

Minutes of the Annual International CertiLingua® Conference

26 - 27 September 2013

Rectorat d l'académie de Lille

Conseil regional Région Nord pas de Calais

Participants: cf. attachment no. 1

26 September 2013

Conference Opening - Welcoming Words

Ms. Isabelle Jeuffroy, representative of this year's host, the *Rectorat - Académie de Lille*, welcomes the participants and stresses the conference's international dimension with guests from France, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Russia and Germany.

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:

- Gisella Langé from Italy, Prof. Hartmut Ebke from Baden-Württemberg and Prof. Franz Mittendorfer from Austria as the other members of the international steering group present at the conference,
- the representatives of the region of Perm, Russia, as a new partner country,
- the representatives of Sweden and Estonia as countries interested in the label,
- the participants of the Comenius region project BiLiSE,
- Prof. Philippe Rollet, president of the University of Lille 1 – the first French partner university - who outlines the university's international orientation and emphasizes the importance of foreign languages and intercultural competences.

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 countries are part of the international CertiLingua network. 266 schools are accredited world-wide and all in all 2.140 students have been awarded the label since 2008.

As mentioned above, the region of Perm in Russia has joined the programme as a new partner country. The CertiLingua programme has now been extended to all of Italy with a corresponding memorandum of understanding having been signed by the ministry in Rome. Several new partners have been won, e.g. the University of Lille, with a total of 78 international partners now.

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 the label is meanwhile 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 must be active in promoting CertiLingua at universities and companies, develop ideas together with the partner on how these can play an active role and jointly develop a CertiLingua support programme.

Ms Rönneper thanks all partners for their continued commitment for the label whose ultimate goal it is to connect nations and cultures. Special thanks go to the members of the international steering group.

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 7 CertiLingua schools (6 schools in 2012) and 23 labels were awarded.

The profile of CertiLingua within the Austrian educational system 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 Federal States

Berlin

Ms. Hannelore Trageser reports about the 5 CertiLingua schools accredited in Berlin – with two further schools being interested in the label. In 2013, 74 certificates were awarded which documents the high level of interest in CertiLingua at the participating schools. A special focus has been put on bilingual teaching in the recent years.

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.

Belgium (German-speaking community)

A further school was accredited, making for a total number of two CertiLingua-schools in Belgium. In the academic year 2012/13 two labels were awarded to pupils.

Bremen

Ms. Melanie Knaack reports from Bremen: CertiLingua has just been begun in Bremen with 1 participating school and a second school interested. Bilingual classes had to be established first.

German schools abroad

As representative of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Rolf Knieling provides data of the German schools abroad. The German schools in Helsinki and San José have already awarded the label to students, the schools in Den Haag and Shanghai will do so in the next years.

Hamburg

As Mr. Martin Eckeberg reports, Hamburg is one of the younger members in the CertiLingua Network. In 2012, two schools were accredited as CertiLingua schools and another two schools have joined the programme since then. Many schools in Hamburg offer bilingual classes and another four have shown a high interest in becoming CertiLingua schools. Due to the fact that the label has just been launched in Hamburg, no certificates have been awarded yet.

Hesse

Mr. Rolf Knieling presents the information from Hesse, where 21 schools are accredited and 94 labels were awarded this year.

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.

The label is perceived as particularly advantageous in strengthening a school's international profile, a characteristic that many parents look for and that many schools in the private sector stress as well.

Lower Saxony

Ms. Eva Busse reports from Lower Saxony where the number of CertiLingua schools could be raised to 18 and 61 students were awarded the label in 2013.

Positive effects are seen in CertiLingua strengthening bilingual teaching and the continued learning of French.

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Mr. Zäske provides information on the two accredited CertiLingua schools - with another school interested. The CertiLingua schools are "doing a real good job", it is reported. While French is on the decrease elsewhere as a foreign language continued in upper secondary, it still thrives at the participating schools.

North Rhine-Westphalia

Mr. Clemens Boppré reports from North Rhine-Westphalia for Dr. Manfred Pulm, representative of the District Council of Cologne and responsible for the CertiLingua schools in the region.

