Language Portfolios produced during the first years of the ELP project are quite diverse at first sight. At the same time, from the perspective of many of its users, one of the main strengths of the ELP is its pan-European character. In addition, authorities introducing an ELP are expected to recognize other ELPs learners bring with them. This means that a certain unity within diversity needs to be visible. This may be achieved using a minimum of common headings in English and/or French, in particular:

- for the title:

   European Language Portfolio

   Portfolio européen des langues

- for the three compulsory parts:

   Language Passport, Language Biography, and Dossier

   Passeport de langues, Biographie langagière, Dossier

   (In ELPs for young learners adapted names may be used.)

- for the overview of skills and levels based on the Council of Europe *Common reference levels* contained in the *Language Passport*:

   Self-assessment grid

   Grille pour l'auto-évaluation

Translations of these headings should remain as close to the original English and French versions as possible. It also seems desirable to coordinate the use of translated terms among developers using the same language(s). Please check the terms used in accredited ELPs.

Common headings become particularly important whenever recognizability of an ELP as such matters. This is the case when its potential owners are likely to present it outside the initial (school) context, i.e. common headings are most important in ELPs intended for young people about to leave compulsory schooling and for adults. In ELPs for children which may only very rarely be used outside a pre-specified context, other aspects such as the appeal of headings may be more relevant.

7.2. The official Council of Europe languages and national/regional languages

In the *Principles and Guidelines* the minimum provision is that the "standard headings and rubrics" should be available in either English or French in addition to any other languages chosen. This means that English- or French-speaking countries could decide to use one language only. Although such a solution may correspond to the wording of the provision, it does not fit well with the promotion of plurilingualism

the ELP intends to achieve. The ELP should be used to display plurilingualism by offering text in several languages side by side, provided the text remains readable and the graphic design attractive.

The Slovenian *Stage 2* Language Portfolio has a monolingual text but the authors provided translations of the headings and rubrics into five languages on a separate leaflet (German, English, French, Italian, Hungarian).

In the Czech ELP for learners aged 8-15 almost every text is directly available in the four languages Czech, English, German and French, including a long explanatory text for the pupils and the descriptors for self-assessment.

Figure 26: Use of four languages in the rubrics (Czech ELP for learners aged 8-15)

The Czech developers chose those foreign languages for translation that are most often learned by the pupils using the ELP. Using target languages as languages of communication in an ELP has distinct advantages but also some dangers:

- some learners doubt the effectiveness of reflective teaching in the foreign language classroom if the material they are using is not in the target language; presenting the ELP text in target languages may also take some of that pressure off the teachers;

- advanced learners sometimes prefer using descriptors in the target language which they are assessing;

- learners are confronted with language that was written with a "real" purpose in mind. They are given the chance to compare how things are said in four different languages;

- ELPs containing languages that are widely used may be presented abroad directly;

- there is a danger that working with such an ELP degenerates to a translation exercise every time it is used in class;

- the use of specific 'dominant' languages may indirectly devalue other languages.

7.3. Different language versions

An alternative to producing an ELP integrating text in several languages concurrently would be to produce several language versions of an ELP. The authors of the Swiss *ELP for younger people and adults* chose this option in order to respond to the needs of the majority of its potential users in Switzerland. ELPs in German, French, Italian and English were produced, each of them, however, containing identical parts in all four languages. These include:

- a general overview of the contents and an introduction to the different uses holders can make of the ELP;

- • brief introductions to the purposes of each of the three parts;

- • the *Standard Language Passport*;

- • several forms, including a form for the description and calibration of language examinations which is intended for teachers and institutions.

Other texts, such as concrete instructions, checklists, etc. that are intended for use by the owner of the ELP and possibly his/her teacher(s), are provided in one language only. Should these texts be needed in one of the three other languages also, they can be downloaded from the Swiss ELP Website.

The opportunity to illustrate plurilingualism was one argument for the inclusion of quadrilingual parts, but not the main one. The intention, or even need, to make this ELP accessible to as many users ("readers") as possible, was considered more important. As this ELP version is designed for people who are potentially very active across borders, users and contributors other than the owner of the ELP and his/her teacher(s), it was necessary to consider international employers, schools abroad, pen friends, etc.

7.4.   **Learners' languages**

In most countries today dozens or even hundreds of different mother-tongues are spoken. It is clear that no authority or editor can produce ELP language versions for speakers of every one of these languages. For many speakers of other than the local or national languages, this will not be a problem because they have sufficient command of the language(s) used for the ELP. In their case, it will be more important that they are given the chance to show their linguistic and cultural background through the ELP. This point is also stressed in the *Principles and Guidelines* (4.5.): "An ELP should ... promote the concept of European citizenship by providing a record of all language competencies and experiences, including, where appropriate, indigenous languages of minorities and languages of migrants". This provision has consequences for the concrete design of ELPs. Even ELPs developed especially for use with specific language subjects within a fixed school curriculum should provide enough space and suitable instruments to accommodate out-of-school learning. The inclusion of levels A1 and A2 only, or the provision of two lines for recording further language learning experiences will not suffice for learners with an intercultural background. Some of these aspects have been further developed in chapter 5 in particular.

Another recurring issue concerns whether learners should include their mother-tongue in the ELP, as for example, the ELPs from North Rhine-Westphalia or Portugal suggest. It was often recommended that learners should do so if their mother-tongue was a migrant or heritage language, in order to give value to this additional competence and to draw a differentiated picture of these skills that are not always balanced or complete.

But should mother-tongue speakers of the first language spoken locally also provide information about their skills in that language? What about "perfect" bi- or plurilinguals who use their languages regularly? What about those who live in a diglossic situation where dialects and standard languages are each used for specific purposes? Should *they* describe their skills? As the authors of the North Rhine-Westphalian ELP point out, it could in fact be important to provide information about mother-tongue competence because an ELP may be used in regions where that language is not spoken (e.g. German in France). But the question is: in what terms and with reference to what system should this competence be described? The descriptors the *Common reference levels* are based on were developed in collaboration with foreign language teachers and learners, they were not customized for native speakers. Reference levels for native speakers have yet to be developed. For that reason, no basis exists for assigning native language skills to the Council of Europe levels. Within the European Language Portfolio project, the focus has so far been on the other language(s) a person knows. A common practice concerning the learners' native language(s) has yet to be established.

Due to insufficient knowledge of the local language, some potential users may not be in the position to use an ELP which is not available in their mother-tongue or another language with which they are familiar. This will be the case for many non-integrated migrants, in particular. But language (and intercultural) learning and providing proof of language skills are essential for many migrants. For this

reason, they should be among the primary target groups for ELP developers. During the pilot phase no ELPs were developed especially for migrants not possessing sufficient language skills to use an ELP in a local language version. Experience has yet to be built up. Developers of ELPs intended (also) for this target group need to consider the following questions, in particular:

- Should ELP versions be developed in several migrant languages? In which languages?

- Which elements will be in a migrant language only, which parts will be plurilingual?

- If no translations are prepared, what kind of support will the owners receive?

Developers of ELPs for migrants will probably also be confronted with other language-related problems that have to do with their special social characteristics. Depending on the educational and cultural background, some migrants may not be willing to inform others about their background, skills and experiences; others may not be able to understand self-assessment tasks without strong support because they have never practised self-assessment. Indeed, ELP developers should expect this kind of difficulty to arise whenever ELPs are designed for use by many different groups of users.

