



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

## Study visit group report

<b>Group No</b>	<b>GR190</b>
<b>Title of the visit</b>	Teaching Languages in formal and non-formal Education
<b>Topic</b>	Innovative language teaching across Europe
<b>City, country</b>	Patras, Greece
<b>Type of visit</b>	Study-visit
<b>Dates of visit</b>	March 19 <sup>th</sup> to March 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2012
<b>Group reporter</b>	Elisabeth Poelzleitner



### I FINDINGS

This section summarises the findings of the group while visiting host institutions.

1. One of the objectives of the study visits programme is to exchange examples of good practice among hosts and participants. Cedefop will select well-described projects/programmes/initiatives and disseminate them to former participants and a wider public, including potential partners for future projects. Therefore it is important that you

identify and describe all aspects that, in your view, make these projects/programmes/initiatives successful and worth exploring.

The study-visit to Patras has been a very stimulating experience for all of us. In our discussions (both formal and informal) we feel encouraged to continue our communicative, hands-on approaches to teaching. We have learned many little details that can easily be integrated in our own teaching. Some of these will be described below as “examples of good practice”. We have spent long hours discussing and analysing our impressions of language teaching in Greece and comparing them to our own practice in the different countries and we all see a very strong focus on fulfilling the requirements of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Different countries seem to be at different stages along the way, but we are all going in the same direction.

The introductory presentation given by Ioannis Karras, has given us an ideal framework for our discussions of the subsequent visits. In his presentation Ioannis Karras outlined the development of teacher roles from *lecturers* to *teachers* and finally to *facilitators* in the classroom. While *lecturers* focus only on presenting the subject matter to the learners, who then have to find their own ways of acquiring this knowledge; *teachers* have a double focus on content and methodology. They will use appropriate methodology to help the learners understand and acquire the knowledge. The most advanced type of teachers are the *facilitators*. Not only do they need excellent knowledge of their subject matter and a wide range of methodological skills; they must also focus on the psychological processes involved in learning. We would like to add the neurological and physiological processes involved in learning to this list. Recent findings of neuro-didactics can add fascinating and highly relevant aspects that teachers ought to be aware of in order to teach in efficient and brain-friendly ways. In short it can be said that a *facilitator* must be aware of all the different aspects and processes involved in learning. Teaching is not a simple one-way street where the teacher feeds knowledge to the students. Acquiring new knowledge and skills involves very complex, multidimensional, spiral processes where learners actively construct knowledge and acquire skills through repeated and meaningful practice. When visiting the schools and institutions and observing the lessons, we kept the continuum *lecturer-teacher-facilitator* in mind. In the following pages we will show examples of good practice, and we will point out some of the main challenges that we all face in our classrooms.

## Visit 1: Teaching grammar via ICT in class, 1<sup>st</sup> Primary School of Ovrya



On our first visit we observed a lesson of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at the 1<sup>st</sup> Primary School of Ovrya. The teacher was highly motivated, friendly and had obviously created a very positive classroom atmosphere for her learners. The children were eager to participate and to answer the teacher's questions. Ms Pinelopi Vassiliou spoke only English throughout the lesson and encouraged the learners to do the same. The content of the lesson was a first introduction of the "past perfect tense". In order to make the lesson content more interesting, attractive and memorable for the learners the teacher used ICT in a well-sequenced, but fairly traditional, teacher directed series of activities. The learners were enthusiastic and all wanted to get a chance to suggest some answers.

We also saw some of the previous work the class had done this year. The class had worked on several little projects on topics like "my family", "my home" etc. where the students could use the lesson content in personalized ways and thus make it more relevant to themselves and remember it better.

In general it can be said that the teacher's enthusiasm, friendliness and excellent language skills seemed "contagious" and the learners were happily following the lesson. Compared to many of the participant's experiences in their own schools, active speaking time and experimenting with language seemed to play a minor role in this classroom.

