

## **Minutes of the Annual International CertiLingua® Conference 23 – 24 October 2014**

*Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per la Lombardia*

*Regione Lombardia*

*Piazza Città di Lombardia 1*

Participants: cf. attachment no. 1

### **23 October 2014**

#### **Conference Opening - Welcoming Words**

Ms. Gisella Langé, representative of the Italian Ministry of Education, *MIUR*, welcomes the official representatives and Italian students and their accompanying head teachers and teachers from seven Italian regions. She stresses the conference's international dimension with guests from Austria, France, Italy, Sweden, Estonia, Russia, Portugal and Germany.

Ms. Delia Campanelli and Ms. Roberta Pugliese welcome the participants on behalf of the *Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per la Lombardia* and highlight the importance of the CertiLingua Label of Excellence for the development of language learning in schools.

#### **Conference Opening – Welcoming words international steering group**

Ms. Henny Rönneper, chairwoman of the international CertiLingua steering group, also welcomes the participants and guests of this year's annual CertiLingua conference, and mentions in particular:

- the members of the steering group present at the conference: Gisella Langé from Italy, Chantal Junot from France, Prof. Hartmut Ebke from Baden-Württemberg and Prof. Franz Mittendorfer from Austria,
- to the representatives of the CertiLingua partner countries: Corinna Wesche for Berlin, Jens Bolhöfer for Lower Saxony, Isabelle Jeuffroy for France, Vera Zakharova for Perm, Michael Emrich from Rhineland-Palatinate, Dr. Petra Leihe for Saxony and Christina Uhmman for Thuringia.

- the representatives of Sweden, Ms. Eva Engdell, and Tonu Tender for Estonia as new full partner countries,
- and Ms. Teresa Moncada ,the representative of Portugal as a country interested in the label.

### **Presentation of the international steering group**

On behalf of the International CertiLingua Steering Group Ms. Henny Rönneper expresses her gratitude towards Gisella Langé, Roberta Pugliese and Mario Pasquariello for hosting the International CertiLingua conference and outlines the latest developments within the international CertiLingua network.

At the moment 20 countries are part of the international CertiLingua network. 287 (266 in 2013) schools are accredited world-wide and all in all 3.561 students have been awarded the label since 2008. As mentioned above, Sweden and Estonia have joined the programme as full new partner countries. Due to internal restructuring within the Finnish education administration, there is currently no institution responsible for the task of administering CertiLingua in Finland. Finland's CertiLingua membership rests for the moment until a solution has been found.

Ms. Rönneper continues her presentation by stressing that CertiLingua documents true excellence gained by students at public schools and puts emphasis on the fact that meanwhile the label is well-received by a growing number of universities and companies. CertiLingua uses existing standards and documents, like the CEFR, and is awarded in addition to a school-leaving diploma in the responsibility of the national ministries.

It is stressed that CertiLingua is in many ways unique and

- has a positive impact on school development for example by strengthening the continued learning of foreign languages,
- helps to foster bilingual learning in a range of subjects and languages unrivalled in the world,

- documents intercultural learning and face-to-face experiences that are documented nowhere else,
- is awarded by public schools free of charge and therefore fosters meritocracy.

These positive effects can be corroborated by feedback from the partner countries, and also by feedback from certificate holders. However, it is also said that the label's public recognition still needs to be further improved and certificate holders, schools and school administration should take an active approach in promoting CertiLingua at universities and companies. The CertiLingua partners should be actively incorporated into the joint promotion of the label of excellence.

Ms Rönneper thanks all partners for their continued commitment for the label whose ultimate goal is to connect nations and cultures. Special thanks go to the members of the international steering group, as they represent the label's core idea to "keep it small and simple". The full report of the international steering group is available in the appendix (cf. attachment no. 2).

## **Reports from Partner Countries**

### **Austria**

Prof. Franz Mittendorfer informs the Annual Conference about CertiLingua in Austria. Currently there are 7 CertiLingua schools and 23 labels were awarded. The profile of CertiLingua within the Austrian educational system and among CertiLingua partners is developing steadily.

The CertiLingua schools report about the following positive effects:

- CertiLingua provides motivation for students to perform well,
- prestige is added to the schools' language departments,
- schools offer more bilingual courses,
- parents have become increasingly aware of the label.

Learners are particularly motivated as they feel part of "something really big". The report of Austria can also be found as PowerPoint Presentation in the appendix (cf. attachment no. 3).

### **Belgium (German-speaking community)**

There are two CertiLingua-schools in the German-speaking community of Belgium. In the academic year 2013/14 1 label was awarded.