7.5.   Use of symbols

Symbols are often used to accompany names of rubrics. Symbols facilitate orientation within the document and can help where no plurilingual headings or translations are provided.

As in most ELPs, icons are used to symbolise the different skills in the *Standard Language Passport*.

The style of the symbols used depends largely on the age group for which an ELP is intended. In ELPs for younger learners in particular, symbols and illustrations are an important means of making the document more lively and attractive.

Figure 27: Three symbols for Reading: left: from the *Standard Language Passport*; middle: from the Czech pilot ELP for pupils aged 8-15; right: from the Slovenian pilot ELP for primary school children

7.6.   Languages in the Standard Language Passport

The *Standard Language Passport* intended for use in ELPs for young people and adults (age 15/16+) can accommodate up to four languages in the printed text, and is designed to hold entries by its owner for up to six target languages. The *Language Passport* booklet is the reporting instrument *par excellence,* which means that the choice of languages used for rubrics and headings should be made with the most likely readers of the *Language Passport* in mind. The forms contained in the *Language Passport* are designed in a way that entries made by the owners require a minimum of text so that they are usually understood by most readers, no matter what language the owners use. However, it may be necessary for learners in special cases to translate their text entries into the language of a specific reader. For that purpose, developers of an ELP should consider how, under what conditions and through what distribution channels they want to make additional blank *Language Passport*s or pages from the Passport available to learners.

The Council of Europe secretariat in Strasbourg intends to make available on the ELP Website the *Self-assessment grid* defining the *Common reference levels* in as many language versions as possible. Developers of ELPs are encouraged not only to use these translations but also to send translations into

more languages to Strasbourg. Before ELP developers translate the other pages they should check for existing translations within validated ELPs.

7.7.   Translation of related documents

Point 3.4 of the *Principles and Guidelines* states that "as far as relevant and practically feasible", not only ELPs but also related documents from the Council of Europe should be made available in the "national language(s)" and "in the target languages and in the languages of the learners". The number and range of documents concerned will certainly change over time. As far as possible in the first phase, the following documents could be made available as translations for the intended target groups:

- the general information leaflet for all users issued for the launch of the ELP in 2001;

- the *Guide for teachers and teacher trainers* by D. Little/R. Perclová;

- possibly the present *Guide for developers of an ELP;*

- the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment.*

Translations of the *Common European Framework* into the language(s) of the countries where the ELP is used are desirable because the CEF provides the necessary background and guidance for the creation of curricula, material, etc. compatible with the approach adopted by the ELP. (See Bibliography for other relevant Council of Europe documents.)

8.   Physical form

The ELPs produced for piloting are very different in their physical appearance:

- size varies between a passport-size booklet and an A4 ring-binder. One ELP for young pupils can be folded open like an ordinary board game;

- some consist of simple photocopies, others contain different paper qualities in custom sizes and various colours;

- some are stitched or bound brochures while others are folders containing loose leaves and sometimes also booklets for certain parts (Passport, Biography).

In this chapter the pros and cons of various options are discussed in order to facilitate an informed decision concerning the physical form of a specific ELP.

8.1.   Format

The format chosen for an ELP depends mainly on practical aspects and is also motivated by factors such as age of the learners, main intended uses and functions, and also financial resources.

- An ELP in the form of a board game is obviously not suitable for adults who would like to present their ELP to a future employer, but for primary school children this may be one format chosen from a motivational point of view.

- The smaller A5 format may appear handier than A4 format, but photocopied pages, certificates awarded and texts produced by learners are usually A4 format.

- Closed formats such as a bound brochure or a game board may be very convenient but have the drawback that, being closed formats, once they are full, no additional information can be included. Closed formats were chosen for ELPs with a well-defined place and functions within a curriculum. The *Dossier* consisting of personal work by the ELP owner needs to be established separately.

- Cardboard folders or pockets are slim and at the same time can accommodate many kinds of learner products (except larger media such as cassettes), However, they tend to make an overview of the contents difficult and usually do not stand frequent use well.

- Ring binders are often too bulky so that learners tend to leave them on a shelf. However, ring-binders make additions possible as do cardboard folders and have the added advantage that they are more stable and allow an overview more easily.

8.2.   Design

Design and the use of colours will depend very much on the context and the target group(s) for which an ELP is intended. Several aspects may be considered:

- the age of the learners: young learners, in particular, prefer colours and illustrations;

- design "fashions" the intended target groups are used to (e.g. what do attractive textbooks look like?);

- the common European identity of the ELP project (create a "Council of Europe look and feel");

- the "identity" the institution or authorities developing an ELP may want to convey.

The *Standard Language Passport* may be a good point of departure for designing an ELP, especially for those ELPs that include this Passport.

In order to guarantee high quality and well adapted design, it is recommended that ELP developers contact professionals, e.g. schoolbook editors, for design questions.

8.3.   Material quality

If a European Language Portfolio is to be taken seriously in the environment it is used, and beyond, its quality should not be inferior to the standards set for regular textbooks. Good quality is also needed for an ELP to last several years, as is usually intended. However, developers should live with the fact that no material is good enough to endure an infinite number of years, especially not when it is used regularly and carried around by pupils and students. In any case, wear and tear, and at the same time (partial) replacement, have to be taken into account.

During the ELP piloting it became clear that good material quality can also be a disadvantage: pages the learners are expected to write on should not be glossy so that the learners are reluctant to use them. Also, it makes little sense to provide colourful master copies that cannot be reproduced for use in black and white in a satisfactory way.

8.4.   Online offers, electronic ELPs

During the first years of the ELP project, no fully-fledged electronic ELPs were created, although quite a few ELP projects maintained a Website. Reasons for this fact may include not only the expected high cost, but also, for example, difficulties in creating satisfactory electronic implementations of the "Working *Dossier*" in a (school) world which is still dominated by paper and pencil. However, having a completely electronic, Web-based ELP is an interesting idea that should be investigated further in the future. Using an electronic ELP may facilitate and improve certain important aspects of working with and using the ELP for presentation. For example:

- as learners using the ELP have mentioned repeatedly, it does not make much sense and is becoming more and more unusual, nowadays, to fill in by hand documents such as the *Language Passport,* the personal history of language learning and other instruments that need updating from time to time;

- it would make sense to let users add items to checklists they are using for personal documentation and planning purposes. (During the Swiss piloting the checklists were available in a format that could be edited from the Internet, so that learners and teachers could add descriptions according to their needs.);

- it has become commonplace on the jobmarket for university graduates in particular to put up their CV on the Web for interested employers to see. The presentation parts of an electronic ELP would fit into such an approach perfectly well.

Even now, Websites are ideal for the distribution of the contents of an ELP, as well as auxiliary materials. There is probably no cheaper and simpler way (at least in the near future) to provide users of ELPs with additional or updated forms and worksheets. If auxiliary materials are distributed via the Web, the hardcopy of the ELP may be kept light and slim, and learners can consult the auxiliary materials as the need arises. A concept that fully integrates the Web faces the challenge that access to the Internet will be limited to relatively small groups of users for years to come. For this reason, resources provided on the Web would have to be made available in printed form as well, or at least selected elements.

Using the Web as a means of support for learners is highly recommended, and in particular as a source of information and information exchange for teachers and teacher trainers (see Ch. 9.1).

