

Report of the President of FIPLV, Dr Terry Lamb January 2010

This report will refer to activities carried out in the period September-December 2009, following from the report produced in August 2009.

During the meetings of FIPLV in Graz in August, our relationship with the **European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)** was cemented by the formal signing of a memorandum of cooperation between ECML and FIPLV. Other organisations which have signed such an agreement include EAQUALS, AILA, the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute – OLBI – University of Ottawa, Canada, ALTE, CercleS, EALTA and ICC. These are gathering together in Graz in January 2010 for the first meeting of the Professional Network Forum, the aims of which will be to explore issues of common interest, to sign a Graz Declaration on Language Education and to provide input for the next ECML medium term programme (2010-2015).

The ECML funded project **LACS (Language Associations and Collaborative Support)** is one of the projects of the ECML 2008-2011 programme (Empowering Language Professionals), and it continues to develop opportunities for language teacher associations to benefit from greater collaboration with one another as well as engagement with the range of ECML projects. To remind you, I am coordinating the project with the support of a project team consisting of other FIPLV colleagues who represent other partner organisations: Sigurborg Jónsdóttir from Iceland (FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region and FIPLV Europe), Lucka Pristavec from Slovenia (FIPLV and IDV) and Janina Zielinska from Poland (FIPLV and FIPF). In addition, the project team has been joined by Nicole Thibault, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), which is enabling us to explore collaboration on the North American continent.

The LACS project is aimed at exploring the ways in which language teacher associations around the world support their members through professional development activities and action to influence policy. Following an initial survey which had 35 returns from FIPLV, FIPF and IDV members across the globe (Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Macedonia, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Togo, United Kingdom, USA, Venezuela, Zambia), a follow-up survey was sent out in Autumn 2009 in order to pick up responses from an even broader range of associations. A further 19 associations have responded to this so far (Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Russia (Baschkortostan), Russia (St Petersburg), Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Rumania, Switzerland). Though not yet fully analysed, some of the results can be found in a powerpoint presentation on the LACS website (www.lacs.ecml.at).

On 10-11 December 2009, the project workshop took place in Graz with representation from all ECML member countries (which are not exclusively in Europe). The event was very well attended by over 30 representatives of language teacher associations and other organisations involved in supporting teachers, and evaluations showed that it had been a great success. We are now updating the website with input from these participants, with a view to creating a dynamic forum where associations can collaborate with and support each other. The need for this was clearly expressed in the workshop, and ideas suggested there for enhancing such collaboration will be developed in the coming months. A further outcome of the meeting was discussion with several participants about the formation of new language teacher associations.

We have also had the first LACS newsletter in the Autumn, with reports from the project, from CASLT and from the ECML project MARILLE. The next newsletter will be out soon, and the intention is to make them more frequent following the workshop, when many associations signed up to contribute a profile of their association. These newsletters are being circulated to all members of FIPLV, FIPF and IDV and they will also be found on the LACS website. We would ask association representatives who receive these to circulate them to all individual members of their associations, as the intention is to disseminate useful activities, including the many valuable projects which are being carried out at the ECML.

The other ECML project in which I am involved is MARILLE (MAJoRity language Instruction as basis for pLuriLingual Education), which also had its workshop immediately after the LACS workshop. Further information can be found at this project's website: www.marille.ecml.at. This workshop was also very successful, and explored ways in which the gap can be bridged not only between teachers of different languages, but also between teachers involved in different types of languages, mother tongue teachers, second and additional language teachers, and teachers of modern and community languages. There is potentially a role for FIPLV in facilitating cooperation between different types of language teacher associations with a view to supporting the holistic language development of learners.

I would like to thank all of our friends at ECML again for their support and collegiality. We are always made to feel welcome there and we look forward to further development of our partnership.

With regard to the **European Commission**, FIPLV is part of a consortium which successfully bid for an EC project on language policy. The one-year project, called Languages in Europe: Theory, Policy, Practice (LE TPP) has been initiated in order to identify the conditions which allow good ideas on multilingualism to develop into coherent policy and practice, and also the obstacles to that happening. By policy we mean European, national and regional strategies which promote or inhibit linguistic diversity in social and economic life, and also specific measures which may support that diversity, such as the Lifelong Learning Programme. The two major strands of LE TPP are languages for social cohesion (questions of identity, community and mutual understanding), and languages for intercultural communication (questions of commerce, employability, and international relations). Taken together these underpin the aspiration to create a viable, competitive and democratic society based on principles of diversity, inclusiveness and mutual respect.

The specific stages and events within the project are as follows –

- * Initial scoping of the key issues
- * Two seminars – one on Languages and Social Cohesion (at the LSE), and one on Languages and Intercultural Communication/Employability (at the House of Lords) to establish key questions and an outline for further discussion.
- * An international conference - UNLOCKING THE GATES OF LANGUAGES
- * An on line consultation
- * Dissemination in member states and through transnational networks
- * Proposals for sustained dialogue

Participants are language practitioners from all sectors, experts and researchers on multilingualism and policy makers and advisers. As part of the project, a researcher was sent to the ANILS meeting in Sardinia in November in order to discuss policy issues, ANILS

being a member of FIPLV. In addition, representatives of FIPLV member organisations (IDV, FIPF, FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region) have also been invited to the seminars.

Terry Lamb
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