### **France**

Since the start in 2009 CertiLingua has been developing into an important factor to support foreign language learning as Ms. Chantal Junot points out. At the beginning only 2 academies were involved, by now 13 schools in 6 academies are accredited within the CertiLingua program. At first only English and German were permitted as foreign languages within CertiLingua. Now the label also comprises the languages Italian and Spanish and can be offered by Abi-Bac schools.

Every 2 years the Ministry of Education summons a meeting of the CertiLingua coordinators of the French Academies in order to evaluate CertiLingua in France and to discuss questions of quality control.

### **German Federal States**

#### **Berlin**

Ms. Corinna Wesche, the new CertiLingua representative for Berlin, reports about the 5 CertiLingua schools accredited in Berlin – with one further school being interested in the label. In 2014, 51 certificates were awarded and the steadily rising number of schools shows the high level of interest in CertiLingua in the city of Berlin.

As in the other participating countries, CertiLingua is experienced as a most helpful and effective instrument for school development, both on the level of schools and on the level of school administration. The CertiLingua Coordinators meet regularly in order to evaluate the label and to discuss measures of quality control.

#### **German schools abroad**

6 German schools abroad are CertiLingua schools. The German schools Helsinki and San José have already awarded the label to students, the schools in Den Haag, Shanghai, Nairobi and Valinhos (Brazil) will do so in the next years.

## **Hamburg**

Since 2012, two schools have been accredited as CertiLingua schools. Many schools in Hamburg offer bilingual classes and another four have shown a high interest in becoming CertiLingua schools. In 2014 the first two certificates were awarded.

## **Hesse**

In Hesse 25 schools are accredited and 60 labels were awarded at 20 schools in 2014. CertiLingua has a stabilizing effect on the learning of foreign languages in upper secondary and certificate holders report a positive effect the label had on their personal confidence.

## **Lower Saxony**

Mr. Jens Bolhöfer reports from Lower Saxony where the number of CertiLingua schools could be raised from 18 in 2013 to 22 in 2014. The Ministry of Education strengthens and supports bilingual classes and bilingual branches. The annual feedback from the CertiLingua-schools proves the positive effects of CertiLingua on bilingual teaching and the continued learning of French.

## **North Rhine-Westphalia**

Mr. Clemens Boppré reports from North Rhine-Westphalia. In the academic year 2013/14 193 students were awarded the CertiLingua label in North Rhine-Westphalia, the number of CertiLingua schools has increased to a total number of 94 (84 in 2013). The range of subjects and languages leading to CertiLingua could be further enlarged. Details of the report from North Rhine-Westphalia can be found as PowerPoint Presentation in the appendix (cf. attachment no. 4).

Apart from that the following measures of quality control, established in North Rhine Westphalia, are pointed out as very helpful:

- A system of peer evaluation for the project documentations. Under the supervision of the educational authorities the school coordinators present the project documentations of their students to a group of regional school coordinators for a peer check.
- A high level of transparency, for example achieved by project documentations being displayed at the annual awarding ceremonies.

- An educational policy that facilitates the introduction of bilingual modules and courses also in the upper secondary level.

### **Rhineland - Palatinate**

Mr. Michael Emrich reports from Rhineland-Palatinate. 12 schools with bilingual streams are accredited CertiLingua schools (10 in 2013) and 2 more have shown interest in CertiLingua. 31 students were awarded the label in 2014. The alumni's feedback has been very positive. They regard CertiLingua in general and the face-to-face project in particular as a major contribution to their personal development.

### **Saxony**

Ms. Petra Leihe reports about the 9 schools accredited in Saxony, with an additional school showing interest in the label. In 2014, 37 students were awarded the label. The need to promote the CertiLingua label in Saxony is one of the major tasks at the moment in order to gain more schools in the future.

Annual meetings of CertiLingua coordinators are held to view project documentations together and discuss quality standards. The large number of languages offered at the 9 CertiLingua schools is stressed (English, French, Italian, Spanish, Czech, Polish and Russian).

### **Thuringia**

Ms. Birgit Raasch reports from Thuringia where there are 5 CertiLingua schools. The school's feedback shows that students show an increased willingness to strive for CertiLingua and more and more discover the personal gains when conducting face-to-face projects.

With the help of the European Jules Verne exchange programme links between a CertiLingua school in Thuringia and a CertiLingua school in France have been established. The CertiLingua coordinators involved exchanged experiences with CertiLingua in school and students' documentations were exchanged in order to assess them. As the teachers involved, Ms. Tatjana Thiele and Philippa Marguin, report, the initiative has had many positive effects on the CertiLingua programme in both countries.

### **Italy & Region of Lombardy**

Ms. Gisella Langé reports about the label's progress in Italy. In late 2012 and 2013 there have been meetings of teachers and students in Italy to present the work of the CertiLingua schools and the students' documentations. She stresses the importance of CertiLingua as a vital part of promoting plurilingualism in schools.