In the academic year 2012/13 291 students were awarded the CertiLingua label in North Rhine-Westphalia, the number of CertiLingua schools has increased to a total number of 84. The sharp rise in the number of awards is due to the fact, that schools in North Rhine-Westphalia now lead students to their Abitur in 12 years. This reform has led to two year groups completing their secondary schooling simultaneously. The percentage of labels relative to the total number of students at the awarding schools is however quite stable at 2,9%.

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

In Rhineland-Palatinate 10 schools with bilingual streams are accredited CertiLingua schools. Last year, 62 students were awarded the label, which are 2.7 % of the graduates at these schools. This percentage underlines the high standards and the outstanding overall competences of these students.

Saxony

Mr. Rüdiger Möller reports about the 9 schools accredited in Saxony, with an additional school showing interest in the label. In 2013, 38 students were awarded the label, which are 7 % of the students graduating at the respective schools.

Annual meetings of CertiLingua coordinators are held to view project documentations together and discuss quality standards.

The large number of languages offered at the 7 CertiLingua schools is stressed (English, French, Italian, Spanish, Czech, Polish and Russian). CertiLingua has also led to new school partnerships between Saxon and Czech schools.

Thuringia

Dr. Helga Hämmerling reports from Thuringia where there are 5 CertiLingua schools. Last year, only two of them could award certificates due to stricter regulations concerning the project documentations. However, these two schools could award 43 labels which is an outstanding performance.

In the future, students at Grammar Schools in Thuringia are obliged to attend 50 hours of bilingual studies in upper secondary. This initiative might show positive effects on the CertiLingua programme in upper secondary.

Italy & Region of Lombardy

Ms. Gisella Langé reports about the label's progress in Italy, where the region of Lombardy begun with CertiLingua in 2008. The number of CertiLingua schools has risen to 40 in 2013.

The tremendous efforts that have been taken in Lombardy and the experience gained could be transferred to all of Italy. The memorandum of understanding was signed by the ministry in Rome, now enabling schools in all of Italy to participate in the CertiLingua programme.

In the region of Lombardy 68 labels were awarded and in the rest of Italy there were another 62 candidates.

The project documentations have turned out to be the most difficult part of the programme, but guidelines developed in Lombardy have been of great help in this context. Since in Italy additional language certificates have to be provided for CertiLingua, the label's high quality is additionally corroborated.

Key Note Speaker

Prof. Genviève Zarate of the *Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO)* gives a lecture on the definition of intercultural competences and methodological questions on their assessment in a globalized context. She stresses the role of the "intercultural mediator" and points out the importance of students' hidden curricula in languages that are also determined by their intercultural competences, as case studies show.

The CertiLingua Standards of Excellence in Intercultural Competences are also covered in the presentation and deemed very well-suited by Prof. Zarate. Positive aspects amongst others are that the document is not Eurocentric and provides a map rather than a scale of competences and incorporates a self-reflexive approach.

27 September 2012

Ms. Pavot, Directrice générale adjointe chargée de l'éducation et de la jeunesse au conseil régional du Nord-Pas-de-Calais welcomes the participants of the conference on the second day. A short introduction to the workshops is given:

Workshop 1 – International and European Competences: Documentations as an Instrument of Quality Control, Exchange of Good Practice

(moderation: Hartmut Ebke, Clemens Boppré)

Workshop 2 – The CertiLingua Network: Facilitating Cooperation

(moderation: Franz Mittendorfer, Thomas Wegner)

Workshop 3 – CertiLingua Standards and Requirements: Questions and Answers

(moderation: Henny Rönneper, Gisella Langé)

Workshop 4 – BiLiSE Comenius Regio

(moderation: Gabriele Berghoff)

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.

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

Workshop 1

International and European Competences: Documentations as an Instrument of Quality Control, Exchange of Good Practice

The working group presents the newly developed “CertiLingua Standards of Excellence in Intercultural Learning” as a standard for the verification of competences attained in this domain. These standards have been developed over the last years on the basis of the ELOS framework and the FREPA. It is suggested to replace *Learning* by *Competences*.

Additionally, a new version of the Checklist for Project Documentations is suggested as an instrument of quality control.

