



NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE LABEL

FRANCE





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FRENCH NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE LABEL

1 Introduction

This report has the objective to describe how the European Language Label is implemented in France.

The first part of the report analyzes the national actions carried out in order to implement the European Language Label. The report therefore starts with a description of the national institution in charge of the European Language Label in France, the national organization of the Label campaigns, the national priorities and the selection criteria, the evaluation and the follow-up of some of the awarded projects.

The second part of the report carries out a further analysis of projects that were awarded the European Language Label in France. This second part of the report includes: the impact of the European Label on the awarded projects, the activities of dissemination and exploitation, the recommendations coming from the awarded project promoters.

2 The European Language Label in France

In France, the European Language Label is presented by the National Agency as a “*European award with the objective to improve innovative approaches and initiatives in the framework of language learning and training.*”¹

The national management of the European Language Label in France is under the control of the “Europe-Education-Formation France” National Agency. The Agency is a public interest group under the patronage of three different Ministries: the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Labour.

The Board of Directors of the National Agency defines the general trends and the priorities in the field of education. The Board of Directors is composed by the delegates of several institutions: the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Association for Vocational Education, the Conference of University Presidents, the “Centre international d’études pédagogiques” of Sèvres, the “Centre National des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires”, the Paris 4 – Sorbonne University, the Bordeaux 4 – Montesquieu University.

The “Europe-Education-Formation France” National Agency is the only national institution in charge of the management of the European Lifelong Learning Programme. Among the tasks the Agency carries out in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme, there is also the management and promotion of the European Language Label.

¹ “Europe-Education-Formation France” National Agency, “Label Européen des Langues – Lauréats 2010-2011”



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3 The Label Campaigns

The National Agency is in charge of the organization of label campaigns. The Agency is specifically responsible of:

- Management activities
- Promotion activities.

With reference to the Management activity, the National Agency is involved in 3 main actions: creation and publication of the call for tenders, selection of winning projects, organization of the awarding ceremony

The National Agency launches, every year, a call for tender for the European Language Label. The call for tenders is usually published in April and the deadline is in September.

The main purpose of the call for tender is to inform about the objectives of the Label and the procedure for the presentation of the candidatures and to provide guidance for the submission of the application form.

The call for tender is promoted through:

- organization of events to promote the information about the European Language Label;
- publication of the information about the call for tenders on the websites of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Labour, the National Agency's web site
- advertising on national press and on Internet search engines.

With reference to the selection of winning projects, the French National Agency, that receives the proposals to be selected, has implemented a series of procedures aimed at guaranteeing an adequate assessment action:

- check the eligibility of the applications
- organization and management of the assessment day
- creation of the list of the winning projects

An awarding ceremony is organized every year. The awarding ceremony is usually celebrated in the framework of the main language related event organized in France, the Expolangues Fair (<http://www.expolangues.fr/>). Expolangues is a yearly language fair addressed to students, teachers as well as to businesses and professionals with the aim to promote language learning and linguistic diversity.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the European Language Label, the "Europe-Education-Formation France" National Agency decided to organize a special ceremony to award the best language projects which had already received the European Language Label.

With reference to the "Promotion" activity, the National Agency implemented a specific section of the National Agency's web site dedicated to the European Language Label providing information about the label, about who can participate, about the target languages, selection criteria, information on how to participate and about the benefits related to the awarding of the Label.

On its web site, the "Europe-Education-Formation France" National Agency also makes available a specific section containing the Yearly Reports, the main results and the official documents which can be useful for project promoters who intend to submit their application.



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4 Priorities

The “Europe-Education-Formation France” National Agency, in accordance with the objectives and the priorities selected yearly by the European Commission, identifies National Priorities that are relevant for the improvement of language learning in France.

The national priorities a project should respect in order to be selected are: innovation, consistency and transferability.