9. Supporting measures and materials

An ELP should be combined with compatible instruments and supporting measures and materials. One crucial factor concerning the sustainability of an ELP is the degree to which it is embedded in its environment. This is one of the insights gained in the pilot phase. It is difficult to sustain an ELP in an environment in which curricula, learning materials, teaching practices, examinations and certificates do not relate to the ELP. For that reason, developing and introducing an ELP will often entail not only adaptations of the ELP to the environment but also changes in the environment itself. Embedding the ELP well into its environment will help it to assume the "critical mass" necessary for it to gain enough recognition within educational systems (including by the learners!) and among employers. Effective publicity and a powerful launch in collaboration with the relevant groups will contribute to a wide acceptance of the ELP within a reasonable period of time.

9.1. Supporting measures

During the pilot phase, Language Portfolios were more easily integrated into teaching practice where they were introduced together with changes in the language curricula that were in harmony with the approach the ELP takes (e.g. Hungary, Slovenia). In other projects, learners and teachers doubted the importance or even the seriousness of the ELP because it did not really fit in with common teaching and testing practice; in addition, it was hardly known except among those who were directly involved, and, at the same time, said to be an important instrument for the future, providing international transparency and recognition for foreign language competence and achievements.

An ELP needs wide dissemination and broad recognition in order to be successful. Developing a good instrument alone is not sufficient. Various types of supporting measures are necessary. ELP developers may want to consider the following suggestions for such measures.

- **Collaboration with authorities** - political authorities concerned with school and professional development, institutional authorities such as universities and independent schools, associations (of teachers, private schools etc.) may be interested in the ELP and support its development and implementation; the national Validation Committee (see Ch. 11) – if one exists – may be able to point out a specific demand for ELPs, or synergies with other ELP projects, etc.

- **Establishing links between the ELP and the relevant examinations and diplomas** - official diplomas and widely known certificates have very high prestige among most learners and other potential users of an ELP. Therefore, existing links should be made transparent (e.g. ALTE certificates) in order to show that the ELP is well worthwhile; in the case of examinations that have not been related to the *Common reference levels* developers should encourage those responsible to do so. Authorities may even be interested in developing new instruments for evaluation and assessment which are compatible with and related to the descriptors that make up the *Common reference levels.*

- **Combining the ELP with other innovations** - the ELP will be more readily accepted among its users when it appears to be part of the same philosophy as other on-going innovations (e.g. using the ELP in combination with newly established exchange activities).

- **Involvement of teacher associations or unions** - pedagogic innovations of any kind often put extra strain on the teachers involved. There will be less resistance on the part of the teachers or their representatives when their situation is fully taken into account.

- **Involvement of groups of (potential) users** in the development of an ELP - if future users are involved in the development process, the ELP will be likely to be better adapted to the specific environment. Its dissemination will also be easier: teachers (and employers) involved in the process from the beginning are competent and motivated disseminators.

- **Approaching initial teacher training** - initial teacher training institutions may not only prepare their students for the use of the ELP in their career but also undertake potentially helpful research on the ELP.

- **Taking advantage of in-service teacher training** - on the one hand, through in-service training courses, contacts may be made with innovative teachers who are ready to contribute to an ELP by developing material or doing action research, and who can assist in its dissemination. On the other hand, in service training should be used to familiarize large numbers of teachers with the ideas and the concrete practice connected with the ELP.

- **Establishing teacher networks** - schools and teachers working with the ELP should not remain isolated. Working groups consisting of teachers of different languages at one school or teachers of one specific language from different schools should meet regularly to exchange experiences and ideas. ELP specialists may be present from time to time. This form of collaboration was suggested as a good solution by teachers and coordinators from several pilot projects.

- **Providing information and support via the Web** - Websites can be used profitably for various purposes connected with introducing and sustaining an ELP:
    - for the promotion of the ELP and its ideas;
    - as a link to the Council of Europe and other Language Portfolio Websites;
    - as a source of information about the latest developments, the foundations and the potential uses of an ELP, its application in class etc.;
    - as a source for updates of elements of an ELP (additional forms etc.);
    - as a source and a market place for adapted teaching material (worksheets, lesson plans, ideas);
    - for trouble-shooting: a database or list of frequently asked questions may be maintained;
    - as a discussion forum concerning the ELP (e-mail discussion list, chat).

    A free (or inexpensive) ready-made *e-group* Website may be set up and used for most of the purposes just described. However, the investment in time may be considerable.

- **Organizing a public relations and media campaign** - the launch of the final print version of an ELP should gain coverage in the relevant media, depending on the intended target group(s) of the respective ELP. Developers of future ELPs will have the opportunity to benefit from projects launching their ELPs during the European Year of Languages (2001).

- **Preparation of supporting materials** for various groups and purposes (see chapter below).

9.2.   Supporting materials

The ideal Language Portfolio for an adult user is self-explanatory because he or she will generally learn languages in varying contexts and use the ELP independently. The authors of the Swiss *ELP for young people and adults* intended to develop such a document. This is why it contains probably more text explaining purposes and providing instructions and ideas on how to use the various forms than any other existing ELP. Such a Portfolio may appear a bit heavy. An alternative would be to write a user's guide for the learner. The need to handle two separate documents seems, however, complicated and inconvenient.

ELPs designed for use in a school context do not need to be completely self-explanatory. Teachers will usually be available to provide the necessary help and guidance for the learners to become acquainted with the ELP. In the long run, the learners as the owners should be able to work independently with any ELP, even the very young to a certain degree.

Supporting materials should be prepared for various groups and purposes:

- **for all groups concerned:** information leaflets for learners, teachers, schools, parents, employers and a wider audience. The Council of Europe designed a general information leaflet for the launch in 2001. It may be used as it is or adapted for local use;

- **for teachers and teacher trainers:**
    - a teacher's guide providing background information on the project in general and the fundamental ideas behind it; the *Common reference levels*; relationships to existing certificates and examinations; extracts from completed Language Portfolios; lesson ideas; sample worksheets (e.g. for self-assessment practice), etc.

A general Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers has been written by D. Little and R. Perclová. It can be used, translated and taken as a source of inspiration for developing teacher guides that are more closely related to a specific ELP model or educational sector. Some guides were produced for the pilot phase, e.g. in Italy, France (CIEP), UK (CILT), Austria;

- training materials for practising ELP-compatible assessment (e.g. assessment and marking of oral proficiency);
- material helping teachers to familiarize their learners with self- and peer-assessment.

10.   Accreditation procedure

A European Validation Committee (EVC) was set up by the Council of Europe, which is charged with the accreditation of all European Language Portfolios. ELPs applying for accreditation in Strasbourg have normally first been examined by a national Validation Committee or other instance and are recommended for accreditation by that body. ELPs that are developed in countries that do not have such a national body, may send their application directly to the EVC (c/o The Modern Languages Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg). International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) wishing to apply for accreditation follow the same procedure. The exact procedures to be followed are laid down in the document *Rules on Accreditation of ELP Models,* which is reprinted in Appendix D to this guide.

11. Quality assurance and further development of an ELP version

All those involved in the European Language Portfolio scheme must have an interest in the quality of every single ELP that is created – no matter where. Good quality ELPs in one country or project help the reputation and recognition of all ELPs. In order to guarantee minimum standards, the Council of Europe established a Validation Committee that accredits, or rejects, the documents that are submitted for validation.

