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## **CertiLingua Schools Conference 17 - 18 December 2009 in Soest**

- Minutes -

The third conference of Certilingua-Schools in North Rhine-Westphalia on 17/18 December 2009 offered the participants of all 98 CertiLingua-Schools the opportunity to discuss quality criteria and authorisation procedure. Additionally, common award criteria for European and international competences were agreed on in different workshops.

All in all, 104 participants from North Rhine-Westphalia and 11 further partner countries (among them Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the German Federal States Berlin, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saxony and Thuringia) took part in the meeting which took place in the conference hall of the Ministry of School and Further Education North Rhine-Westphalia in Soest.

The report on the ending of the pilot phase (see attachment no. 1) has already given strong evidence for the relevance of the CertiLingua Label of Excellence for school development and the promotion of plurilingualism during the pilot phase, as well as for innovative foreign language learning and teaching and the development of specific European and international competences. All in all, the CertiLingua Label of Excellence has been proven to be very motivating for students as they fully exploit the educational offers at their schools in terms of foreign language learning, bilingual and international learning. The participating schools regard their possibility to prove their international education offers with the European Label of Excellence as very positive. Internationally operating companies, universities and institutions contribute appreciation and support to the CertiLingua Label of Excellence.

In the workshops different aspects of quality assessment and the precise authorisation procedure in the partner countries were discussed. For North Rhine-Westphalia's schools the following aspects are of high importance:

- precise regulations for the award criteria during the academic year 2009/2010
- setting dates and responsibilities for the authorisation procedure
- cues for the assessment of student's material
- CertiLingua and the European Language Portfolio
- proof of European/international competences: exchange of ideas regarding suitable projects and forms of documentation

The guests from the partner countries discussed different requirements for the awarding of the CertiLingua Label of Excellence in their respective countries (e.g. minimum score in foreign languages, number of lessons in bilingual classes, connection of the curriculum with European/International competences). Moreover,

the European partner countries discussed the question of an external certification of foreign language competences as well as the problem of all Romanic countries lacking bilingually trained teachers, as their teachers usually teach one subject. The workshops agreed that the differences among the partner countries do not seem to be too serious and thus can be compensated by different regulations within these countries. A profound change of the internationally agreed standards of the CertiLingua Network was not regarded necessary, except commonly agreed enhancements.

The second day focussed the question of the assessment of European and international competences. Due to the multitude of possible projects and learning resources, measures to set standards should be taken to guarantee the comparability of learning efforts in all partner countries. The displayed and discussed examples from previous years showed the necessity of further agreement on the level of the participating schools. A positive development in comparison to the previous years was noticeable, though. Through intensive exchange via local networks among the participating CertiLingua Schools the setting of standards and award criteria should be further improved.

In the workshops the following was discussed:

- the projects should be closer connected with the curriculum, though the CEF B2 Level will stay a necessary requirement. A connection to the school programme is not regarded necessary.
- the development of a project idea and the realisation of European/international projects: schools should try to provide European and international exchanges for all students. Already existing networks and partner exchanges can be helpful. Virtual projects do not replace Face-to-Face meetings, they are useful for the pre- and post-processing, though. The students do not need to determine their topic for European/International projects before they leave for their exchange stay, but they should have already prepared their topic in order to work on it systematically during the exchange.
- form and design of the documentation: the documentation should follow usual standards of school documentations, i.e. it should not be less than 8 pages and should provide the sources used and additional material. The reflection should be dealt with in an own paragraph, the document should be linguistically appropriate and nearly without mistakes.
- the assessment of the documentation by teachers: it is recommended to use reference texts on the CEF B2 Level in order to guarantee an assessment on the respective language level. In North Rhine-Westphalia common assessment standards will be developed by the CertiLingua Schools and the school board. These standards should be referred to when awarding the CertiLingua certificate.