

Minutes of the Annual International CertiLingua® Conference

6 – 7 September 2012

Deutsche Schule Helsinki

Participants: cf. attachment no. 1

6 September 2012

Conference Opening - Welcoming Words

Mr. Frank Kühn, the principal of the German School in Helsinki, welcomes the guests and briefly outlines the school's educational work.

Ms. Henny Rönneper, chairwoman of the international CertiLingua steering group, welcomes the participants and guests of this year's annual CertiLingua conference at the German School in Helsinki.

Ms. Anne Berner, a former student of the German School in Helsinki and manager of *Oy Vallila Interior*, an internationally famous company specialising in interior design, gives a welcoming statement underlining the importance of linguistic and intercultural competences in the European and worldwide economy.

Presentation of the international steering group

On behalf of the International CertiLingua Steering Group Ms. Henny Rönneper outlines the latest developments within the international CertiLingua Network.

At the moment 19 partner countries are part of the international CertiLingua network.

Europe-wide 181 schools are accredited and all in all 1.423 students have been awarded the label so far.

Since the last annual conference further countries, like Hamburg and Bremen and further German Schools Abroad have become members of the CertiLingua network. Also, several new partners (e.g. Emitec and Continental AG) have been won with a total of 69 partners now. To intensify the benefits for CertiLingua graduates at universities talks have taken place with the University of Cologne, FOM University of Applied Science for Economy and Management and FONTIS University of Applied Science, Venlo, Netherlands.

Estonia, Lithuania and Slovakia have declared their interest in the label and send official representatives to this year's conference. Ms. Rönneper warmly welcomes Ms. Eva Obzerova from Slovakia, Ms. Vilija Sipaitė from Lithuania and Ms. Margit Timakow and Mr. Tonu Tender from Estonia. Due to political decisions in the field of education and budget cuts the Netherlands decided to discontinue their partnership. Ms. Rönneper thanks the partner countries for their commitment and for having provided extensive feedback for the evaluation report 2011. She continues her presentation by stressing the positive effects which the CertiLingua Label of Excellence produces on educational development in general. Within the partner countries CertiLingua has proven to be a catalyst, the label facilitates development within schools and supervisory institutions.

CertiLingua promotes foreign language education and plurilingualism throughout Europe and improves its quality. The feedback shows:

- The range of languages offered at schools has been broadened.
- The learning of languages is continued more often in upper secondary.
- Intercultural learning with regard to languages, CLIL and cross-border projects is strengthened

CertiLingua helps to promote and diversify CLIL learning opportunities.

- The number of schools offering Biology and Social Sciences as CLIL courses has increased .
- The range of languages used as a working language in CLIL courses has been broadened, with bilingual offers made in French, Spanish, Italian, Czech, Russian and German.
- CLIL learning opportunities have been made more sustainable with classes initially taught in modules being turned into continuous bilingual courses.

CertiLingua Schools report that

- their European profile is strengthened,
- students regard the label as an incentive,
- students tend to use their school's learning opportunities more extensively.

The full report of the international steering group is available as PowerPoint Presentation 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 6 CertiLingua schools with 115 candidates of which only 10-12% will finally receive the label.

Several efforts are made to develop the profile of CertiLingua within the Austrian educational system. 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 become increasingly aware of the label.

The following needs are named:

- School to school networking should be improved.
- Teachers need to be well qualified for their job as CertiLingua coordinator. Austria recommends teachers to participate in the School Convention North Rhine-Westphalia in Soest.

The label is regarded as being in a phase of consolidation. It is important to keep CertiLingua on top of the educational agenda. Positive signs could be set, though. For instance, CertiLingua has been mentioned as best practice example in the EU Commission's publication *Languages for Jobs*.

The report of Austria can also be found as PowerPoint Presentation in the appendix (cf. attachment no. 3).

France

Chantal Junot reports that CertiLingua in France is a programme at 6 schools with a European profile (section européenne). At these schools German and English are obligatory foreign languages (classe bilingue). This year 18 students have applied for the label of excellence.

At the moment five academies are taking part in CertiLingua (Lille, Besançon, Nancy, Metz and Poitier). The academies are the institutions which accredit new CertiLingua schools. Thus, a major challenge is to improve the communication between the involved institutions. The Ministry of Education needs to inform and further involve

the academies. Which in turn need to inform headmasters, language inspectors and teachers about the label in general and its educational goals.

