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ANNEX

ANNEX

to the

Proposal for a Council Recommendation

on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

{SWD(2018) 174 final}

ANNEX
Language Awareness in Schools –
developing comprehensive approaches to language learning

Comprehensive language approaches could support the implementation of the language learning Recommendation. This annex lists a number of pedagogical principles and good practices, which have in common the aim to increase the general language awareness in schools, with the ultimate goal to improve language-learning outcomes.

The teaching of language is an important element across all subjects looking at the various ways language is used in the classroom and the vital role language plays in learning and understanding subject content. Acquiring a good command of academic language goes hand in hand with the development of subject knowledge and understanding.

Language awareness in schools and training centres could support the understanding that language learning is a dynamic process and a continuum – the acquisition of the mother tongue and its different registers and styles continues and is deeply interlinked with the learning of other languages, in different levels of proficiency, corresponding to every learner's circumstances, needs and interests.

Language awareness in schools and training centres could support reflections on the language dimension in all levels of school organisation, teaching and practice: in literacy development, foreign language learning, in subject teaching, for acknowledging other languages brought in by pupils, in communication with parents and with the wider school environment, etc.

Close cooperation among the different members of the school community, ideally within a concept of the school as a learning organisation or within a whole school approach, can promote such an understanding of language awareness.

In order to support language awareness in schools and training centres, the following examples of good practice have been identified.

1. Multilingualism in schools and training centres

- **A positive attitude towards linguistic diversity can help to create a language friendly environment** where learning and using multiple languages is perceived as a richness and a resource. Awareness of the importance of language learning, and of the educational, cognitive, social, intercultural, professional and economic benefits of the wider use of languages can be increased and encouraged.
- **The development of language competence and of linguistic awareness can be integrated transversally into the curricula.** Integrating languages and other subjects can make it possible to provide more authentic learning geared towards real-life situations.
- **The motivation of learners to study languages can be enhanced by linking education content to their own lives and interests,** taking informal learning into consideration and encouraging synergies with extra-curricular activities. Links between everyday life practice of language and schools or training centres can be strengthened through recognition of prior learning of languages, and offering the

possibility to add language competences acquired outside of formal education to school leaving certificates.

- **Learner's entire linguistic repertoire can be valued and supported** in school and also used as pedagogical resource for further learning of all learners. Pupils can help each other in learning, explain their language(s) to others and compare languages.
- **Schools could offer a wider range of languages in addition to the main global languages of communication.** The uptake can be different depending on whether a country has two or more state languages or if there is a declared interest to promote the learning of the language of a neighbouring country.
- **Establishing bilingual nurseries and schools in border regions** will encourage children to learn the language of their neighbour from an early age and decrease language barriers in cross-border regions.

2. Efficient and innovative teaching for enhanced language learning

- The potential of digital tools could be fully embraced to enhance language learning, teaching and assessment. Technology can massively support broadening the language offer, provide opportunities for language exposure, and be very useful for supporting those languages which are not taught in schools. Developing critical thinking and media literacy and an appropriate use of technology can be an essential learning element in this context.
- **Virtual cooperation between schools through eTwinning** can allow young people to improve language learning, work with peers from another country and prepare for mobility to study, train or volunteer abroad.
- **Pupils' mobility, including through Erasmus+**, could become a regular part of the learning process. This should extend to virtual and wider staff mobility.
- **A mix of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment** can be used by teachers, trainers and learners to monitor and evaluate language development; individual language portfolios are used to keep track of the progress, for example through the European Language Portfolio or the Europass Language Passport.

3. Support for teachers and trainers

- **Teachers of modern languages could be encouraged to take part in exchange schemes** with countries where their target language is spoken, as part of their initial education and/ or further professional development. Every newly graduated language teacher could have spent at least six months of learning or teaching abroad.
- **Teachers and trainers of other subjects than modern languages could gain language awareness** and knowledge about language didactics, and acquire strategies for supporting learners.
- **Language assistants could be included in language teaching**, using the opportunities provided by exchange schemes between Member States.

- **Continuing professional development opportunities can be made accessible to teachers** (through networks, communities of practice, massive online language courses, centres of expertise, cooperative online learning, action research, etc.) in order to keep them up to date with latest pedagogical innovations and to upskill them.

4. Partnerships and links in the wider school environment to support language learning

- **Schools and training centres could cooperate with parents** on how they can support their children's language learning, especially when children grow up with more than one language or use a different language at home than the language of schooling.
- **Schools and training centres can develop partnerships with language centres/languages laboratories, public libraries, cultural centres or other cultural associations, universities and research centres** in order to create more engaging learning environments, to enrich the uptake of languages and to improve and innovate teaching practice.
- **Schools, training centres and municipalities can pool resources** to create language centres with a larger offer of languages, in order to maintain less spoken languages, and/or languages that are not taught in school.
- **Cooperation with employers** in the region or beyond can help increasing the understanding of the importance of language competences in working life and can help to ensure that language competences gained effectively support employability.
- **Cross-border partnerships between education and training institutions** in border regions could be encouraged. Mobility of students, teachers, trainers and administrative staff, as well as doctoral candidates and researchers could be facilitated by offering information and courses in the languages spoken in the neighbouring country. Promotion of multilingualism within these cross-border partnerships can prepare graduates to enter the employment market in both sides of the border.