Quality assurance is essential at the beginning of an ELP project. Its objective must be not only to meet the minimum standards for the ELP itself, but to develop a high quality document that best suits the respective target group(s) and has a real chance of being launched and sustained in the intended environment(s). Developers of an ELP should consider the following measures in order to assure high quality concerning processes and products:

- a group of authors should be formed so that the different skills required for the development of an ELP are represented, or: authors should find resource persons for those skills that are not represented in the authoring group; ELPs cannot be developed by an individual author sitting at his/her desk;

- reports on ELP development and piloting should be studied (available from the Modern Languages Division, Council of Europe Website, via the Validation Committee, or from project coordinators in the various countries;

- links should be established with experienced ELP authors (possibly working for the same target group);

- contact with potential users (including schools, employers and political bodies) should be made from the beginning so that needs and wishes can be analysed;

- the instruments should be piloted on a small scale even before the ELP is finalised;

- the ELP as a whole should undergo proper piloting. Small scale piloting makes tight collaboration with learners and teachers possible, and may yield detailed feedback (through personal feedback and/or case studies). However, caution will have to be exercised when results are generalized. Large scale piloting is expensive when done thoroughly, and it may not involve all learners and teachers sufficiently when the personal link is missing. However, results obtained may be generalized more easily. Piloting an ELP on a large scale has the important spin-off that through the piloting the ELP will be widely known before it is launched;

- quality assurance has to continue when the first published version of an accredited ELP has been launched. In order to remain attractive over the years, ELPs need to be kept up to date and improved with regard to design and instruments.

Evaluation measures used in this phase may be combined with in-service teacher training (e.g. case studies, action research).

The developers or publishers of an accredited ELP must report back on its implementation to the European Validation Committee (EVC) at least once every three years. A format for these reports will be provided by the EVC.

The national Validation Committee or other instance, in collaboration with national or regional educational authorities may be interested in more regular evaluations.

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An updated list of available European Language Portfolios and accompanying materials can be found on the Council of Europe Website: http://culture.coe.int/portfolio

12.2. Evaluation reports

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Links to various ELP projects can be found on the Council of Europe Website.

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12.5. Useful Web links

The Council of Europe Modern Languages Division maintains a Website with information on the European Language Portfolio, including a list of links to local ELP Websites:
http://culture.coe.int/portfolio

Appendix

Appendix A

Common reference levels

- Global Scale
- Self-assessment grid

Global Scale

Proficient User	**C2**	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	**B2**	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	**A2**	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

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Self-assessment Grid

		A1	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	**Listening**	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided. I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
S P E A K I N G	**Spoken Interaction**	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an areas where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
W R I T I N G	**Writing**	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

Appendix B

Standard Language Passport

Passeport de langues
Language Passport

Le Conseil de l'Europe est une organisation intergouvernementale dont le siège permanent est à Strasbourg, France. Sa mission première est de renforcer l'unité du continent et de protéger la dignité des citoyens de l'Europe en veillant au respect de nos valeurs fondamentales: la démocratie, les droits de l'homme et la prééminence du droit.

Un de ses objectifs principaux est de susciter la prise de conscience d'une identité culturelle européenne et de développer la compréhension mutuelle entre les peuples de cultures différentes. C'est dans ce contexte que le Conseil de l'Europe coordonne l'introduction d'un Portfolio Européen des Langues, comme étant un document personnel fait pour encourager et faire reconnaître l'apprentissage des langues et les expériences interculturelles de toutes sortes.

Contact:
Division des Langues vivantes
Direction Générale IV
Conseil de l'Europe, Strasbourg, France
site Internet: http://culture.coe.int/lang
© 2000 Conseil de l'Europe, Strasbourg, France

Ce Passeport de langues fait partie du Portfolio européen des langues (PEL) remis par:
Nom de l'Institution / Instance (avec site Internet)

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation with its permanent headquarters in Strasbourg, France. Its primary goal is to promote the unity of the continent and guarantee the dignity of the citizens of Europe by ensuring respect for our fundamental values: democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

One of its main aims is to promote awareness of a European cultural identity and to develop mutual understanding among people of different cultures. In this context the Council of Europe is coordinating the introduction of a European Language Portfolio to support and give recognition to language learning and intercultural experiences at all levels.

Contact:
Modern Languages Division
Directorate General IV
Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France
Web site: http://culture.coe.int/lang
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This Language Passport is part of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) issued by:
Name of Institution / Body (with web site)

Passeport de langues

Ce document est un bilan des savoir-faire, des certifications ou des diplômes ainsi que des expériences vécues dans différentes langues. Il fait partie d'un Portfolio Européen des Langues qui se compose du présent Passeport, d'une Biographie Langagière et d'un Dossier comprenant des matériaux qui documentent et illustrent les expériences effectuées et les compétences acquises. Les compétences en langues sont décrites dans les termes des niveaux de compétence présentés dans le document «Un Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues: apprendre, enseigner, évaluer». L'échelle est présentée dans le présent Passeport de langues (grille pour l'auto-évaluation).

Ce Passeport de langues est recommandé pour utilisation par des adultes (16+).

Le Passeport de langues inclut la liste des langues dans lesquelles le titulaire a des compétences. Il se compose:
• d'un profil des compétences en langues en relation avec le Cadre Européen Commun
• d'un résumé d'expériences linguistiques et interculturelles
• d'une liste de certificats et diplômes

Pour tout renseignement concernant les niveaux de compétences en plusieurs langues, consultez le site Internet du Conseil de l'Europe: http://culture.coe.int/lang

Language Passport

This document is a record of language skills, qualifications and experiences. It is part of a European Language Portfolio which consists of a Passport, a Language Biography and a Dossier containing materials which document and illustrate experiences and achievements. Language skills are defined in terms of levels of proficiency presented in the document «A Common European Framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment». The scale is illustrated in this Language Passport (Self-assessment grid).

This Language Passport is recommended for adult users (16+).

The Language Passport lists the languages that the holder has some competence in. The contents of this Language Passport are as follows:
• *a profile of language skills in relation to the Common European Framework*
• *a résumé of language learning and intercultural experiences*
• *a record of certificates and diplomas*

For further information, guidance and the levels of proficiency in a range of languages, consult the Council of Europe web site: http://culture.coe.int/lang

COUNCIL OF EUROPE   CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

European Language Portfolio

Portfolio européen des langues

Portfolio Européen des Langues: modèle accrédité N° 0.2000
European Language Portfolio: accredited model No. 0.2000

Accordé à / *Awarded to*

Le présent modèle est conforme aux Principes et Lignes directrices communs.

CONSEIL DE LA COOPERATION CULTURELLE
COMITE DE L'EDUCATION – COMITE DE VALIDATION DU PEL

This model conforms to common Principles and Guidelines.

COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION
EDUCATION COMMITTEE – ELP VALIDATION COMMITTEE

Nom:
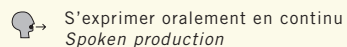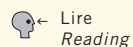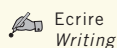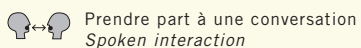*Name:*

Profil linguistique
Profile of Language Skills

Nom
Name _____

Langue(s) maternelle(s)
Mother-tongue(s) _____
_____

Autres langues
Other languages _____
_____

Auto-évaluation
Self-assessment

→👤 Ecouter *Listening*   👤↔👤 Prendre part à une conversation *Spoken interaction*   ✍ Ecrire *Writing*

👤← Lire *Reading*   👤→ S'exprimer oralement en continu *Spoken production*

Langue *Language* _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
→👤						
👤←						
👤↔👤						
👤→						
✍						

Langue *Language* _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
→👤						
👤←						
👤↔👤						
👤→						
✍						

Langue *Language* _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
→👤						
👤←						
👤↔👤						
👤→						
✍						

Langue *Language* _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
→👤						
👤←						
👤↔👤						
👤→						
✍						

Auto-évaluation
Self-assessment

→👤 Ecouter *Listening*   👤↔👤 Prendre part à une conversation *Spoken interaction*   ✍ Ecrire *Writing*

👤← Lire *Reading*   👤→ S'exprimer oralement en continu *Spoken production*

Langue *Language*   langue language

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
→👤	▨	▨	▨			
👤←	▨	▨	▨	▨		
👤↔👤	▨	▨	▨			
👤→	▨	▨	▨			
✍	▨	▨				

Exemple Example

Langue *Language* _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
→👤						
👤←						
👤↔👤						
👤→						
✍						

Langue *Language* _____

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
→👤						
👤←						
👤↔👤						
👤→						
✍						

Grille pour l'auto-évaluation

	A1	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
Comprendre — Ecouter	Je peux comprendre des mots familiers et des expressions très courantes au sujet de moi-même, de ma famille et de l'environnement concret et immédiat, si les gens parlent lentement et distinctement.	Je peux comprendre des expressions et un vocabulaire très fréquent relatifs à ce qui me concerne de très près (par ex. moi-même, ma famille, les achats, l'environnement proche, le travail). Je peux saisir l'essentiel d'annonces et de messages simples et clairs.	Je peux comprendre les points essentiels quand un langage clair et standard est utilisé et s'il s'agit de sujets familiers concernant le travail, l'école, les loisirs, etc. Je peux comprendre l'essentiel de nombreuses émissions de radio ou de télévision sur l'actualité ou sur des sujets qui m'intéressent à titre personnel ou professionnel si l'on parle d'une façon relativement lente et distincte.	Je peux comprendre des conférences et des discours assez longs et même suivre une argumentation complexe si le sujet m'en est relativement familier. Je peux comprendre la plupart des émissions de télévision sur l'actualité et les informations. Je peux comprendre la plupart des films en langue standard.	Je peux comprendre un long discours même s'il n'est pas clairement structuré et que les articulations sont seulement implicites. Je peux comprendre les émissions de télévision et les films sans trop d'effort.	Je n'ai aucune difficulté à comprendre le langage oral, que ce soit dans les conditions du direct ou dans les médias et quand on parle vite, à condition d'avoir du temps pour me familiariser avec un accent particulier.
Lire	Je peux comprendre des noms familiers, des mots ainsi que des phrases très simples, par exemple dans des annonces, des affiches ou des catalogues.	Je peux lire des textes courts très simples. Je peux trouver une information particulière prévisible dans des documents courants comme les petites publicités, les prospectus, les menus et les horaires et je peux comprendre des lettres personnelles courtes et simples.	Je peux comprendre des textes rédigés essentiellement dans une langue courante ou relative à mon travail. Je peux comprendre la description d'événements, l'expression de sentiments et de souhaits dans des lettres personnelles.	Je peux lire des articles et des rapports sur des questions contemporaines dans lesquels les auteurs adoptent une attitude particulière ou un certain point de vue. Je peux comprendre un texte littéraire contemporain en prose.	Je peux comprendre des textes factuels ou littéraires longs et complexes et en apprécier les différences de style. Je peux comprendre des articles spécialisés et de longues instructions techniques même lorsqu'ils ne sont pas en relation avec mon domaine.	Je peux lire sans effort tout type de texte, même abstrait ou complexe quant au fond ou à la forme, par exemple un manuel, un article spécialisé ou une œuvre littéraire.
Parler — Prendre part à une conversation	Je peux communiquer, de façon simple, à condition que l'interlocuteur soit disposé à répéter ou à reformuler ses phrases plus lentement et à m'aider à formuler ce que j'essaie de dire. Je peux poser des questions simples sur des sujets familiers ou sur ce dont j'ai immédiatement besoin, ainsi que répondre à de telles questions.	Je peux communiquer lors de tâches simples et habituelles ne demandant qu'un échange d'informations simple et direct sur des sujets et des activités familiers. Je peux avoir des échanges très brefs même si, en règle générale, je ne comprends pas assez pour poursuivre une conversation.	Je peux faire face à la majorité des situations que l'on peut rencontrer au cours d'un voyage dans une région où la langue est parlée. Je peux prendre part sans préparation à une conversation sur des sujets familiers ou d'intérêt personnel ou qui concernent la vie quotidienne (par exemple famille, loisirs, travail, voyage et actualité).	Je peux communiquer avec un degré de spontanéité et d'aisance qui rende possible une interaction normale avec un locuteur natif. Je peux participer activement à une conversation dans des situations familières, présenter et défendre mes opinions.	Je peux m'exprimer spontanément et couramment sans trop apparemment devoir chercher mes mots. Je peux utiliser la langue de manière souple et efficace pour des relations sociales ou professionnelles. Je peux exprimer mes idées et opinions avec précision et lier mes interventions à celles de mes interlocuteurs.	Je peux participer sans effort à toute conversation ou discussion et je suis aussi très à l'aise avec les expressions idiomatiques et les tournures courantes. Je peux m'exprimer couramment et exprimer avec précision de fines nuances de sens. En cas de difficulté, je peux faire marche arrière pour y remédier avec assez d'habileté et pour qu'elle passe presque inaperçue.
S'exprimer oralement en continu	Je peux utiliser des expressions et des phrases simples pour décrire mon lieu d'habitation et les gens que je connais.	Je peux utiliser une série de phrases ou d'expressions pour décrire en termes simples ma famille et d'autres gens, mes conditions de vie, ma formation et mon activité professionnelle actuelle ou récente.	Je peux articuler des expressions de manière simple afin de raconter des expériences et des événements, mes rêves, mes espoirs ou mes buts. Je peux brièvement donner les raisons et explications de mes opinions ou projets. Je peux raconter une histoire ou l'intrigue d'un livre ou d'un film et exprimer mes réactions.	Je peux m'exprimer de façon claire et détaillée sur une grande gamme de sujets relatifs à mes centres d'intérêt. Je peux développer un point de vue sur un sujet d'actualité et expliquer les avantages et les inconvénients de différentes possibilités.	Je peux présenter des descriptions claires et détaillées de sujets complexes, en intégrant des thèmes qui leur sont liés, en développant certains points et en terminant mon intervention de façon appropriée.	Je peux présenter une description ou une argumentation claire et fluide dans un style adapté au contexte, construire une présentation de façon logique et aider mon auditeur à remarquer et à se rappeler les points importants.
Ecrire — Ecrire	Je peux écrire une courte carte postale simple, par exemple de vacances. Je peux porter des détails personnels dans un questionnaire, inscrire par exemple mon nom, ma nationalité et mon adresse sur une fiche d'hôtel.	Je peux écrire des notes et messages simples et courts. Je peux écrire une lettre personnelle très simple, par exemple de remerciements.	Je peux écrire un texte simple et cohérent sur des sujets familiers ou qui m'intéressent personnellement. Je peux écrire des lettres personnelles pour décrire expériences et impressions.	Je peux écrire des textes clairs et détaillés sur une grande gamme de sujets relatifs à mes intérêts. Je peux écrire un essai ou un rapport en transmettant une information ou en exposant des raisons pour ou contre une opinion donnée. Je peux écrire des lettres qui mettent en valeur le sens que j'attribue personnellement aux événements et aux expériences.	Je peux m'exprimer dans un texte clair et bien structuré et développer mon point de vue. Je peux écrire sur des sujets complexes dans une lettre, un essai ou un rapport, en soulignant les points que je juge importants. Je peux adopter un style adapté au destinataire.	Je peux écrire un texte clair, fluide et stylistiquement adapté aux circonstances. Je peux rédiger des lettres, rapports ou articles complexes, avec une construction claire permettant au lecteur d'en saisir et de mémoriser les points importants. Je peux résumer et critiquer par écrit un ouvrage professionnel ou une œuvre littéraire.