German Federal States

Berlin

Helga Nieschalk informs the conference that in Berlin 5 schools are accredited CertiLingua schools. One of these schools has just started in the programme. 56 labels were awarded in 2012.

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.

Brandenburg

Rosemarie Pilz reports that in Brandenburg one school with a European profile serves as a role model and contact institution for future CertiLingua schools. There are two more schools in Brandenburg offering bilingual classes in upper secondary education. Three students have been awarded the label so far, underlining the high standards set by the label. In the last two years these students were awarded the label by the minister herself in an official awarding ceremony in the Ministry of Education.

Lower Saxony

Birgit Bergmann informs the conference that the number of CertiLingua schools could be raised to 16 in contrast to 13 in 2010. In the last year 69 students were awarded the CertiLingua label. Most applicants chose English bilingual courses. Only one applicant attended a French and a Spanish bilingual class.

In the course of a CertiLingua Project, the “Gymnasium in der Wüste” produced a bilingual set of recipes which has been co-financed by the German publishing company Klett.

Further efforts have been undertaken to win new partners. Last month the Continental AG signed the partner’s membership form. Mr. Friedrichsen is the contact person for CertiLingua and has been invited to the annual school convention in Soest. Mr Friedrichsen offers all German schools to get into contact with him in

order to establish any kind cooperation. Contact details can be requested at Ms. Rönneper's office in Düsseldorf.

Hamburg

Martin Eckeberg reports that in 2012 two schools have been accredited as CertiLingua schools. All in all 20 schools in Hamburg offer bilingual classes and have shown a high interest in becoming CertiLingua schools. Thus, it is likely that in the future further schools will be accredited. Hamburg plans to contact the Airbus Company in order to gain them as CertiLingua Partner.

North Rhine-Westphalia

Dr. Manfred Pulm, representative of the District Council of Cologne and responsible for the CertiLingua schools in the region of Cologne, informs the conference about CertiLingua in North Rhine-Westphalia. Currently 78 schools are accredited CertiLingua schools, among them 5 vocational schools. More than 180 labels were awarded in 2011. The exact number will be published in the Annual CertiLingua Report, due in November 2012.

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.

Details of the report from North Rhine-Westphalia can be found as PowerPoint Presentation in the appendix (cf. attachment no. 4).

Rhineland - Palatinate

Michael Emrich informs the conference that in Rhineland-Palatinate 10 schools with bilingual branches are accredited CertiLingua Schools.

Last year about 30 students were awarded the label. In 3 schools graduates were awarded the label of excellence for the first time. Since the beginnings of CertiLingua about 120 students have been awarded the label in Rhineland Palatinate.

On average about 5% of the students taking their A-levels at the respective schools receive the label. The low percentage underlines the high standards and the outstanding overall competences of these students. On a regular basis critical friends are invited in order to evaluate the programme and its effects.

Saxony

Dr. Petra Leihe reports that the number of CertiLingua schools in Saxony has been further increased. By now, 9 schools are accredited. Together, they offer five different CLIL subjects. Among these schools 7 languages are on offer: English, French, Italian, Spanish, Czech, Polish and Russian. In contrast to many other countries Polish and Czech play an important role within the CertiLingua programme. Last year 28 graduates were awarded the label of excellence.

In order to establish a system of quality control the CertiLingua coordinators are assembled in an annual meeting to discuss matters of quality standards and project documentations.

Thuringia

Dr. Helga Hämmerling informs the conference that Thuringia is in a phase of consolidation regarding the number of school accreditations. All in all, there are 6 CertiLingua schools. The prospect of raising the number of schools will also depend on the number of qualified bilingual teachers to be found in Thuringia. At the moment, recruiting the staff necessary for a further expansion of the label seems to be a very challenging task.

From 2013 onwards students at Grammar Schools in Thuringia are obliged to attend 50 hours of bilingual studies in years 9 and 10. This initiative might show positive effects on the CertiLingua programme in upper secondary.

German schools abroad

Birgit Bergmann informs about the German Schools Abroad. The German School Helsinki awarded the CertiLingua Label to 5 students in 2011. Several students of the school take part in the Model United Nations Program in order to fulfil the

requirements for the CertiLingua project. In addition to the German school in Helsinki, three more German schools abroad have been won as new members in the International CertiLingua Network: The German Schools in The Hague, Costa Rica, Shanghai and are now accredited CertiLingua schools.

