

## **Report of the President of FIPLV, Dr Terry Lamb June 2010**

This report is an update on my report of January 2010 as much of the news from that report is still recent and relevant.

During the meetings of FIPLV in Graz in August 2009, 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 organisations gathered together in Graz in January 2010 for the first meeting of the Professional Network Forum (PNF), the aims of which are 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 process of producing the Graz Declaration began with the production of papers by each organisation in which we identified priorities in the field of language education from our various perspectives. I produced this document (also to be found on the FIPLV website) by consulting the questionnaires returned to me by our member associations as part of the LACS project, as well as members' reports. These reports were presented at the Professional Network Forum in January, and led to the joint production of the Graz Declaration, which was circulated to all FIPLV member associations earlier this year in English and French and which can also be found on the FIPLV website. The President of IDV, Marianne Hepp, as a member of the LACS team, has also translated this into German for circulation in the near future. Please take a look and let me have any feedback. It is intended to form the basis of a common agenda for language education over the coming years.

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), Marianne Hepp from Italy (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. Thanks go to Lucka Pristavec from Slovenia for her excellent contribution to the project team over the past two years, and to Marianne Hepp for agreeing to represent her association on the team.

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](http://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, with reports from the project, from CASLT and from the ECML project MARILLE. The next newsletter will be out soon, though it has been delayed by workload difficulties amongst the tea. The intention is nevertheless to make them more frequent, and many associations signed up to contribute a profile of their association during the workshop. 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.

In March we had another LACS project team meeting in Graz during which we planned the publication to be produced over the coming year. At the moment we intend to make this an online publication intended to support language teacher associations in running their associations. The content was identified in the December workshop and will continue sections containing contributions from associations on issues such as the recruitment of active members, fundraising, event management, publications, websites etc. We shall be asking members for contributions to this shared resource throughout the coming year.

All of the LACS initiatives will gather momentum very soon as ECML is funding a fellowship to enable someone to work on the project for three months. We have successfully recruited a very talented person and will be sharing more information in the near future. We expect that she will be in regular contact with you over the second half of this year.

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](http://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 Europe 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) was 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) were also funded to attend the seminars, and Paolo Balboni (FIPLV Vice President) and Sigurborg Jónsdóttir (President, FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region) were able to take up these invitations (though Paolo's attendance at the conference was thwarted by the eruption of the Icelandic volcano).

We are very excited by this project as it is the first major activity of the new FIPLV Europe Region of which I am Chair. Please take a look at the excellent website; you are most welcome to join in with any of the discussions, polls etc. We are currently discussing how to take the project further at the end of year.

Finally, I am writing this report at the Nordic-Baltic Region conference in Reykjavik where I presented the opening keynote presentation entitled Developing Learner Engagement in Language Learning. You can find my presentation on the FIPLV website. I am grateful to STIL (the Icelandic Association of Language Teachers) both for organising this highly impressive event and for inviting me to contribute. We will be making the most of the opportunity of being in Iceland to hold meetings of both FIPLV Executive Committee and FIPLV World Council.

As ever, I would like to thank members of the Executive Committee as well as all of our other voluntary members who contribute so much to each other's professional development, for all of their hard work and dedication to FIPLV. FIPLV consists entirely of volunteers

working on behalf of the profession with the intention of making all of our lives that a bit easier through supporting collaboration and sharing of ideas.

Terry Lamb  
President, FIPLV

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