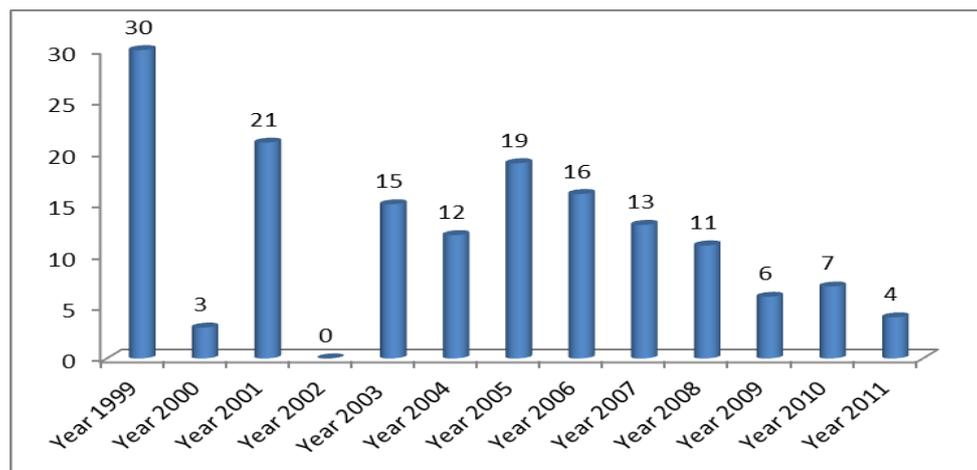
- Innovation. A project should: generate an additional value in the national context, and guarantee a qualitative and quantitative development in the framework of language teaching and learning. At quantitative level, the main result may be represented by the inclusion of less widely spoken languages. At qualitative level, the result may be represented by the adoption of a more effective methodology
- Consistency. Methods and products should be able to satisfy the specific needs identified, and the resources should be used in a creative way in order to motivate the language learning
- Transferability. An awarded project should work as source of inspiration for other projects located in different countries and developed in several languages

The projects should also guarantee an additional value, represented by the following features:

- to assure concrete results
- to be addressed to different target groups
- to develop the language skills in a lifelong perspective
- to support the maintenance of or the search for an employment
- to improve an early language learning
- to sustain a content and language integrated learning

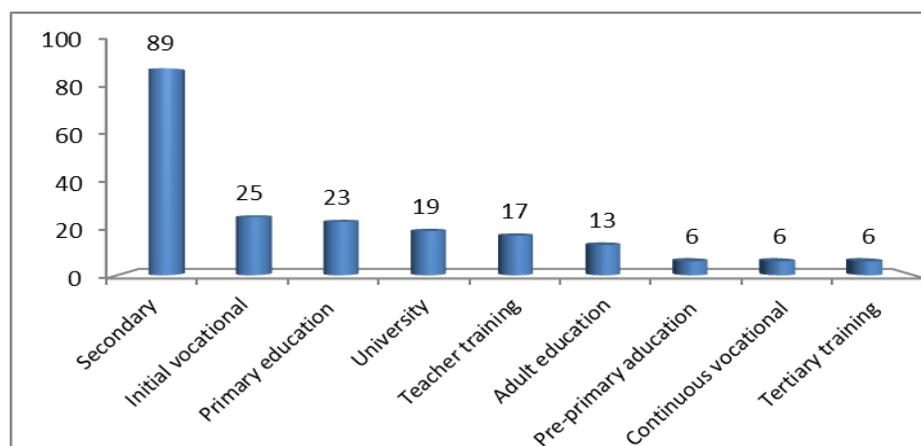
5 Awarding the European Language Label

In the first 13 years (1998-2011), 157 French projects have been awarded the European Language Label. The statistical data, collected by the NELLIP team, offer a synthetic image about some strategic points: the awarded projects year by year, the educational sectors, the themes for which they have been awarded, the most studied languages.



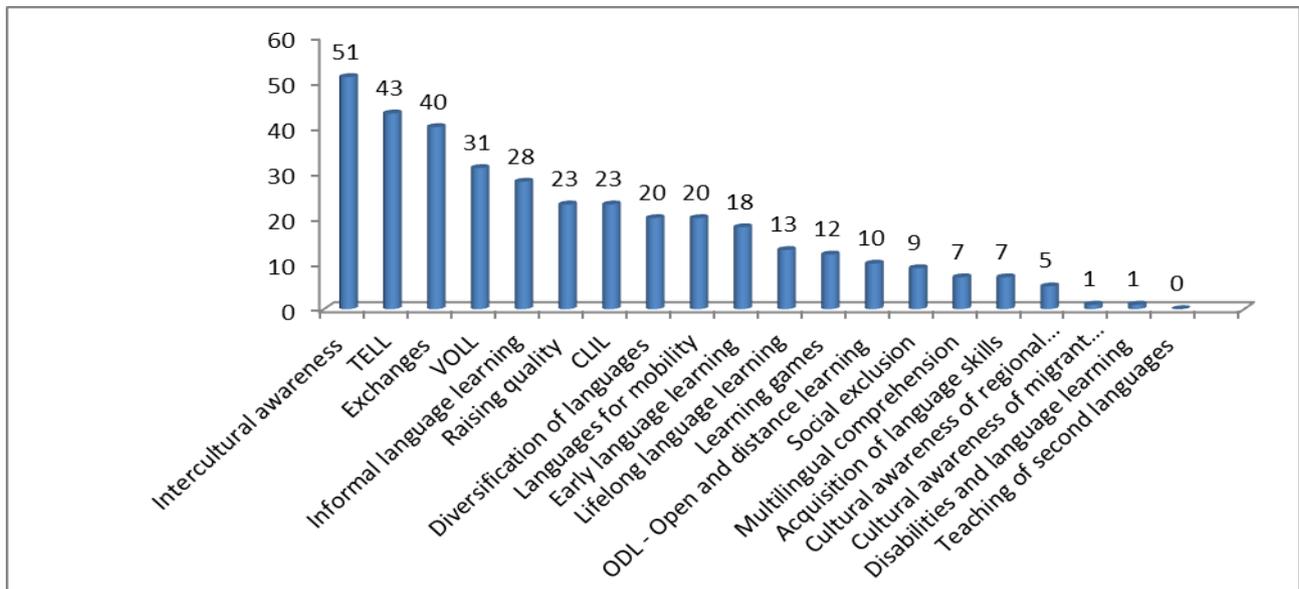
Source: European Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/language/label/index.cfm>)