Italy - Region of Lombardy

Gisella Langé reports that due to changes in school policy – since 2012 all students have to attend a bilingual subject in their final year of secondary education – the number of CertiLingua schools could be increased to 20 schools. About 50 graduates were awarded the label in 2012 in an official awarding ceremony in Milan.

For 2012 it is planned to further spread CertiLingua within Italy. The National Minister of Education sent letters to all Italian regions inviting them to take part in the programme of excellence. So far, 5 regions in Italy are showing interest to join the CertiLingua network. Still, each region needs to apply for membership individually. Thus, CertiLingua in Italy has developed from a regional to a national programme whose further development focusses on establishing a national CertiLingua network within Italy and improving communication among the participating schools.

Key Note Speaker

Dr. Franz-Joseph Meißner, professor for Romanic languages at the University of Gießen and German representative for the development of Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches (FREPA), outlines his view on the FREPA as a basis for a CertiLingua Framework of European and International Competences. The integrative description of linguistic and cultural learning is the heart of the FREPA. Thus, language awareness, intercultural learning, integrated didactics and the inter-comprehension of related languages are regarded as pluralistic approaches within the FREPA framework. Prof. Meißner particularly stresses the notion of the FREPA focussing on the process of acquiring competences rather than on the competences themselves. Thus, the FREPA can offer assistance for benchmarking, but cannot be directly applied to measure a student's intercultural and multilingual performance. The full presentation is enclosed in the appendix (cf. attachment no. 5).

In the following discussion the descriptors the FREPA offers are regarded as very helpful and necessary tools to provide aims for intercultural and multilingual learning. The lack of “I-can-do-statements” is lamented as the FREPA does not allow any form

of self-evaluation. All in all the FREPA is recognised as an instrument being able to provide solid ground for a new CertiLingua framework of European and International Competences, especially in comparison to the draft of the ELOS Common Framework of Europe Competence.

7 September 2012

At the beginning of the second day of the conference a short introduction to the workshops is given.

Workshop 1 – International and European Competences: Improving Measures of Quality Control

(moderation: Hartmut Ebke, Martin Teuber)

Workshop 2 – The CertiLingua Network: Future Perspectives of Cooperation and Promotion

(moderation: Franz Mittendorfer, Chantal Junot)

Workshop 3 – CertiLingua Standards and Requirements: Questions and Answers

(moderation: Henny Rönneper, Gisella Langé)

Presentation of the Working Group Results / Annual International Conference

The working group moderators present the results of the working groups and votes are taken on the issues mentioned below.

The absent partner countries have in advance transferred their voting rights to Henny Rönneper, chairwoman of the international steering group.

Working group 1 – European competences/ project documentations

As agreed on at the last international conference in Berlin the question of assessing European and International Competences has been made a key issue for this year's conference.

The working group presents the newly developed "CertiLingua Standards of European and International Competences" as the CertiLingua network has the need for a more effective instrument, which clearly defines the intercultural standards demanded by the international CertiLingua network and which can also be used for

self-evaluation. Especially the CertiLingua school coordinators ask for a helpful tool which informs and supports students when designing their CertiLingua face to face project.

The present Framework for Europe Competence, drafted by the ELOS network in 2008, lacks some of the above mentioned dimensions and is not based on an official document of the Council of Europe. Thus, the working group of the German Länder started to develop a new framework based on the FREPA.

The Annual conference appreciates the first draft and gives positive feedback on the new CertiLingua Standards. The member states decide to further follow the aim of setting CertiLingua Standards for European International Competences based on the FREPA. The partner countries are asked to discuss the draft and to suggest alterations and/or amendments. To cross-check the current draft with the scientific discussion about intercultural competences and standards Austria will inform the CertiLingua partners about the draft “Multilingual Curriculum / Curriculum Mehrsprachigkeit” developed by the OESZ. [www.oesz.at]

A decision about the set of standards will be prepared for next year’s annual conference.

In a second step the working group presents three documents which are meant as further support for teachers and students when designing the CertiLingua face-to-face project. Existing guidelines and documents from North Rhine-Westphalia have been taken as a basis.