Self-assessment grid

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Understanding	Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
Speaking	Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
Writing	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

Résumé des expériences linguistiques et interculturelles
Summary of language learning and intercultural experiences

Nom
Name

→1 Jusqu'à 1 an
Up to 1 year

→3 Jusqu'à 3 ans
Up to 3 years

→5 Jusqu'à 5 ans
Up to 5 years

5→ Plus de 5 ans
Over 5 years

Langue: / *Language:*																								
Apprentissage et utilisation de la langue dans le pays/la région où la langue n'est pas utilisée: *Language learning and use in country/region where the language is not spoken:*	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→
Enseignement primaire / secondaire / professionnel *Primary/secondary/vocational education*																								
Enseignement supérieur *Higher education*																								
Education des adultes *Adult education*																								
Autres cours *Other courses*																								
Utilisation régulière sur le lieu de travail *Regular use in the workplace*																								
Contacts réguliers avec des locuteurs de cette langue *Regular contact with speakers of the language*																								
Autre *Other*																								
Informations complémentaires concernant des expériences linguistiques et interculturelles *Further information on language and intercultural experiences*																								

Résumé des expériences linguistiques et interculturelles
Summary of language learning and intercultural experiences

Nom
Name

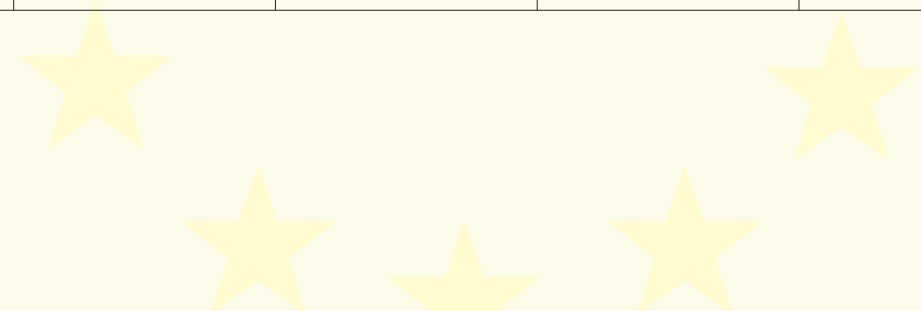|	
→1 Jusqu'à 1 mois *Up to 1 month*	→3 Jusqu'à 3 mois *Up to 3 months*
→5 Jusqu'à 5 mois *Up to 5 months*	5→ Plus de 5 mois *Over 5 months*

Langue: *Language:*																									
Séjours dans une région où la langue est utilisée: *Stays in a region where the language is spoken:*	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→	→1	→3	→5	5→
Participation à un cours de langue *Attending a language course*																								
Etudes, formation dans la langue *Using the language for study or training*																								
Utilisation professionnelle de la langue *Using the language at work*																								
Autre *Other*																								

Informations complémentaires concernant des expériences linguistiques et interculturelles
Further information on language and intercultural experiences

Certificats et diplômes
Certificates and diplomas

Nom
Name _____

Langue *Language*	Niveau *Level*						Intitulé *Title*	Délivré par *Awarded by*	Année *Year*
	A1	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**			

Appendix C

Principles and Guidelines

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

In the interest of

- the quality and credibility of the European Language Portfolio as a pedagogic and reporting tool and of
- the quality, validity and transparency of individual ELPs in a European context

authorities, decision makers, ELP developers, teachers and learners will use their best endeavours to follow these ***Principles and Guidelines*** when creating, using and promoting the European Language Portfolio.

1.   The ELP reflects the Council of Europe's concern with:

1.1.   the deepening of mutual understanding among citizens in Europe;
1.2.   respect for diversity of cultures and ways of life;
1.3.   the protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;
1.4.   the development of plurilingualism as a life-long process;
1.5.   the development of the language learner;
1.6.   the development of the capacity for independent language learning;
1.7.   transparency and coherence in language learning programmes;
1.8.   the clear description of language competence and qualifications in order to facilitate mobility.

2.   The ELP:

2.1.   is a tool to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism;
2.2.   is the property of the learner;
2.3.   values the full range of the learner's language and intercultural competence and experience regardless of whether acquired within or outside formal education;
2.4.   is a tool to promote learner autonomy;
2.5.   has both a pedagogic function to guide and support the learner in the process of language learning and a reporting function to record proficiency in languages;
2.6.   is based on the Common European Framework of Reference with explicit reference to the common levels of competence;
2.7.   encourages learner self-assessment (which is usually combined with teacher assessment) and assessment by educational authorities and examination bodies;
2.8.   it incorporates a minimum of common features (outlined below) which make it recognisable and comprehensible across Europe;
2.9   may be one of a series of ELP models that the individual learner will possess in the course of life-long learning. ELP models can cater for the needs of learners according to age, learning purpose and context and background.

3.   The authorities which undertake to produce an ELP for one or more target groups of learners should:

3.1.   develop ELPs in conformity with the aims and principles described in this document and in the Common European Framework of Reference;

3.2.   respect the basic division of the ELP into three parts so that the learners have the possibility to use each of these according to their particular needs in their different learning contexts;

• the **Passport** section provides an overview of the individual's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time; the overview is defined in terms of skills and the common reference levels in the Common European Framework; it records formal qualifications and describes language competencies and significant language and intercultural learning experiences; it includes information on partial and specific competence; it allows for self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examinations boards; it requires that information entered in the Passport states on what basis, when and by whom the assessment was carried out. To facilitate pan-European recognition and mobility a standard presentation of a Passport Summary is promoted by the Council of Europe for ELPs for adults.

• The **Language Biography** facilitates the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his or her learning process and progress; it encourages the learner to state what he/she can do in each language and to include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside formal educational contexts; it is organised to promote plurilingualism i.e. the development of competencies in a number of languages.

• The **Dossier** offers the learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the Language Biography or Passport.

3.3.   adhere to terminological conventions, standard headings and rubrics as specified by the Council of Europe in at least one of the official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French) in addition to any other languages;

3.4.   make the ELP and related documents available in the national language(s) and as far as relevant and practically feasible in the target languages and in the languages of the learners;

3.5.   take into account the diversity of learners' needs according to age, learning purposes and contexts, and background, e.g. to develop where appropriate distinctive ELP models for different age groups whilst taking measures to ensure mutual recognition of all models and continuity between different educational institutions, sectors, regions and countries;

3.6.   respect the European character of the ELP so as to promote mutual recognition of Portfolios within and across national boundaries, including the reporting of competencies in an internationally transparent manner by relating them to the categories and levels of proficiency described in the Common European Framework;

3.7.　submit the ELP for approval before its publication and implementation to the Council of Europe or other bodies nominated by the Council of Europe for this purpose;

3.8.　monitor and evaluate the use of the ELP and report the results to the appropriate co-ordinating body;

3.9.　seek to improve the ELP in the light of experience.