## Visit 2 “Junior High School of Ovría, Patras”.

The students in class B at Ovría Junior High School, aged between 13-14, had an English lesson on the history of writing and printing. Both, the teacher as well as the students used English throughout the lesson. The students' participation in the class activities showed that they have good receptive skills as they answered a round of questions about details of a text they had read at home.

In the second part of the lesson the students gave group presentations about key topics of Greek culture: The Olympic Games, The Carnival in Patras, Greek Cuisine and Greek Music. The students' Powerpoint presentations demonstrated their advanced skills in using the new technologies as well as good “research” skills (finding relevant information in the Internet). The presentations proved that the learners were involved in the activity and had put in a lot of effort. The language used in the presentations was above the learners' true level of production, which showed that it was not their own production. This made it difficult for the class to follow the presentations. Nevertheless the audience was quite attentive and (secretly) applauded each group after the performance. Apparently the class gets along well and the learners support one another in challenging situations.

In the last part of the lesson the learners had the chance to ask the visiting teachers a round of questions that the class had prepared in advance. These questions were about common topics of the students' interest on the participant's countries.

In this phase the students seemed to be genuinely interested in finding out about our experiences in foreign countries and our views and opinions of Greece. Some of the students seemed highly motivated to try out their English in real, communicative situations.

## Visit 3: Hellenic Open University: E-portfolio of non-formal competences „Leonard da Vinci project VAB: Valuing experience beyond university.

At the Hellenic Open University we learned about an interesting new project that aims at documenting and evaluating students' soft skills in an e-portfolio. The main objective of the project is to propose a pedagogical tool for teachers/trainers in order to identify, evaluate and validate skills and qualifications developed through informal learning outside the universities. Soft-skills are becoming more and more important in the world of work. In these portfolio skills and knowledge in the following areas can be documented:

- Sports, culture, arts activities
- Active citizenship
- Professional activities
- Transnational activities



In the current economic situation the additional qualifications documented in these portfolios can enhance the students' chances to find a job. The project has been designed and piloted in several European countries (France, Austria, Greece, Ireland, Slovenia).

Benefits:

- Additional certificate endorsed by universities or other educational institutions
- Employers get valuable additional information of applicants

Remaining questions:

- How can a broad acknowledgement of employers be reached? Do they trust the university teacher's evaluations of these skills?
- How can employers be actively involved?

In general it can be said that soft skills like the ones documented in these portfolios are very important "social capital" of a society. Documenting and evaluating them is a sign of appreciation of a person's effort, commitment, responsibility and active citizenship.

#### Visit 4: Primary Peiramatiko School of Patras

Presenting the Implementation of ELP in Class V&VI



During our visit at the Primary Peiramatiko School of Patras we observed a class that consisted of only 9 pupils being taught at two levels (grades V and VI). The school is a partner school of the University of Patras where student teachers can gain practical classroom experience. Since over 30% of Greek elementary schools are very small (2 teachers only!), future teachers need to learn to teach under such circumstances and to teach mixed level and

mixed ability groups efficiently. Moreover this school takes part in a pilot program implementing the new Greek curriculum which focuses strongly on inclusion, active participation and student involvement.

The class (level A2 -B1) learned to use the form “used to” to talk about past routines. After a well-structured, presentation of the form and meaning of this structure, the learners practiced both orally and by writing a dialog. Their dialogs were then added to the dossier section of the ELP (European Language Portfolio) which they had been using all year to keep track of their activities outside of the textbook. The learners were very proud of their portfolios and were eager to show their folders to our group. Again we could see how examples of work that seem relevant to the learners add to their motivation to learn a foreign language.

The teacher then outlined the benefits of portfolio work. According to her, portfolios are

- useful tools for self-assessment
- encourage flexibility and variation
- help establish a non-threatening environment, and
- give important feedback for teachers, pupils and parents
- innovative methods of teaching

The ELP, as well as instructions for teachers, can be downloaded from the website of the ECML (European Centre of Modern Languages)

<http://elp-implementation.ecml.at/>. The ELP is available at three levels (elementary, secondary I and secondary II) in almost all European languages. Several other participants of our group have used the ELP successfully in their classrooms. Like in the Greek example, most of us find the dossier section the most helpful and important part, while the checklists of the ELP seem to be rather vague and abstract for many learners.