The documents “CertiLingua Guidelines for Tutors” [2012-01 EN], “CertiLingua Guidelines on Project Documentation” [2012-02 EN] and the “Planning Dossier for Students” [2012-03 EN] are introduced to the Annual Conference. Minor changes and stylistic improvements are made and the working group suggests making the three documents obligatory. The proposal is accepted unanimously.

The documents can be found in the appendix (cf. attachments no. 6 - 9) and on the CertiLingua website.

Workshop 2 – The CertiLingua Network

The presenters stress the common vision of improving mutual European understanding inherent in CertiLingua, that all partners contribute to as well as they can.

The working group presents a comprehensive list of ideas of how to improve and promote the label's public recognition, one of which are the CertiLingua Ambassadors.

It is strengthened that enhancing public recognition is a process of many little steps all members of the network need to contribute to.

Workshop 3 – CertiLingua Standards and Requirements

The moderators point out the central ideas of CertiLingua which are binding for all partners, as laid out in the programme description. They elaborate on different ways in which the programme is implemented in the partner countries. Italy has a centralised approach to quality control regarding the judging of CertiLingua candidates, relying on a central commission. North Rhine-Westphalia on the other hand has a decentralised approach, relying on peer-to-peer evaluation among the CertiLingua school coordinators under the supervision of the school supervisory boards within the regional governments.

Ms. Rönneper stresses the KISS-principle, *keep it small and simple*, and emphasizes the idea, that CertiLingua should be a programme that bases itself on existing European documents, like the CEFR, as well as on educational offers and structures within the CertiLingua partner countries.

Ms. Langé points out, that CertiLingua in Italy is no longer limited to the field of general education but is also expanding to vocational schools. As these schools are also looking for suitable partners, Ms. Langé suggests marking vocational schools within the list of international schools. Addendum: This has been implemented, the revised document can be downloaded from the CertiLingua website

Results of the Annual Conference

The Annual Conference discusses the following documents which can be found in the appendix of the minutes and on the CertiLingua Website:

- **Draft Standards of European and International Competences**
- **CertiLingua Guidelines for Tutors [2012-17 EN]**
- **CertiLingua Guidelines on Project Documentation [2012-18 EN]**
- **Planning Dossier for Students [2012-19 EN]**
- **Programme Description [2012-08 EN]**

The suggested amendments and changes are accepted unanimously by the Annual Conference.

Election of the International CertiLingua Steering Group

The annual CertiLingua conference elects the following persons as members of the international Steering Group:

- Henny Rönneper (chairwoman)
- Hartmut Ebke
- Dr. Kim Haataja
- Chantal Junot
- Gisella Langé
- Franz Mittendorfer
- Ruth De Sy

The vote is taken unanimously. The above mentioned persons are elected for three years (2012 - 2015).

Presentation on the Project “Plurilingual and Intercultural Education”

Prof. Dr. Helmut Vollmer presents the European Project “Plurilingual and Intercultural Education”. The project aims at the promoting of language development across school subjects. The project has set up a Europe-wide platform of resources and references offering examples of how plurilingual and intercultural education can be implemented in schools. The access to the platform is free and the European States are invited to contribute by sharing further documents and material.

A project flyer and a short project description can be found in the appendix. (cf. attachments no. 11 - 12)

Closing the Conference

On behalf of the international steering group Ms. Rönneper thanks Ms. Kerstin Kiel and the German School in Helsinki for their hospitality and the smooth organization of the annual conference.

Ms. Jeuffroy invites the participants to the next annual CertiLingua conference from **26 – 27 September 2013 in Lille, France.**

Attachments

- 1) Participants
- 2) Report International Steering Group (PPT)
- 3) Report from Austria (PPT)
- 4) Report from North Rhine-Westphalia (PPT)
- 5) Prof. Franz-Joseph Meißner: The FREPA as a basis for a CertiLingua Framework of European and International Competences” (PPT)
- 6) Draft Standards of European and International Competences
- 7) CertiLingua Guidelines for Tutors [2012-17 EN]
- 8) CertiLingua Guidelines on Project Documentation [2012-18 EN]
- 9) Planning Dossier for Students [2012-19 EN]
- 10) Programme Description [2012-08 EN]
- 11) Flyer Plurilingual and Intercultural Education
- 12) Prof. Helmut Johannes Vollmer “Languages in Education / Languages for Education”