



Promoting excellence in language education

European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe

ECML Workshop

‘Enhancing Language Education
in Cross-border Vocational Education’

7-8 February 2023, Graz, Austria

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The project:

Enhancing language education in cross-border vocational education focuses on the promotion of language learning in cross-border working environments. Plurilingual and intercultural competences, among others, are required for living and working in a border region. In this context, (the) neighbouring language(s) play(s) a major role in achieving successful communication. Hence, adapting trainings accordingly has become an issue of increasing importance all over Europe.

The participants:

- Teachers from 27 countries
- One from Canada
- Some online teachers

The participants were presented with the first results of the survey/project as well as the Manual that was planned to be published within 2023.

The workshop provided participants with an opportunity to discuss the chapters in detail and also make contributions themselves.

The main purpose of the seminar:

- To enrich the website and provide the organisers with ideas and material for further study (the website was being prepared, not yet available, only on Moodle);
- To get information and ideas (for teachers) to implement and compliment their own teaching (self-reflection);
- To share experiences and good practices among teachers from different countries / neighbouring countries;
- To promote plurilingual education.



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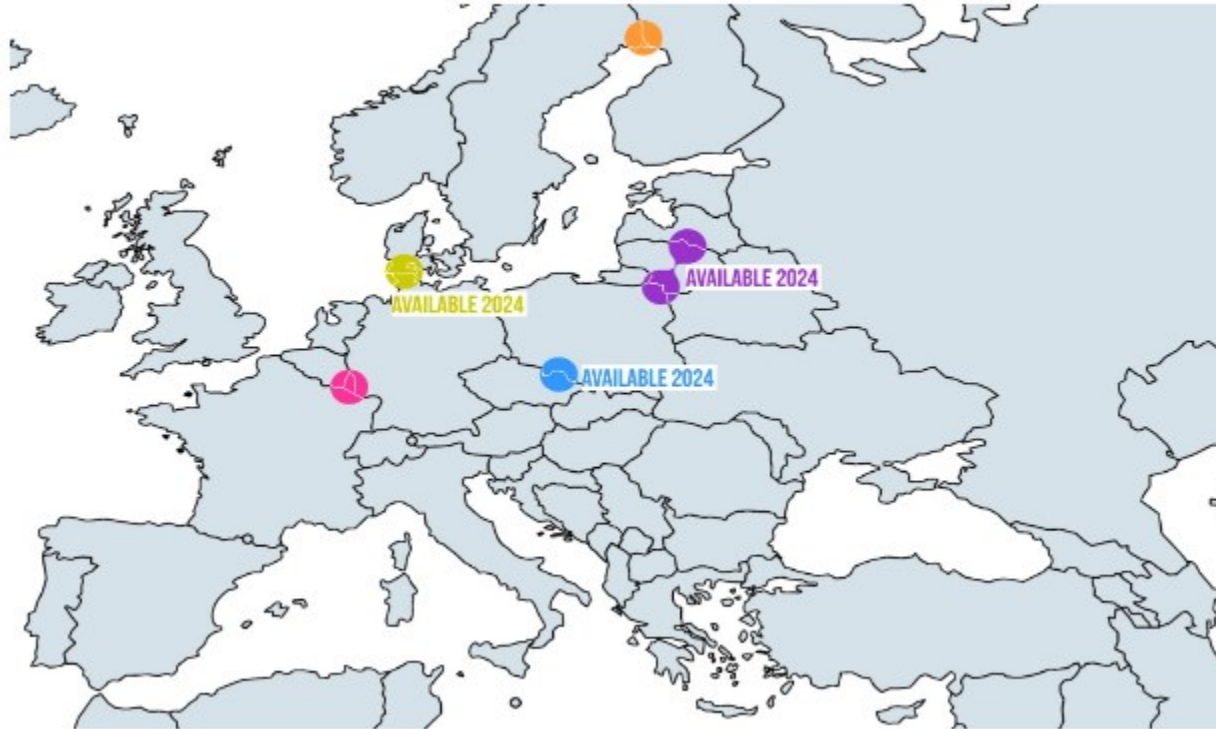
Enhancing language education in cross-border vocational education



How to best promote language education in border regions, especially in professional and vocational education



Click on the map to find out more about a particular border region and get inspired.



The examples of border regions indicate that there are shared needs and challenges.



There are **different understandings and perceptions** of borders (national, historical, regional, mental, cultural, linguistic, social...).



Geographical closeness does not necessarily lead to close relationship and collaboration.



Borders can be described on a **continuum** between friendly and hostile (Henry Lefebvre "La production de l'espace" 1974).

An open mindset is one of the most important conditions for cross-border practices. Languages can build bridges. Borders and border regions are dynamic spaces or processes that start with us. So be part of it and cross the bridges!

Plurilingualism

- ▶ Intercomprehension - understanding languages through other languages
- ▶ It opens up new possibilities for cross-boarder vocational language education
- ▶ Quizzes about European Language Families
- ▶ Discover intercomprehension with the EuroCom approach (practical examples)

Intercultural competences

Intercultural competence is very important in everyday social situations at work and outside the workplace, such as having a lunch break together.

Verbal communication

- Politeness: What should I take? Water, lemonade, beer or wine for lunch with colleagues from my border region?
- Formality: Asking your boss vs asking a colleague to go for drinks after work.

Non-verbal communication

- Shake hands, nod or kiss cheeks?

Culture

- Customs (including public holidays) of national and ethnic groups

'Hotwords':

- culture specific words

Languages, Disciplines and Professions

- Overview of the old and new methods of teaching to enrich the teaching repertoire
- CEFR
- Not only English, but multiple languages
- Multilingual resources in professional practice
- Case studies

My take-aways

- ▶ We should be open-minded for intercomprehension and use intercomprehension skills and approaches in our teaching.
- ▶ We need to maintain and promote diversity of language (not globalise).
- ▶ Intercultural competences are important. It allows learners to avoid communication misunderstandings.
- ▶ Non-verbal communication should also be taught and practised (body language, gestures, handshakes, etc).
- ▶ Learners need (cultural) information necessary to survive (e.g. what time shops open/close, signs, symbols, alcohol issues).

- ▶ It is important to understand that different vocational fields require different skills and language might be understood differently especially in cross-border professions. Some aspects that need to be considered when thinking about professional language cross-border settings are: language formality, academic and technical vocabulary and the language needs i.e. reading, writing, speaking, listening.
- ▶ There is **no single teaching method that can guarantee successful language acquisition**. Knowledge of different teaching methods and how they can address different language needs and their use in the classroom are important. Teachers need to plan and structure language lessons for specific purposes and to focus on teaching based on specific language needs (speaking, listening, reading or writing).