4.　The authorities and education institutions using an ELP should:

4.1.　create the conditions in which the ELP can be used effectively with regard to the agreed aims and principles, and taking into account the demands of curricula and teaching/learning contexts;

4.2.　make it possible for learners who so wish to obtain and use an ELP;

4.3.　recognise the learner as the owner of the ELP;

4.4.　ensure that the aims and the purposes of the ELP are understood by the learners and that they can understand the content;

4.5.　promote the concept of European citizenship by providing a record of all language competencies and experiences, including, where appropriate, indigenous languages of minorities and languages of migrants;

4.6.　ensure that learners are strongly encouraged to develop competencies in several languages which may include partial and specific competencies (e.g. receptive skills, competence in specified tasks) even at modest levels of proficiency;

4.7.　assist teachers in the use of the ELP through appropriate training and support;

4.8.　help learners to use the ELP usefully and effectively;

4.9.　help learners to develop autonomy, a critical awareness of their learning and to assess their language and intercultural competence;

4.10.　acknowledge all language and intercultural competence equally, regardless of whether it is acquired within or outside of formal education;

4.11.　recognise, support and value other ELPs which individual learners may possess and wish to present or maintain;

4.12.　publicise the ELP and disseminate examples of good practice.

Appendix D

Rules on accreditation of ELP models

RULES ON ACCREDITATION OF ELP MODELS

Chair of the committee:

The Validation Committee will have a chair and vice chair.
The chair calls the meetings and sets the agenda.
The chair holds the casting vote.
If deemed necessary the chair or three members of the committee can ask for a meeting to take place.

Secretariat of the committee:

The Modern Languages Division of the CoE will be the Secretariat of the Validation Committee.

Bureau of the committee:

A bureau (up to 4 members) can prepare decisions related to applications for accreditation, ensure that guidance is given when requested and ensure continuity between meetings.

Working methods

The Committee may decide, if necessary and on the initiative of the Chair, that written procedure is to be applied.

Voting procedures:

There shall be a quorum if two thirds of the members of the Committee entitled to vote are present. Are considered present those who replied to the written procedure.

Decisions will be taken on majority vote among the members of the committee.

In the case of equality of votes the chair will have the casting vote.

Time frames:

Invitation to meetings will be issued at least 15 calendar days before a meeting.

Applications for accreditation, guidance or any other relevant documents will normally be made available to the members of the Committee and the nominated consultants at least 3 months prior to the decision deadline.

VALIDATION PROCEDURES

Principles and methods:

A. The principle of self-declaration:
Applicants declare:
- the conformity of the ELP model submitted to the *Principles and Guidelines*, or their reasons for any proposed deviations;
- their commitment to the *Principles and Guidelines* and their reasons for any proposed deviations.
- their observation of the common core and any variations proposed;
- the links to the *Common European Framework of reference*;
- the parties having an interest in the ELP model;
- how it will be produced and disseminated.

B. Information is given and received in good faith.

C. A mock-up of the ELP model has to be available for examination before accreditation is granted.

D. the committee will (in the interest of quality and credibility of the ELP as a pedagogic and reporting tool) verify the conformity of form, content and intent with the *Principles and Guidelines*.

It will use its discretion in forming an opinion on the degree of conformity to the common core needed in the specific case and to the acceptability of the variations proposed.

Where judged necessary, it will ask for further information and provide guidance before taking a decision.

E. The committee will consider the advice of national committees or other relevant bodies.

Several ELP models may be accredited, even when target groups overlap.

The committee will endeavour to foster co-operation between developers with a view to avoiding the undue proliferation of ELP models.

The advice of national and regional educational authorities on ELP models for the school sectors is taken into account.

F. The Validation Committee's decision on accreditation will be communicated to applicants within 10 working days following the meeting.

G. The accreditation does not prejudice the rights third parties may have.

Accreditation application

The application form for the accreditation of an ELP model can be down loaded from http://culture.coe.fr/lang or obtained from the Modern Languages Division of the Council of Europe.

This form provides guidance for a self-evaluation of the proposed ELP model by the applying education authority or other body.

The ELP is normally submitted for the opinion or advice of the national committee or competent INGO according to agreed procedures.

The application for accreditation should reach the Validation Committee at least three months prior to the date of the meeting at which it will be examined.

The completed and signed form should be sent to:
The European Validation Committee
c/o The Modern Languages Division
Directorate of Education DGIV, Council of Europe
F – 67075 Strasbourg

The application should be accompanied by a mock-up of the ELP model proposed. Fifteen copies should be attached.

The Secretariat will acknowledge receipt of applications.

If necessary, the applicant will be asked for further information.

Application for guidance Educational authorities or institutions undertaking to produce an ELP model may ask for guidance and a preliminary reaction from the Validation Committee at an early stage.

A draft mock-up of the ELP model should be enclosed if available.

Accreditation confirmation The response to request for validation will be communicated in writing by the secretariat.

Accredited ELP models will carry an *accreditation number*.
All accredited ELP models will be acknowledged on the ELP web site.

The following rights are granted to accredited models:
- to use the *Council of Europe Logo with the addition "European Language Portfolio" (*© of the Council of Europe) as a design element for the accredited ELP model;
- to use the *Accreditation Stamp* on the ELP model and its individual distinct parts;
- to use these logos, names and stamps in English and/or French, the official Council of Europe languages, in any other language in harmony with the language policy of the member state.

The following conditions are attached:
- the obligation to observe the agreed *Principles and Guidelines* when implementing and using the accredited ELP model;
- the commitment to promote as far as possible the implementation of the recommendations
- any reasonable additional conditions judged necessary by the Validation Committee.

Duration of accreditation **The accreditation of a specific ELP model is linked to the production, the distribution and the use of the document in question.**

Any changes made to an accredited ELP model shall be submitted to the national committee, competent INGO or, if necessary, to the Validation Committee which will decide whether a new application for accreditation is necessary. In this case, the revised ELP model will bear a new accreditation model.

Withdrawal of accreditation	The accreditation can be withdrawn by the European Validation Committee in the case of abuse and/or major infringement of the **Principles and Guidelines**.
Finances	The expenses of the members of the European Validation Committee shall be met by the Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe.
	A fee may be charged for expertise and guidance. The expenses may be passed on to the applicant.
	A fee may be required for the validation procedure, use of the name "European Language Portfolio" (© of the Council of Europe). Royalties may be required in the case of commercial publications.
	Applicants will be informed in advance of any financial implications.
Revision of Regulations Revision of Procedures	These Regulations and Procedures may be revised at any time by the Validation Committee with the consent of the Education Committee.

Strasbourg, 8 September 2000

Appendix E

Draft Application for Validation and Accreditation of an ELP model

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO
PORTFOLIO EUROPÉEN DES LANGUES

VALIDATION COMMITTEE ELP

In the interest of
➢ the quality and credibility of the ELP as a pedagogic and reporting tool and
➢ the quality, validity and transparency of individual ELPs in a European context

ELP models should conform to the *Principles and Guidelines of the Education Committee set out in the Recommendations* CC-ED (2000) 20 for validation and accreditation.