### Visit 5: Patras Science Center

Our visit at the Patras Science Center was a perfect example of successful facilitation. At the Patras Science Center learners of all ages and educational levels find a large variety of technical, mathematical and philosophical challenges and mysteries waiting to be solved. The visitors/learners are encouraged to watch, observe, discuss and analyze the materials presented to them and try to find solutions. The staff of the Patras Science Center act as facilitators, never giving answers but guiding the learners along the path by asking additional questions that might help them think of alternative ways of solving the problems. This approach fulfills all the criteria of a facilitator that were presented to us by Ioannis Karras on day one. Learners are not given any ready-made solutions or asked to memorize facts and bits of declarative knowledge, but are guided in the process of hypothesis building to reach true understanding. The materials presented to the learners and the assistance given by the staff stimulate discussion among the students and thus incorporate the aspect of social interaction that is a key factor in efficient, brain-friendly learning. Learners and visitors leave the center with more questions than answers - many of us are still puzzled about some of the phenomena that we have observed but have not been able to solve.

Another project that was presented to us at the Science Center showed an interesting approach to teaching modern Greek to foreigners and immigrants. A group of learners (A1 level) was taught the most important speech functions necessary for basic communication. The lessons were organized around some of the typical themes and speech functions taught at A1 level and were held outside of the regular classrooms. One lesson on the topic “giving and understanding directions” was held at the site of ancient Olympia, another lesson on “Greek food” was held in a kitchen. The learners were thus actively involved and had to use the newly presented language in real-life situations. This approach makes highly efficient use of the natural language acquisition processes and mechanisms that humans have developed throughout evolution. It is another excellent example of teaching in the manner of a facilitator.

### Visit 6: University of Patras

At the University of Patras we learned about a very interesting research project that aims at reducing racism, improving intercultural understanding, enhancing equality, justice and integration of immigrants into Greek society. The project has been put into practice all over Greece at 3 educational levels: pre-school, primary and secondary school.

The research team has produced and piloted different educational tools emphasizing the following features:

- empathy
- recognition of diversity
- acceptance of diversity
- recognition of stereotypes and prejudice
- fight against stereotypes and prejudice
- constructive-social action
- cross-thematic approach to diversity

Among all the activities proposed, some drew our particular attention and might easily be adapted for classroom use in any of our countries.

- **Music and our heart** (emotional control): it showed that whatever the culture, emotions produced by music were all the same
- **Chocolate milk and skin colors** (understanding why people have different skin color): raised awareness for the fact that skin color doesn't affect a person's intelligence
- **Diversonopoly**: tool developed in a Grundtvig project: board-game to increase cross-cultural awareness.

Unfortunately not all the teachers in the pilot project were eager to participate. Many were afraid of the extra work and being late with their work in the coursebook.

Describe each of the good practices you learnt about during the visit (both from the hosts and from one another) indicating the following:

title of the project/programme/initiative	Country	name of the institution that implements it (if possible, provide a website)	contact person (if possible) who presented the programme to the group	whom the project/programme/initiative addresses	what features of the project/programme/initiative make it an example of good practice
Facebook groups	Spain	Simpson College, Iowa, (USA)-EOI Maspalomas, Gran Canaria (Spain) First introduced by Julia Talavera	Miguel A. Suárez López <a href="mailto:msualopa@gmail.com">msualopa@gmail.com</a>	A2, B1 to B2	Classes of both countries communicate via facebook groups. This initiative encourages peer teaching as the students ask each other questions, they share their interests, they get to know first-hand about each other's countries, they realize that they face the same difficulties when learning a foreign language and they write for real purposes rather than for the only objective of being tested.
Conversation exchange group	Spain	EOI Maspalomas	Miguel A. Suárez López <a href="mailto:msualopa@gmail.com">msualopa@gmail.com</a>	All levels	Students of Spanish as a second language and students of English of all levels through conversation exchange have face to face conversation and meet up with native speakers. These exchanges are first held during school-times and they usually go on outside school.
Class teacher and native	Bulgaria	MD 2001 Ltd	Stanislava Krasteva	Adults	The classes are taught by two