The number of CertiLingua schools in Italy has risen to 40 in 2014. The tremendous efforts that have been taken in Lombardy and the experience gained there could be transferred to a further five regions and two independent provinces of Italy:

Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont, Apulia, Veneto, Sicily, Bolzano and Trento.

On the national scale 149 students were rewarded the label in 2014, of which 68 labels were awarded in the region of Lombardy. Details of the report from Italy and Lombardy can be found as PowerPoint Presentation in the appendix (cf. attachment no. 5).

### **Region of Perm, Russia**

Ms. Tatiana Platonova reports about the label's progress in the region of Perm.

Within one year 3 CertiLingua schools could be accredited. The accredited schools are convinced that the CertiLingua label offers multiple advantages for students and school development.

The foreign languages are English, French and German, the bilingual subjects Geography, History and Economics. The report of Perm can also be found as PowerPoint Presentation in the appendix (cf. attachment no. 6).

### **Examples of good practice - Model United Nations**

As representative of the German School The Hague, Mr. Markus Schicketanz provides information on the largest Model United Nations conference, The Hague International Model United Nations (THIMUN). Contact details and further information can be found in the attached PowerPoint Presentation (cf. attachment no. 7)

### **Key Note Speaker**

Prof. Aline Gohard –Radenkovic from the *Université de Fribourg* rounds off the first day of the conference by giving a talk with the title: « *Analyse critique des approches plurielles au service de l'éducation plurilingue du Conseil de l'Europe: à partir*

*d'exemples contextualisés* ». Details of the lecture can be found in the attached PowerPoint- Presentation (cf. attachment no. 8).

### **Friday 24 October 2014**

*Regione Lombardia – Via Fabio Filzi, 22 - 20124 Milano*

Gisella Langé and Henny Rönneper welcome the participants to the second day of the conference. Henny Rönneper thanks Gisella Langé, Mario Pasquariello and Roberta Pugliese for the wonderful cultural programme. A brief introduction to the workshops is given.

**Workshop 1 - International and European Competences: Exchange of Good Practice** (Hartmut Ebke, Clemens Boppré)

**Workshop 2 - Content and Language Integrated Learning**

(Franz Mittendorfer, Chantal Junot)

**Workshop 3 - CertiLingua Standards and Requirements: Questions and Answers** (Henny Rönneper, Martin Teuber)

**Workshop 4 - Networking for CertiLingua** (Gisella Langé, Isabelle Jeuffroy)

### **Presentation of the Working Group Results & Annual Conference:**

**Workshop 1 - International and European Competences: Exchange of Good Practice**

The working group points out that assessing the competence dimension International and European competences is a challenge, as it comprises attitudes that cannot be assessed as easily as language competences. However, the project documentations provide schools and coordinators with a suitable basis to assess this competence dimension and the planning dossier or the guidelines for project documentations have helped to provide orientation for CertiLingua students and coordinators. It is pointed out that the development of a research question in advance is of great importance and students should be encouraged and supported in the process of finding such a question before actually beginning their face-to-face project.



Further suggestions are made of how to assess international and European competence development in students, e. g.

- the presentation of a project to other students with an additional question time,
- the discussion of a project with a teacher or a panel of students,
- an interview conducted at the end of upper secondary.

In order to keep things manageable for teachers these ideas could be integrated into classroom procedures and could contribute to a grade for classroom participation.

The working group presents the draft resolution “CertiLingua Awarding Criteria and Measures of Quality Control” (cf. attachment no. 9). This document integrates the documents 2010-1, 2009-2, 2009-3 and 2011-4 into one comprehensive document 2014-1 that defines the awarding criteria and the measures of quality control.

Moreover, some minor changes in wording are suggested in passages that reflect the sentiment of the pilot phase.

## **Workshop 2 - Content and Language Integrated Learning**

The working group had a lively discussion on the dimension bilingual/CLIL competences covering questions of terminology, assessment and best practise. The idea of a portfolio as an instrument that involves students in the process of assessing their competences is generally welcomed.

Changes in terminology are suggested regarding the CertiLingua official documents. The suggestion is made to replace the term “A-levels” in all documents by “upper secondary school leaving certificate” in order to avoid confusion with the British education system. This change would also be in line with the wording of the CertiLingua certificate as agreed on at the annual conference 2013 in Lille. With regard to Bilingual Competences it is suggested to replace the term “bilingual” with “bilingual/CLIL” in order to cover a wider range of concepts. A glossary of terms within the CertiLingua context could be considered.

### **Workshop 3 - CertiLingua Standards and Requirements: Questions and Answers**

Work in the group was characterized by a lively exchange regarding CertiLingua Standards and Requirements and the way these are implemented and ensured within the CertiLingua partner countries.