After the positive impact in 1999, the average of the European Language Label took the high ground of 12-19 awarded projects per year, with a worrying drop in the past 3 years.



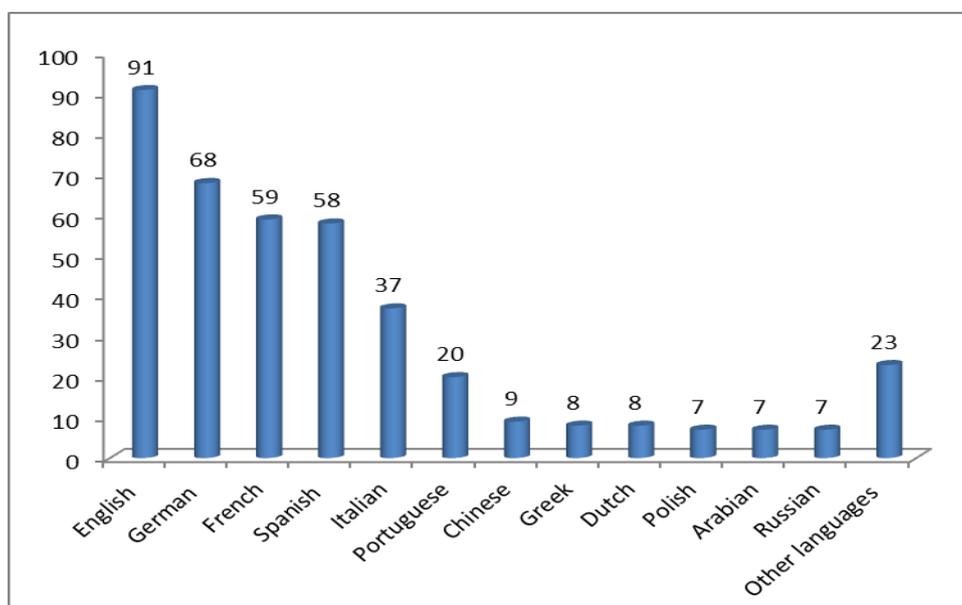
Source: European Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/language/label/index.cfm>)

This graphic shows the distribution of the awarded projects. Most of them belong to the compulsory education, with an important number of projects addressed to secondary (89) and primary education (23). Several projects have also been addressed to initial vocational training (25), University (19), teacher training (17) and adult education (13). Pre-primary education, tertiary education, and continuous vocational training scored the lowest results in terms of awarded projects (6).



Source: European Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/language/label/index.cfm>)

This graphic shows the main themes faced by the awarded projects. The greatest number of projects deals with the intercultural awareness of the end users (51) and the teaching enhanced language learning (43). Exchanges (40) and vocationally oriented language learning projects (31) obtained a good number of awards.



Source: European Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/language/label/index.cfm>)

This graphic show the main languages French awarded projects are addressed to. English represents the main language, followed by German, French (support language teaching a foreign one / French as L2), Spanish and Italian.

6 Evaluation carried out by the NELLIP Italian Team

The European Language Label represents a tool to contribute to the implementation of the current political priorities of the European Commission in the field of language learning.

European language policies aim to protect linguistic diversity and promote knowledge of languages. The most recent key documents on language learning are: *The Council's Conclusions on Language Competences to Enhance Mobility* (2011), *Strategic framework for cooperation on education and training* (2009), *EU strategy for multilingualism* (2008), *Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment* (2008), *Inventory of EU actions in the field of multilingualism* (2008). From those key documents, it is possible to understand the current political priorities of the European Commission in the field of language learning.