speaker		MeDia Educational Centre <a href="http://www.md-2001.com">www.md-2001.com</a>		A1 level	teachers who split the time: Half of the lessons are taught by a native speaker teacher, the other half by the regular class teacher. Encourages authentic communication even at A1 level.
Acting Idols	Bulgaria	MD 2001 Ltd MeDia Educational Centre <a href="http://www.md-2001.com">www.md-2001.com</a>	Stanislava Krasteva	Age 10-18	Learners create characters and write a script for their own play, which they then rehearse and perform in front of family and friends. Speaking, writing and personal skills are practiced in these projects.
Fun English	Bulgaria	MD 2001 Ltd MeDia Educational Centre <a href="http://www.md-2001.com">www.md-2001.com</a>	Stanislava Krasteva	Age 6-12	Children learn English through hands-on experience without a textbook. Real life situations such as “in the kitchen”, “on the street”, “in the playground” are used to teach the language naturally.
ENHANCE	United Kingdom	CableCom Training Ltd	Elaine Crompton <a href="mailto:ellecrompton@yahoo.co.uk">ellecrompton@yahoo.co.uk</a>	Adult learners	Learner-centered provision: giving the learner the option to learn in a way appropriate to the individual: embedded within vocational qualification/ via distance learning, flexible online (ICT) learning tool/ teacher 1:1 support.
Cooperative Learning	Denmark	Danehofskolen, Ringvej 1, 5800 Nyborg, Denmark e-mail: <a href="mailto:biso@nyborg.dk">biso@nyborg.dk</a>	Birgit Soerensen <a href="http://www.kaganonline.com">www.kaganonline.com</a>	Age 6-16	Teachers use different structural arrangements in lessons/classrooms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High involvement and activity level, allows active hypothesis building, practice and proceduralization</li> <li>• Using language</li> <li>• Practicing teamwork</li> <li>• These activities are useful for summarizing, testing</li> </ul>

					and revising for both students and teachers.
Simulation of Job Interviews	Belgium	Haute Ecole Albert Jacquard	Veronique Van Cauter	Students in their last year of bachelor program	Application training: CV writing and interview simulations with peer feedback and teacher feedback to practice for real life situations
Summer Camp	Italy	Primary School "F.lli Bulandi" Albino (BG) e-mail: cattaneo.afp@virgilio.it	Stefania Cattaneo	Age 6-10	A week spent with native speakers Active learning, language in context
PROFICOM project	Finland	University of Turku: Turun normaalikoulu <a href="http://www.tnk.utu.fi">www.tnk.utu.fi</a> in co-operation with City of Tampere and University of Tampere	Taina Wewer <a href="mailto:taina.wewer@utu.fi">taina.wewer@utu.fi</a>	CLIL pupils aged 9-13	Creation of three film-based, narrative computer simulations for assessment and language proficiency profiling purposes.
Making language learning attractive	Finland	University of Turku: Turun normaalikoulu <a href="http://www.tnk.utu.fi">www.tnk.utu.fi</a> <a href="http://www.kielitivoli.fi">www.kielitivoli.fi</a>	Taina Wewer <a href="mailto:taina.wewer@utu.fi">taina.wewer@utu.fi</a>	Age 7-9	Web-page to introduce different languages through age-appropriate activities. Thematic session with the aim to facilitate the selection of an additional language to study.
First Language tuition for immigrant children	Finland	University of Turku: Turun normaalikoulu <a href="http://www.tnk.utu.fi">www.tnk.utu.fi</a>	Taina Wewer <a href="mailto:taina.wewer@utu.fi">taina.wewer@utu.fi</a>	Learners of primary level with immigrant background	Complementary tuition in the learner's mother tongue. A better command of one's first language has strong effects on the acquisition of other languages and on academic achievement in general. Moreover it is important for the learner's construction of identity.
Teaching Literature and Culture	Austria	Graz International Bilingual School	Elisabeth Poelzleitner	Age 10-18	Active group-reading projects for different age groups. Intercultural