A new version of the Certificate is presented which displays the logos of all participating ministries with the intention to underline the “ministerial” character of the label. In addition the wording was revised, as the original wording reflected the sentiment of the pilot phase. It is suggested to add the CEFR on the Certificate when listing the foreign languages and it is to be stressed that level B2 is a minimum requirement that can be exceeded and documented on the certificate. It is suggested to replace *linguistic* competences by *language* competences.

Workshop 2

The CertiLingua Network: Facilitating Cooperation

The concept of the CertiLingua Ambassadors is presented. In addition to the partner group of universities, companies and institutions, an initiative is to be launched in which support for CertiLingua is gained on a more personal level with the help of people – famous and well-known or less famous but committed to CertiLingua. Support is signalled by officially becoming a CertiLingua Ambassador. Drafts for the corresponding documents, i.e. a membership form and an official letter have been produced and are suggested as resolutions.

More ideas are presented of how the network could be used more intensively.

- A closer cooperation between schools from different countries is encouraged, esp. in order to provide opportunities for international work experience, knowing that one’s students are taken good care of abroad by another CertiLingua school.
- Exchange is to be promoted in general: of students, of teachers, but also of materials such as the exchange of project documentations between countries. The question of how the exchange of teaching materials between schools could be facilitated by an online platform is to be discussed further. It is pointed out that an etwinning-space does already exist.
- It is furthermore suggested to make the first page of the homepage www.certilingua.net available in the language of every partner country, in order to make CertiLingua better known among parents and companies. Translations

need to be provided by the partner countries and should be addressed to clemens.boppre@msw.nrw.de.

- A congratulatory letter by the minister of education that is given to students in addition to their CertiLingua certificate has proven to be very helpful for example in North Rhine- Westphalia. This leads to the idea of a “promotion pack” given to certificate holders which contains additional materials such as flyers or the above-mentioned letter.
- Another idea put forward in the discussion is to invite alumni as speakers to conferences or awarding ceremonies.

Workshop 3

CertiLingua Standards and Requirements: Questions and Answers

The general requirements are pointed out and it is emphasized that these high standards are vital to the idea of the label of excellence.

In particular the domain of the intercultural competences has been a field of development in the last years in which huge progress could be achieved by the guidelines for the project documentations and the Standards of Excellence in Intercultural Competences and Checklist for Project Documentations presented at this year’s conference.

Workshop 4

BiLiSE Comenius Regio

Ms. Berghoff reports about the Comenius Regio project BiLiSE as an example of cross-national cooperation and networking between the administrative regions of Arnsberg, Germany, and Nord-Pas de Calais, France. The project

- links up these European regions with the aim of improving educational offers to young people
- includes schools and other players linked to education
- makes the regions work together on topics of mutual interest
- strengthens the European dimension in school education

- offers European learning experiences to teachers and pupils and administrators.

The presentation can be found in the appendix (cf. attachment no. 5).

Results of the Annual Conference

After discussing the draft resolutions and deciding on minor changes the Annual Conference, **the following documents are passed unanimously as resolutions and thus made binding for all CertiLingua partner countries:**

- **CertiLingua Certificate [2013-10-EN]**
- **CertiLingua Standards of Excellence in Intercultural Competences [2013-12-EN]**
- **CertiLingua Checklist for Project Documentations [2013-20-EN]**
- **CertiLingua Ambassadors [additional documents]**

The documents in their final version can be found in the appendix of the minutes and on the CertiLingua website: www.certilingua.net > documents.

Closing the Conference

On behalf of the international steering group Ms. Rönneper thanks Ms. Isabelle Jeuffroy for their hospitality and the organization of the annual conference.

On behalf of the whole CertiLingua network Prof. Franz Mittendorfer thanks Ms. Henny Rönneper for the conference's planning, her commitment and dedication.

Ms. Gisella Langé invites the participants to the next annual CertiLingua conference **in Lombardy**, Italy. A date is to be set.

Attachments

- 1.) Participants
- 2.) Report of the International Steering Group
- 3.) Report from Austria
- 4.) Report from North Rhine-Westphalia
- 5.) Presentation BiliSE
- 6.) CertiLingua Certificate [2013-10-EN]
- 7.) CertiLingua Standards of Excellence in Intercultural Competences [2013-12-EN]
- 8.) CertiLingua Checklist for Project Documentations [2013-20-EN]
- 9.) CertiLingua Ambassadors [additional documents]