

## Development of the project

The LEA project, the main objectives of which are aimed at developing social cohesion through language teaching/learning among teachers and consequently among their students, has been developed within the 2nd medium-term programme *Languages for social cohesion: language education in a multilingual and multicultural Europe*, and it is closely linked with many previous and ongoing ECML projects.

What makes it different from similar thematic projects is the focus on language teacher educators as the main addressees/target group and the focus on adequate training and raising of awareness, serving to exemplify how to introduce plurilingual and pluricultural dimensions into a language learning institution.

The main objective of the project was to elaborate a kit for language teacher educators to enable them to introduce plurilingualism and pluriculturalism into their classroom practice.

The project is in line with the profound modification of language education heralded by the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001), in which the primary focus of language education shifted from achieving "mastery of the target language taken in isolation" to developing proficiency (of varying degrees) in several languages and experience of several cultures.

The three-year project (starting in 2004) was structured around the following events:

- three project team meetings (16-17 January, 25-26 June and 18-19 October 2004);
- a central workshop (26-29 January 2005);
- two project team and network meetings (1-2 July 2005 and 20-21 January 2006);
- editorial project team meeting (15-16 September 2006).

During the first project team meeting the project was re-examined by the team and the dates were fixed. The aims of the language teacher training materials for the kit were established as well as the team's contribution in terms of preparing a rationale and a set of activities to be developed by each member of the team.

The second project team meeting included the elaboration of a questionnaire for pre-service and in-service teachers aimed at analysing the attitudes that language teachers/trainees have about plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. The team also planned in detail the contents of the kit, wrote a draft agenda for the workshop to be held in January 2005 and reviewed the activities for the kit already prepared by the team members.

The third project team meeting was devoted to a review of the kit's rationale and the activities elaborated by the team. The team also designed a template for the activities and the guidelines, made suggestions on content issues for building up new activities, and discussed the final content, organisation and assessment issues of the draft kit for the central workshop. The responsibilities for each team member were established. The project team expected the participants of the central workshop to assist the team in piloting and developing the kit, as well as disseminating plurilingualism and pluriculturalism among language teachers and language teacher educators in their own context.

The central workshop was attended by 33 participants from 29 countries. The objectives were to present a draft kit and train participants for the development of plurilingual and pluricultural awareness in language teacher education. Under these two general objectives, the following aims were also set:

- to discuss the most relevant concepts in relation to the project (language, culture, communication, identity, diversity, and plurilingual and pluricultural competence);
- to experience the activities designed by the expert team;
- to motivate participants to learn more about the approach suggested in the rationale of the draft kit;
- to encourage participants to develop activities collaborating, if possible, with other colleagues.

A balance between plenary sessions and group work was maintained throughout the workshop. Six working groups simultaneously studied the rationale, discussed the concepts and the activities, designed new materials and prepared for future work.

The project team was careful to evaluate the development of the workshop on a daily basis. The positive results of these evaluations encouraged the team to keep working, and confirmed the interest of the project itself.

Participants were expected to be in a position to contribute to the kit's further development and to pilot it in their own context. Thus, they were committed to staying involved in the subsequent phases of the project by providing regular feedback on the piloting of the kit and by attending the network meetings.

The first project team and network meeting was another important step in the development of the project, which led to the production of a number of activities dealing with different issues relating to plurilingual and pluricultural awareness in language teacher education. From this moment on, 23 participants became engaged in the process of designing materials following the guidelines provided during the workshop. These materials, together with the rationale and the activities written by the LEA team, make up the core of the final product of this project. The network meeting continued the process launched in the central workshop: providing feedback and discussion on the adaptation of the materials and preparing the national training sessions, including procedures for evaluation of the pilot.

During the second network meeting, the discussion focused on the presentation of the revised versions of the materials; evaluation of the piloting process; and organisation of the final version of the kit.

Participants were asked to make an overall evaluation of the project. The results exceeded the expectations of the co-ordinating team, confirming the validity and importance of the concepts and practices developed during the project.

The co-ordinating team would like to highlight the participants' appreciation of the collaborative process followed throughout the project, and to commend the participants on the quality of their own contributions.

The editorial project team meeting was intended to prepare the final version of the kit for language teacher educators for publication and to take decisions concerning the content of the booklet and accompanying CD-Rom.