					reading projects using Young Adult Literature. See <a href="http://www.epep.at">www.epep.at</a>
CLIL and cross-curricular projects	Austria	Graz International Bilingual School	Elisabeth Poelzleitner	Age 10 - 18	All the subjects are taught in English. In the first semester of year one the children learn English in an intensive phase where all subjects focus strongly on the language. Later, language teachers support the subject teachers in cross-curricular projects.
EPOSTL	Austria	Karl Franzens Universitaet Graz Austria	Elisabeth Poelzleitner	Initial teacher training	The new European Portfolio of Student Teachers of Languages is a reflection tool for future teachers of languages. Examples of use can be found at <a href="http://epostl2.ecml.at/">http://epostl2.ecml.at/</a>
Have fun in English	France	Ecole "Les Platanes", 3 place du Foirail 33650 St Selve	Christine Blaviel	Age 3-6	Developing listening and understanding, hands-on activities like storytelling, games and singing
Language classes according to levels of achievement, not age/classes	France	Ministry of Education	Elisabeth Heitz	Age 15-18	Learners can change the groups in the course of the year, thus motivated learners can be challenged without stressing and frustrating others
Language lessons during the holidays	France	Ministry of Education	Elisabeth Heitz	Age 15-18	Small groups of learners, volunteers,
Bilingual primary schools (French/English)	Germany	<a href="http://grundschule.bildung-rp.de/lernbereiche">http://grundschule.bildung-rp.de/lernbereiche</a> <a href="http://wohoe-landau.de">http://wohoe-landau.de</a>	Anita Mandel <a href="mailto:Anita.Mandel@addnw-rlp.de">Anita.Mandel@addnw-rlp.de</a>	primary schools	CLIL in German/French/English bilingual classes in primary school to increase early bilingual skills. The learners experience French or English via first-hand interaction with native speakers in addition to the German class teachers. Portfolios are compulsory in these classes.
Job related language certificates	Germany	Pädagogisches Landesinstitut Rheinland-Pfalz <a href="http://bbs.bildung-">http://bbs.bildung-</a>	Gerhard F. Carra	Students and apprentices	Students get an additional qualification that improves their chances on the job market

		<a href="http://rp.de/kmk-fremdsprachenzertifikat.html">rp.de/kmk-fremdsprachenzertifikat.html</a>		in vocational education	Specific description of the skills is helpful for both employers and applicants to find the right person for the job
CLIL and cross-curricular projects	Germany	Pädagogisches Landesinstitut Rheinland-Pfalz <a href="http://bbs.bildung-rp.de/kmk-fremdsprachenzertifikat.html">http://bbs.bildung-rp.de/kmk-fremdsprachenzertifikat.html</a>	Gerhard F. Carra	Students in full-time vocational schools	Students in grades 12 and 13 attend bilingual courses in economics Final examination (Abitur) mentions this additional qualification and thus improves the students' chances on the job market.
Student exchange program	Poland	Kazimierz Wielki University Bydgoszcz, Poland	Anna Stepniak Adam Zielinski	B1 - C1	Bilateral meetings for Polish and German university students. Project work concerning Polish and German history, culture and future cooperations. Authentic and motivating opportunities for communication in the foreign language.
Project Based Learning	Czech Republik	Secondary and Higher Nursing School Zlín	Libuše Kolínková, <a href="mailto:libikolinkova@seznam.cz">libikolinkova@seznam.cz</a>	Upper Secondary school (14-18 years old)	Native speaker present, using internet resources, interactive and integrate learning, problem solving method, new approaches through e-learning, critical thinking, classes with a low number of students.

