



EUROPEAN LABEL AWARDED TO INNOVATIVE PROJECTS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

European priorities for the 2016-2017 Label Campaigns

For 2016-2017, the European priorities for the European Language Labels will be aligned to the objectives stated by the Education ministers in the Paris Declaration¹.

The Paris Declaration of Education Ministers called for action at all levels to reinforce the role in education in promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination, fostering social cohesion and an inclusive society. The follow-up to the Declaration is a key priority of the new Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020)².

1. Multilingual Schools and Classrooms: Embracing Diversity in Schools

Multilingual schools and classrooms are linguistically and culturally heterogeneous. Teachers and students might have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and not necessarily share a common language or cultural background; some or all of the students might have to learn the language of instruction and need extra support in this direction. Some examples where such situations exist are: schools welcoming newcomers who arrive as immigrants or refugees; schools with bilingual education, where two languages are used for instruction; international schools; schools integrating regional, minority or indigenous languages.

Multilingual classrooms are a growing reality in the EU countries: more and more schoolchildren have a mother tongue other than the main language of instruction in school. The situation can be very different between different Member States in the European Union and the expertise and experience on how to best support multilingual classrooms and school may greatly vary. Large-scale immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon in many areas of Europe and teaching culture needs to adapt to various ways of supporting language learning.

¹ On 17 March 2015 EU Education Ministers met in Paris to discuss how education and training can best meet the challenges of social inclusion, radicalisation and citizenship: http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2015/0316-paris-education_en.htm

² http://ec.europa.eu/education/documents/et-2020-draft-joint-report-408-2015_en.pdf



The multitude of languages brought to the classroom by multilingual children is an important challenge for teachers and principals but also a potential asset. Teachers need specific training and additional support for teaching students who are learning the language of the school as a second or additional language.

Good practice examples exist nowadays all around Europe, and spreading this knowledge could benefit the wider teacher community. If used in an appropriate way, multilingual classrooms can lead to increased language awareness for all, can help children with learning other languages and also develop an open and curious attitude towards cultural diversity.

This priority focuses on the formal education school sector, including paying attention to multilingualism and language learning in VET schools as well.

Label projects could identify good practices about multilingual schools/ classrooms which value diversity, intercultural dialogue and encourage multilingualism, where linguistic diversity is used as a resource for language learning, which foster relevant teacher professional development programmes.

Special attention could be paid to measures of support for children who do not master the language of instruction. All children should be given equal chances to realise their potential in school, and mastering the language of instruction is a *sine qua non* condition.

2. Language-friendly society – informal language learning

"Language-friendly society" means a social environment where language learning and intercultural understanding are encouraged, and multilingualism is promoted and seen positively. The needs of speakers of all languages are fully respected, and linguistic diversity is presented as an asset for an inclusive society and for economic development. Every community in Europe can become more language-friendly by making better use of opportunities to hear and see other languages, respecting all languages present in the community, thus helping to improve language learning and intercultural awareness.

There are many ways to achieve this: capitalise on the skills of multilingual citizens, exchange students etc., using sub-titles in film and television, using the power of media to expose citizens to other languages and cultures, promote intergenerational learning projects, tourism projects, cross-border projects etc.

Informal learning plays an important role to foster a language-friendly society. Informal learning is the most important part of all the learning that all of us experience every day. Language learning happens in the family, while watching TV or using on-line media, from exposure to the environment, reading newspapers and books, by listening to the radio or viewing films or television, interaction with speakers of other languages or use of new technologies and on-line resources.



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Label projects could identify such practices and measures which encourage informal language learning and a language-friendly society. The projects should present innovative ways of learning languages in an informal way for participants of all ages. They should make use of informal setting and informal resources available, of new media, on-line resources, communities of practice, etc.; they could target family, community or inter-generational learning. Contributions could include a wide array of actors, from civil society, regional and local authorities, municipalities, to hospitals, prisons, media, community centres, museums. Language learning can happen anywhere!