



The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)

www.ecml.at

The Centre's Mission

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), Graz, Austria, is a Council of Europe institution whose aim is to promote the learning and teaching of modern languages in Europe. It was set up in 1994 on the initiative of Austria and the Netherlands in the form of a Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement. At present 31 States are members of the ECML. The ECML operates entirely within the framework of the Council of Europe's cultural and educational co-operation.

The role of the ECML under the Resolution (98)11 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 July 1998, is as follows: "To serve in general the implementation of language policies and the promotion of innovative approaches to the learning and teaching of modern languages."

Its strategic objectives are:

- ❖ to focus on the practice of the learning and teaching of modern languages;
- ❖ to promote dialogue and exchange among the various actors in the field;
- ❖ to train multipliers;
- ❖ to support programme-related networks and research projects.

In order to implement its strategic objectives, the Centre sets itself the following operational objectives:

- ❖ to collect and disseminate examples of good practice in the field of modern language learning and teaching;
- ❖ to organise meetings of different types between multipliers such as teacher trainers, textbook authors, experts in the area of the development of curricula, educational standards and methods of evaluation and certification, researchers and educational policy makers from all over Europe, specialists in new technologies;
- ❖ to focus on dissemination and follow-up activities and to further develop the Centre's documentation and resources.



Looking back to the work accomplished in the last 2 years

Overall impression - A success

2000 saw the introduction of a medium-term programme based on 35 projects, each with a set of activities of varying scope, aiming at coherence regarding the programme as a whole, but also with regard to each single project. The concentration on a smaller number of subjects was meant to allow a greater impact with the resources available; a good balance between events and research and development networks should ensure that concrete results be achieved, which may then be presented and disseminated.

This new medium-term formula of programming can definitely be considered as a success. It is an advantage to plan and implement a programme of activities over a period of time. This advantage became more apparent, once the teaching problems had been overcome.

Expert teams and participants alike generally react very positively to the new formula. Work becomes foreseeable and manageable, the project plans - both, for smaller and larger projects alike - render the activities and the expected results more tangible and act as an extra stimulus for the involvement of the experts.

The concentration of resources on a small number of thematic focuses already shows that substantial results can be expected for the topic area at the end of the medium-term programme.

The intended balance between central events, research and development work and the production and presentation of concrete results incorporated in the programme as a whole and in each single project offers a further incentive to expert teams and to the expert participants.

In concrete terms the implementation of the programme meant that over the past 18 months more than one hundred meetings - ranging from expert meetings up to 10 participants, to network meetings with up to 25 participants and central and regional workshops with up to 40 participants - were organised by the ECML; in a number of cases this was done with the support from other institutions and organisations as several projects are jointly supported and funded by the ECML and other international or national institutions and organisation, and for others cooperation takes place for single events.

The new website (<http://www.ecml.at>) as the central tool of project information, presentation and dissemination of results and as a working tool for the communication between networks was presented in its first operational version in April 2000. The interactive website has been well received; it may take some time for all the experts to make full use of the potential of the information and communication tools in their daily work.

Results of workshops and other events and meetings are documented on paper and on the website, results of previous projects are published in book form in the ECML series and are also available on the website.

Looking forward

An internal evaluation underlined the success of the new formula of programming, however it also highlighted some issues to be taken into account for the current and, above all, for the following medium-term programme: reduction of large-scale projects, concentration of resources, catering for different types of participants,



adaptation to the profile of experts and to the capacities of the ECML, are just some of them.

The further development of the Centre's website shall be complemented by an information campaign and training of the experts and participants in order to promote web literacy and to ensure the best use of this tool. The necessary resources shall be provided for the preparation, translation and distribution of the Centre's publications.

In the preparations for the next medium-term programme 2004-2007 the consultation process with national nominating authorities shall be intensified. The establishment of a network of national Contact Points and planned series of regional events will not only support the dissemination effort but also have a positive effect on the preparation of future projects.

The orientations of the new medium-term programme were determined on the basis of the evaluation of the current work by the Governing Board at its meeting in February 2002. The subsequent twelve months will be devoted to the preparations of the Call for Proposals and accompanied by awareness-raising regional events in member States. A meeting of all the coordinators of the current projects to evaluate the progress and possible synergies and to help prepare the final conference in 2003 will be held in late 2002. The final conference in autumn 2003 shall present the results of the first medium-term programme and launch the second medium-term programme from 2004 to 2007.

How to participate in the activities of the ECML

General Policy

The ECML was established and is maintained by its member States as an Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe to serve in general the implementation of language policies and the promotion of innovative approaches to the learning and teaching of modern languages.

While the main orientation of its operations is understood as a service to its member States, the nature of the activities, their results and the services offered –mainly through its tools of information, documentation and dissemination- are not geographically limited.

For these reasons and in order to encourage other countries to join the Enlarged Partial Agreement, the ECML offers a limited number of places at its events to experts from non-member States. Depending upon the availability of places they may be able to attend either at their own cost or that of their institution/ministry.

Central Events

Since Greece is a member State, participants from Greece should take up contact directly with the national nominating authority (the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, Directorate of International Relations in Education or the Pedagogic Institute, Office of Foreign Languages). Central events are normally open to one participant from each member State and the expenses are born by the ECML. When more places are available additional participants may attend either at their own cost or that of their institution/ministry.

Regional Events

Depending on the organising country/institution these events will be open to a



varying number of participants from neighbouring countries. Conditions of participation may also vary. In each case you should contact the coordinator of the event in the host country.

Network Meetings

They are normally established as a result of central activities and the experts invited will be active members of the existing networks.

Experts



In specific thematic areas are selected by the ECML on an ad hoc basis to carry out fact-finding missions / needs analyses / studies / consultancy projects or to act as animators.

In order to put forward your name you are invited to make use of the online database (<http://www.ecml.at>). The database on experts in the field of teaching and learning of modern languages is intended as a service to the expert community to promote and to search for expertise in specific areas.

European Centre for Modern Languages
Edited by **Vassilis Hartzoulakis**

**ΣΧΟΛΙΚΕΣ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΕΣ
ΠΑΡΑΘΥΡΟ ΣΤΟΝ ΚΟΣΜΟ**

**της ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΑΣ
& της
ΓΝΩΣΗΣ**

e-mail: scholib@ypepth.gr
<http://www.ypepth.gr/layout05-b-h.html>