2. The study visits programme aims to promote and support policy development and cooperation in lifelong learning. That is why it is important to know what you learnt about such policies and their implementation during your visit. You are invited to describe your findings concerning the following:

**2.1 APPROACHES TAKEN BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS') REGARDING THE THEME OF THE VISIT. ARE THERE ANY SIMILAR APPROACHES/MEASURES IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES? WHAT ASPECTS ARE SIMILAR AND WHY? WHAT ASPECTS ARE DIFFERENT AND WHY?**

**CEFR:** In many schools and institutions the Common European Framework of Reference has become a useful tool in language teaching. All four skills have become equally important. In some countries this is clearly reflected in teaching as well as testing. In other places, the focus on written work still seems relatively strong compared to the other skills.

**Active involvement of the learners:** In order to reach the goals described in the CEFR learners must have the chance to practice and experiment with the language actively as much as possible. Although we all agree on this matter, we have seen big differences in its practical application. In some countries open learning in workshops and small groups is very common, while others still conduct strongly teacher-centered, lock-step lessons. We all agree that the learners' speaking time must be increased as much as possible, which means that teachers' speaking time needs to be reduced. More time must be devoted to group and pair-work as well as active exploration activities.

**CLIL:** Content and Language Integrated Learning is becoming more and more popular across Europe. In most countries CLIL is taught in some of the classes, students interested in these programs apply and are often selected according to their language skills (often in the first language). In Austria CLIL has become compulsory in some vocational secondary schools. A certain number of hours must be taught in English every year. CLIL is generally very well accepted among the learners and their parents and contributes to better language skills. The main challenge concerning CLIL is the recruitment of teachers who are qualified to teach their subject in English/or another foreign language. In Austria, Germany and Finland secondary school teachers acquire double qualification in two subjects. This makes it relatively easy to find qualified language teachers who can teach their second subject in the foreign language.

**2.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (INCLUDING HOST) IN THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES RELATED TO THE THEME OF THE VISIT. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES? ARE THEY COMMON CHALLENGES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?**

**Using ICT meaningfully:** We have seen several classes where ICT was used to motivate the learners. We would like to stress that ICT is a tool that can have very positive, enriching effects on language teaching, if it is used



appropriately. However, ICT may lead to strongly teacher-centered lessons with very little student activity. It may also lead to a lock-step approach where very traditional worksheets are made available on the screen. This may attract the learners' attention a few times. As the novelty effect fades away, these tasks will be even less motivating than traditional gap-filling exercises. Learners will be tempted to lean back and wait for the correct solutions to be given by another student or the teacher.

The same applies to the use of Powerpoint presentations that can be used as excellent visual support in presentations. If, however, long and complex text passages are read off the screen, the audience will easily lose interest in the matter. Since these presentations have become standard in almost all professional fields, learners as well as future teachers must be taught as early as possible how to use this tool meaningfully and fruitfully.

**Teacher training (general):** We have noticed a general trend towards higher standards in initial teacher training. We strongly agree that teachers at all levels should be highly qualified, both concerning subject content as well as teaching methods and personal and pedagogical skills. This means that all teachers should be educated at universities or teacher training colleges and have a master's degree in education. The excellent PISA results of Finnish schools seem to be related to the highly qualified teachers and strict selection processes they go through. Only the best ones are selected to become teachers.

In many other European countries teachers are hired by central authorities. The criteria for employment do not include any of the social and personal skills required in teaching. Good grades, family status, age and similar criteria may play a role. However, personal and social skills must be taken into consideration as a main criterion for employment. The most important question is whether a teacher wants to be with children and wants to have a relationship with the learners. Teachers who do not answer this question with a clear YES, will not be able to be facilitators as described in the opening paragraph of this report.

Moreover, methodology classes must play a more important role in initial teacher training. In many countries methodology still seems to be an unimportant add-on to language studies. (see solutions)

**Group size:** In the course of our visits we have seen some examples of very small classes where the children can be taught in highly efficient and personalized ways. Unfortunately many of us have to teach up to 30 children in a class - which makes it almost impossible to meet each child's personal needs. Language groups should definitely be kept as small as possible in order to reach each of the children individually and involve them actively.

