

Minutes of the 16th International CertiLingua Annual Conference

Strasbourg

29 & 30 September 2022

- DAY 1 -

WELCOMING WORDS

Mr. Youcef Slamani (Head of Marie Curie high school) and several of the school's students as well as Mr. Léopold Stefanini (permanent representation of France to the Council of Europe) welcome the participants of the conference.

Silke Hinz, the chair of the International Steering Group, thanks Mr. Slamani and Mr. Stefanini. In her opening remarks, she particularly stresses that, after having to rely on digital meetings in 2020 and 2021, everybody is grateful to be able to meet in person again and emphasizes the special qualities of face-to-face encounters. She thanks Patrice Rey and the Académie de Strasbourg for having invited the group to the city and providing the opportunity to host the conference in a beautiful setting.

Silke Hinz points out that, apart from strengthening social and personal bonds, the Annual Conference has traditionally served two major purposes and is continuing to do so:

- 1) The Annual Conference has always been a place to renew the commitment to the CertiLingua® label of excellence and the goals and values the label represents
- 2) The conference has always been a place to discuss and further shape the label's development according to the principles and procedures that have been set

Especially in these times of global crises, the network has stood strong, and this can be regarded as a token of the network's uniqueness, creativity and adaptability.

The Compendium, the collection of the label's documents, serves as the binding reference document and it is updated once a unanimous decision is taken. Some additions to the Compendium will be suggested at this year's Annual Conference.

In view of the keynote speech by Brian North and its topic of online interaction, she comments on how, during the last two years, everybody has surely learned a lot in terms of how digital tools can support schools in the realization of their projects. However, a real face-to-face encounter cannot be fully replaced by a digital one and this is why the face-to-face projects remain at the very heart of CertiLingua®. As a consequence, it must be discussed and decided how best to deal with purely digital projects in the future.

Silke Hinz explains that another issue that needs to be discussed further are the project documentations with audiovisual elements. The pandemic has not really boosted these documentations, and it is surely right to continue the pilot phase until next year. She is, however, convinced that it will be necessary to continue pursuing this idea because this format has many benefits to it.

Silke Hinz explicitly thanks the International Steering Group for their commitment to and ongoing support of the label and thanks the representatives of the Member States for their efforts in their respective countries, which have also resulted in still relatively stable numbers that one might not have expected in view of the pandemic.

BRIEF INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON CERTILINGUA® IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2020/2021

The number of CertiLingua® schools (340) has remained relatively stable. It is pointed out that, rather than the number of schools that have actually awarded certificates in a particular year, the total number of CertiLingua schools should be reported.

With regard to the CertiLingua® certificates, a drop in 2020 (758, down from 860 in 2019) can be noted. Possible reasons might be:

- Covid-19 may have stopped some students from going through with certification.
- Not all schools may have reported numbers correctly because they were occupied with school closures and re-organising their teaching.
- There were no certificates in Lower-Saxony due to change to 13 school years (=> no graduates in 2020).

In 2021, 774 certificates were awarded, increasing the total number of certificates awarded so far to 9,197.

REPORTS FROM THE MEMBER STATES

A padlet was created to collect the main successes and main challenges the Member States are facing at the moment (*cf. attached pdf-file*).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

During a guided tour of the Council of Europe, the participants of the Annual Conference are informed about the history, the function and the organization of the Council of Europe.

Afterwards, Mr. Michel Remmert, Deputy Head of the Directorate of policy planning of the Council of Europe, outlines the work of the Council of Europe in the field of language education and subsequently answers questions of participants of the Annual Conference.

Then Mr. Jonas Erin, General Inspector and expert to the European Center for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, gives his presentation “Towards a global approach to plurilingual and intercultural education” (*cf. attached pdf of Mr Erin’s talk*).

- DAY 2 -

KEYNOTE

The second day starts with the keynote speech by Dr. Brian North, member of the Eurocentres Foundation and a co-author of the CEFR as well as the CEFR Companion volume. Dr. North’s talk “*The new CEFR: Mediation and online interaction in the language classroom*” is received with great interest by the participants of the conference (*cf. attached pdf of Dr. North’s talk*).

Graduation ceremony for the 2021 CertiLingua® students

Several French students who have successfully completed CertiLingua are awarded their certificates in a short ceremony.

Workshops

The implications of Dr. North’s remarks are subsequently discussed in several workshops led by members of the steering group. Some aspects dealt with in the workshops are Mediation, Social agency in an action-oriented approach, and the role of online interaction in language and intercultural learning.

The French CertiLingua-students who have previously received their certificates report on their experience and contribute to the discussion in the workshops.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE – RESOLUTIONS

The Representatives of the Members States not present had transferred their voting rights to the Chairwoman of the International Steering Group, Silke Hinz. The Representatives of the Members States present take the following unanimous decisions:

1. The Annual Conference agrees to adding
 - Guidelines for students’ CertiLingua® Project Documentations with audio-visual and written parts
 - the Adapted Checklist for Assessing Students’ Project Documentations
 - the paper “CertiLingua® projects & project documentations in times of COVID-19” to a new section of the CertiLingua® Compendium for documents of foreseeably temporary use.

2. The Annual Conference agrees to keeping track of changes made to the CertiLingua® Compendium by
 - adding the place and year of the Annual Conference where new resolutions are taken to the first page
 - adding a section to the back of the compendium that provides an overview of decisions taken
- ➔ The resolutions are accepted unanimously

End of the Annual Conference 2022 and Annual Conference 2023

Silke Hinz closes this year's Annual Conference by acknowledging the continued efforts of all participants. The next Annual Conference is planned for the end of September 2023, its location will be announced later.