In order to facilitate administration two documents are introduced.

- **CertiLingua Certification Form** (cf. attachment no. 10).

This form is of great help especially for coordinators at school. It contains all the data that later also has to be filled in on the Certificate and helps administering the certification process on the school level.

- **CertiLingua Requirements at a Glance** (cf. attachment no. 11 & 12).

This document gives an overview of international agreements on the three CertiLingua competence dimensions (11). Additional national and regional agreements within the international framework can be presented at a glance in the respective columns (12). This overview facilitates transparency regarding the organizational structure of CertiLingua.

The CertiLingua Certificate will be updated, as Estonia and Sweden have joined the label and their logos will be added to the template. Finland's CertiLingua membership rests temporarily, since there is no government agency officially administering the label at the moment. An updated template for the CertiLingua Certificate will be provided to the representatives of the full CertiLingua partners in a separate email.

### **Workshop 4 - Networking for CertiLingua**

It is underlined that there is an effect of *mutual facilitation* between CertiLingua and European resources like Erasmus+. Such programmes help realize CertiLingua at schools, especially with regard to the face-to-face projects, but CertiLingua also helps facilitate such programmes.

It should also not be forgotten that CertiLingua stands for egalitarianism and meritocracy since it is awarded free of charge by public schools and is not a label reserved for the more affluent clientele of the private school sector. These aspects should be stressed in the public promotion of the label.

Moreover, it is said that enhancing public recognition is a tedious and lengthy process requiring great perseverance and persistency. It should not be underestimated what has been reached already. There is a lot of positive feedback from alumni who have successfully used their labels at universities or in the world of work.

It is stressed that CertiLingua functions largely without resources or a CertiLingua secretariat. Central idea is using what is already there.

A suggestion within the workshop was the creation a CertiLingua online-forum. There are a number of open questions regarding a possible realisation, e.g. how such a forum could be launched, where it could be hosted and who would be in charge of and take care of it. Further research needs to be done so that the issue of such an exchange platform can be elaborated on further.

Ms. Marguin points out, that an etwinning-space for CertiLingua already exists.

Questions concerning this twin-space can be directed at her per email:

[philippa.marguin@gmail.com](mailto:philippa.marguin@gmail.com).

## **Results of the Annual Conference**

The Annual Conference takes votes on the following documents which can be found in the appendix of the minutes and on the CertiLingua Website. All decisions are taken unanimously. The partner countries absent have transferred their voting rights in advance to Henny Rönneper, the chairwoman of the international steering group.

- **CertiLingua Awarding Criteria and Measures of Quality Control**

(cf. attachment no. 9)

The document is passed as an official document 2014-1. It replaces the following official documents:

2010-1, Requirements for the awarding of the label of excellence CertiLingua

2009-2, Measures of quality control: language competences

2009-3, Measures of quality control: Bilingual competences

2011-4, Measures of quality control: European and international competences

- **CertiLingua Certification Form**

(cf. attachment no. 10)

The document will be added to the additional documents as optional support for those administering CertiLingua in their countries.

- **CertiLingua requirements at a glance**

(cf. attachment no. 11 & 12)

The document will be listed as an additional document. National versions provided by the representatives of the CertiLingua partner countries can be published on the CertiLingua website.

- **CertiLingua Plaque**

(cf. attachment no. 13)

A uniform design of a CertiLingua plaque for accredited schools is agreed on. CertiLingua Schools can place this plaque at a prominent place on/in the school building, thus displaying their membership within the CertiLingua network. This is an optional measure for all accredited schools. Templates for the countries will be provided so that the countries or the schools can have plaques produced by service providers of their choice.

## **Closing the Conference**

On behalf of the international steering group Ms. Henny Rönneper thanks Gisella Langé, Roberta Pugliese and Mario Pasquariello for their hospitality and the organization of the annual conference.

Henny Rönneper invites the participants to the next annual CertiLingua conference in **Düsseldorf**, Germany. The conference will take place from 10 – 11 September 2015.

## Attachments

1. Annual Conference 2014, Participants
2. Report of the International Steering Group
3. CertiLingua Report Austria
4. CertiLingua Report North Rhine-Westphalia
5. CertiLingua Report Italy
6. CertiLingua Report Perm

7. MUN, THIMUN and CertiLingua
8. Key Note Lecture, Prof. Aline Gohard-Radenkovic
9. Official Document 2014-01, CertiLingua Awarding Criteria and Measures of Quality Control
10. CertiLingua Certification Form
11. Requirements at a Glance – international
12. Requirements at a Glance – national template
13. CertiLingua Plaque for accredited schools