The main aspects the current policies on language learning focus on are:

- the enhancement of quality of language learning
- evaluation of performance of language teaching
- teachers training
- new approaches to language teaching and learning
- supporting mobility for language learning
- the promotion of multilingualism
- language learning for specific purposes
- tools for monitoring progresses in language learning
- recognition and validation of language skills acquired through non formal and informal learning
- implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)
- promotion of links between VET qualifications and CEFR
- promotion of less widely spoken languages

By matching the quality criteria used to award the European Language Label and the current political priorities of the European Commission in the field of language learning, the Italian team of the NELLIP Network selected, in cooperation with the "Europe-Education-Formation France" National Agency, relevant language learning initiatives among those that were awarded the European Language Label. The Italian team of the NELLIP Network, in cooperation with the "Europe-Education-Formation France" National Agency, has therefore selected 12 relevant Case Studies whose objectives are consistent with the current political priorities of the European Commission in the field of language learning. The project promoters of those case studies have been interviewed by the Italian team of NELLIP in order to collect more information about the methodology applied.

In relation to the target group, the NELLIP team identified four different sectors of reference among the awarded projects identified: School Education, Higher Education, Adult Education, and Vocational Education and Training. According to this classification, the higher number of awarded projects belongs to the School Education sector. However, a recurrent feature of the French projects awarded with the Label is their belonging to several sectors and therefore are addressed to multiple target groups.

As regards the linguistic aspect, English is the commonest languages of the projects that were object of the case studies carried out by the NELLIP team. Also non-European languages (Chinese and Arabic overall) receive a particular attention. This can be explained by the multiracial character of French society.



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7 Impact and Exploitation of the European Language Label as assessed by the NELLIP Team

7.1 Impact

An analysis of the selected French initiatives that were awarded the European Language Label underlines that most of the project promoters submitted the application to the Label with the aim to obtain a better recognition of their initiative, to promote a European dimension to their activities, to share innovative practices.

The impact of the European Language Label on the awarded projects is mainly related to a contribution to the visibility of the project, to the enhancement of the motivation of the awarded project promoters, to the acquisition of a recognition that is both official and European.

7.2 Exploitation and Dissemination

In France, according to most of the promoters of the awarded projects, the best exploitation and dissemination initiatives are those organized by the National Agency rather than by the project promoters themselves. The French project promoters particularly appreciated the “Label des Labels” events organized by the National Agency and the organization of the Label awarding ceremony in the framework of the participation to the “Expolangues” Fair. Those events succeeded in offering a national showcase to the Label winners.

8 Best Practices

Among all the awarded projects, some have been selected in cooperation with the French National Agency “Europe Education Formation” as examples of Best Practices.

Best Practices projects meet both the quality criteria adopted in the awarding of the European Language Label and the current European political priorities in the field of language learning.

9 Recommendations

According to the French promoters of the awarded projects, in order to develop a quality language project, it is necessary that teaching and learning methodologies are both innovative and simple.

Quality projects should also focus on the promotion of cultural awareness at the same time as the learning of the language.

Also, once the label is obtained, it is important, for the French project promoters, to clarify its quality meaning. Some of the promoters of the awarded projects, indeed, stated that the European Language Label is still not sufficiently known by language experts in France.





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10 Conclusions

The Italian team of the NELLIP Network selected relevant language learning initiatives that were awarded the European Language Label in France by matching the quality criteria used to award the Label and the current political priorities of the European Commission in the field of language learning,.

Among the initiatives identified by the NELLIP team, the "Europe-Education-Formation France" National Agency has selected relevant Case Studies, the best projects that received the European Language Label and that are also consistent with the political priorities of the European Commission in the field of language learning.

An analysis of the selected French initiatives that were awarded the European Language Label underlines that most of the project promoters submitted the application to the Label with the aim to obtain a better recognition of their initiative, to promote a European dimension to their activities, to share innovative practices.

The strength of the European Language Label in France, as it results from this report, is related to the fact that the label contributes to the visibility of the project, to the enhancement of the motivation of the awarded project promoters, to the acquisition of a recognition that is both official and European.

The main weaknesses of the European Language Label as it results from this report are related to a poor exploitation of the award that should be further promoted and known.

The further implementation of the European Language Label should be based on:

- The promotion of the visibility of the European Language Label;
- A focus on the cultural awareness issues related to learning a language.
- A better exploitation of the European Language Label.