The questions in this application form reflect the key aspects to be respected.

Applying authority/institutions are asked to evaluate the conformity of their model with *the Principles and Guidelines* and justify any variations they consider desirable.

Application for Validation and Accreditation of an ELP model

Please complete and return to:
ELP Validation Committee
c/o Modern Languages Division,
Directorate of Education DGIV
Council of Europe
F – 67000 Strasbourg

Registration number	Date:
Accreditation number	Date:
Accreditation granted to:	

Request for guidance	Date:

1. General Information

1.1 Name of the applying authority or institution

1.2 Address:

1.3 Name and address of contact person(s)

1.4 Description of the ELP model and target population

1.5 Scope of implementation

1.6 Advice of national committee or other relevant body (if applicable)

VALIDATION COMMITTEE ELP

The ELP model should reflect the Council of Europe's concern with:

➢ The deepening of mutual understanding among citizens in Europe;
➢ Respect for diversity of cultures and ways of life;
➢ The protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;
➢ The development of plurilingualism as a life-long process;
➢ The development of the language learner;
➢ The development of the capacity for independent language learning;
➢ Transparency and coherence in language learning programmes;
➢ The clear description of language competence and qualifications in order to facilitate mobility.

2. **Your ELP model:**   yes   no   **observations**

partially   (add separate pages if more space is needed)

		yes	partially	no
2.1.	Is a tool to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism?	☐	☐	☐
2.2.	Is the property of the learner?	☐	☐	☐
2.3.	Values the full range of the learner's language and intercultural competence and experience regardless of whether acquired within or outside formal education?	☐	☐	☐
2.4.	Is a tool to promote learner autonomy?	☐	☐	☐
2.5.	Has both a pedagogic function to guide and support the learner in the process of language learning and a reporting function to record proficiency in languages?	☐	☐	☐
2.6.	Is based on the Common European Framework of Reference with explicit reference to the common levels of competence?	☐	☐	☐
2.7.	Encourages learner self-assessment (which is usually combined with teacher assessment) and assessment by educational authorities and examination bodies?	☐	☐	☐
2.8.	Incorporates a minimum of common features (outlined in the Guidelines) which make it recognisable and comprehensible across Europe?	☐	☐	☐
2.9.	Caters for the specific needs of your target group?	☐	☐	☐

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO
PORTFOLIO EUROPÉEN DES LANGUES

VALIDATION COMMITTEE ELP

ELP models should respect a basic division of the ELP into three parts:

The Passport
The Language Biography
The Dossier

so that the learners have the possibility to use each of these according to their particular needs in their different learning contexts.

ELP models should adhere to terminological conventions, standard headings and rubrics as specified by the CoE.
For ELP passports this should be in at least one official language of the CoE (English or French) in addition to any other languages.

3. Does your ELP Passport section	yes	partially	no	observations
3.1 allow an overview of the individual's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time?	☐	☐	☐	
3.2 allow the recording of formal qualifications and all language competencies regardless of whether gained in or outside formal educational contexts?	☐	☐	☐	
3.3 allow the recording of significant language and intercultural experiences?	☐	☐	☐	
3.4 allow the recording of partial and specific language competence?	☐	☐	☐	
3.5 allow the recording of self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examination boards?	☐	☐	☐	
3.6 allow to record on what basis, when and by whom the assessment was carried out?	☐	☐	☐	
3.7 Is the overview defined in terms of skills or competencies as described in the levels of the Common European Framework of reference? If not, specify how your levels relate to the CEF.	☐	☐	☐	
3.8 take account of your learners' needs according to age, learning purposes and contexts, and background?	☐	☐	☐	
3.9 ensure continuity between different educational institutions, sectors and regions?	☐	☐	☐	
3.10 respect the European character of the ELP so as to promote mutual recognition of Portfolios within and across national boundaries?	☐	☐	☐	

VALIDATION COMMITTEE ELP

The ELP models and particularly the Language Biographies and related documents should be made available in the national language(s) and as far as relevant and practically feasible in the target languages and in the languages of the learners.

The Validation Committee will use its discretion in forming an opinion on the degree of conformity to the common core needed and to the acceptability of the variations proposed in each specific case.

In principle specific ELP models may be accredited, even when target groups overlap, as long as this does not lead to an undue proliferation of models.

The Validation Committee will consider the advice of national committees and other relevant bodies where such exist.

4. Does the Language Biography

4.1 facilitate the learner's involvement in planning? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.2 facilitate reflection upon the learning process? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.3 facilitate reflection upon and assessment of progress? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.4 encourage learners to state what they can do in each language? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.5 encourage learners to include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside formal educational contexts? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.6 Is the Biography organised to promote plurilingualism i.e. the development of competencies in a number of languages? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.7 Do the levels used match with the levels in the common European Framework? If not explain how they relate. ☐ ☐ ☐

4.8 Have the descriptors used been tested with the target population – are they transparent, understandable for the target age group? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.9 Are the levels and descriptors used compatible with the curricula? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.10 Are the assessment and evaluation criteria in harmony with the Common European Framework? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.11 Are the levels and descriptors coherent with those used in ELP models in other educational sectors? ☐ ☐ ☐

4.12 Are there any specific additional descriptors? ☐ ☐ ☐

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO
PORTFOLIO EUROPÉEN DES LANGUES

VALIDATION COMMITTEE ELP

Authorities and institutions using an ELP should create the conditions in which the ELP can be used effectively with regard to the agreed aims and principles, and taking into account the demands of curricula and teaching/learning contexts.
Learners should be strongly encouraged to develop competencies in several languages which may include partial and specific competencies even at a modest level.
Learners, at least in the early stages, need help to use the ELP usefully and effectively.
Learners need help in particular to develop autonomy, a critical awareness of their learning and to assess their language and intercultural competence.
Teachers need appropriate training and support.

5. Does the Dossier

5.1 offer the learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences? ☐ ☐ ☐

5.2 allow for up-dating and re-organisation? ☐ ☐ ☐

5.3 encourage the development of plurilingualism? ☐ ☐ ☐

5.4 encourage a creative personal development as learner and language learner? ☐ ☐ ☐

6. General Principles

6.1 Is it in your context possible for learners who so wish to obtain and use your ELP?
State the distribution channels and the cost involved for an individual learner. ☐ ☐ ☐

6.2 Is the learner recognised as the owner of his/her ELP? ☐ ☐ ☐

6.3 Will you ensure that the aims and the purpose of the ELP are understood by the learners and that they con understand the content?
How? ☐ ☐ ☐

6.4 Will the concept of European Citizenship by providing a record of all language competencies and experiences, including where appropriate, indigenous languages of minorities and languages of migrants be promoted? ☐ ☐ ☐

6.5 Will in your context other ELPs which individual learners may possess and wish to present or maintain be recognised, supported and valued? ☐ ☐ ☐

7. Any additional information

8. Do you require any guidance or support in the production of your ELP?

9. Production of the ELP   yes   no

9.1 Will the ELP model to be accredited be produced   ☐   ☐
     in the applicants name?

9.2 If not, who will produce it and in what name?   ....

9.3 Is there a commercial interest?   ....

9.4 How many copies of the ELP will be produced?   ....

9.5 How will the evaluation and possible revision be handled? ....

10. Signature

Place and date