**Finding teachers who are confident in English and can teach CLIL:** We all agree that CLIL (content and language integrated learning) is one of the most efficient methods available at the moment. In many schools it is a problem to find teachers who have both the subject knowledge and the linguistic skills to teach their subject in English. More training opportunities will be needed in the future.

**Inclusion of special needs students without special support:** In many countries special needs schools are being shut down and learners with special needs must be integrated into the regular classrooms. We appreciate the general aim of this policy, but would like to stress the fact that the special needs of these students can only be met with the help of an additional teacher who supports the class teacher (as it is done in some countries like Belgium and Bulgaria.)

**2.3 NAME AND DESCRIBE EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED THAT PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS) APPLY TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES MENTIONED IN QUESTION 2.2. PLEASE MENTION SPECIFIC COUNTRY EXAMPLES.**

**Improving teacher qualification:**

We would like to encourage all programs that allow teachers to do a 3 months or 6 months teacher exchange or teaching practicum abroad. Such programs would enhance teachers' language competence, add to their methodological skills (including CLIL) and encourage a more open, less dogmatic view of education. Currently such exchanges can be organized through the Life Long Learning Program. In the future the new Erasmus program might make such exchanges possible as well.

**EPOSTL:** In order to improve the methodological skills of language teachers the EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages) is used in all methodology courses at Graz University. By using this portfolio the students learn to reflect on the competences a language teacher strives to attain and on the underlying knowledge which feeds these competences. The EPOSTL promotes a discussion between students and their teacher educators and mentors and thus makes the students aware of their unconscious beliefs and attitudes about the learning and teaching of languages. This awareness allows them to choose appropriate methods consciously, rather than falling back on their old patterns and repeating the mistakes of their own teachers. The EPOSTL, as well as instructions on how to implement it, can be downloaded from <http://epostl2.ecml.at/>

**Comenius assistant**

While some countries have bilateral agreements in order to hire native speaker assistants for schools, other countries have very little access to native speaker assistants in their classrooms. This bilateral programme is not available in every country. However, schools all over the EU can benefit from hosting a Comenius assistant from a different European country, a future teacher of any subject. This assistant, who works at school for 12 to 16 hours a week assisting in teaching and other school activities, gains teaching experience and the school gets additional support for implementing CLIL, or developing students' communicative competence and reinforcing the European dimension among other activities that both, host school and assistant, agree to do. Find out more information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/guide/fiches/comenius5\\_en.html#1](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/guide/fiches/comenius5_en.html#1)

#### 2.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSFERABILITY OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES. COULD ANY EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT BE APPLIED AND TRANSFERRED TO OTHER COUNTRIES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

All of the examples described above could easily be transferred to other countries. In our discussions we found many more similarities than differences. Since most of the language teaching curricula are now based on the CEFR, adapting solutions from other countries and cooperating internationally has become a lot easier.

### 3. Creating networks of experts, building partnerships for future projects is another important objective of the study visit programme.

Please state whether and which ideas for future cooperation have evolved during meetings and discussions.

## Networks of experts

We are going to further explore the possibilities of e-twinning between our schools in order to give our pupils a chance to get to know children in other countries and use the foreign language for meaningful communication. Most students have very good ICT skills and enjoy communicating via these new media.

Finland - Denmark are considering to start a teacher exchange project to enhance exchange of culture and promote language learning by co-teaching in primary and lower secondary level. The Comenius Individual Mobility program (In-Training Service for Teachers) might be a possible frame for this initiative.

Bulgaria and France are planning to start a Comenius project for primary students where learners from both countries create a common book.

Poland and Belgium: The Kazimierz-Wielki University in Bydgoszcz (Poland) and the Haute Ecole A. Jacquard (Belgium) are studying the possibility of an Erasmus collaboration in the field of economics.

Comenius projects: we are going to explore the possibilities of installing Comenius projects for language learning and/or cross-cultural topics among the participating countries.

Germany - Belgium and others: We would like to implement teacher placements (Comenius and others) for primary school teachers as language assistants .

Austria - Greece: We are looking into an online project of two classes of ten/eleven year old students in Austria and Greece. (Graz International Bilingual School and the primary school in Ovria)

## TO SUM UP

4. What is the most interesting/useful information that the group believes should be communicated to others? To whom, do you think, this information will be of most interest?

It is difficult to select any specific bits of information as most interesting. The most fruitful aspect of this program has been the exchange of information, experiences and challenges that we all face. Each visit triggered long discussions of what we all understand by good practice and how we can implement these practices into everyday teaching. We all go home encouraged and motivated to help improve language teaching in our institutions and countries. We have made contacts and friends and will continue to explore further possibilities of cooperation.

## II Organisation of the visit

This part of the report will not be published but it will be made available to the organiser and will be used by national agencies and Cedefop to monitor and improve implementation of the study visits programme.

We recognise the value of ongoing feedback as a way of ensuring that the programme is at all times a responsive and dynamic initiative, meeting the needs of its various participants and target audiences. In this section you are invited to give us your feedback on several factors that, in our opinion, contribute to an effective visit.

1. Discuss within the group and check if you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please mark only one box (☑) that expresses most closely the opinion of the entire group. Please use Question 2 of this section to elaborate on your responses, if needed.

		All agree	Most agree	Most disagree	All disagree	Not applicable
e.g.	The size of the group was good.	x		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1.	The programme of the visit followed the description in the catalogue.	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2.	There was a balance between theoretical and practical sessions.	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3.	Presentations and field visits were linked in a	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		All agree	Most agree	Most disagree	All disagree	Not applicable
	coherent and complementary manner.					
1.4.	The topic was presented from the perspectives of the following actors of the education and training system in the host country:					
1.4.1.	government and policy-makers	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.2.	social partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.3.	heads of institutions	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.4.	teachers and trainers	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.5.	students/trainees	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.6.	users of services	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5.	There was enough time allocated to participants' presentations.	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6.	The background documentation on the theme provided before the visit helped to prepare for the visit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7.	Most of the group received a programme well in advance.	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8.	The information provided before the visit about transportation and accommodation was useful.	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9.	The organiser accompanied the group during the entire programme.	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.10.	The size of the group was appropriate.	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.11.	The group comprised a good mixture of participants with diverse professional backgrounds.	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.12.	There were enough opportunities for interaction with representatives of the host organisations.		x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.13.	There was enough time allocated for discussion	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



		All agree	Most agree	Most disagree	All disagree	Not applicable
	within the group.					
1.14.	The Cedefop study visits website provided information that helped to prepare for the visit.	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. If you have any comments on the items 1.1. - 1.14 above, please write them in the box below.

### III Summary

1. Having summarised all your reflections and impressions, please indicate how satisfied you are with your participation in the study visit. Indicate the number of participants for each category, e.g.

Very satisfied

Very satisfied  Satisfied  Somewhat satisfied  Not satisfied  Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

2. What elements and aspects of the study visits do you think could be changed or improved?

- A bit more time to discuss the observed lessons with the teachers would be highly appreciated.
- In order not to disturb the lessons, the group could be split into subgroups for the lesson observations.
- It would be helpful to receive information about accommodation as early as possible in order to make travel arrangements early.

### Greek Hospitality and Excellent Organization:

Last but not least we would like to thank the Greek organizational team Ms Kyriaki Vamvaka, Ms Georgia Sarri and Ms Maria Panagiari, Ms Maria Erotokritou and Mr Alexis Safarikas for the excellent planning and support during our study visit. They have created a very open, positive working atmosphere and have stimulated interesting discussions, feedback and suggestions for improvement.

The schools that we have visited showed a wide variety of backgrounds and methods. All the pupils were very outgoing and friendly and happy to see us in their schools. All the teachers that we met were highly motivated, helpful and willing to answer our questions. In addition to the interesting school-visits our hosts have organized a wonderful and very varied social and cultural program. We have seen beautiful ancient sites and countryside and we have tasted a large variety of delicious Greek food. We very much appreciate all their efforts and are going back home filled with inspiring experiences.

THANK YOU!

