

## **NELLIP WORKSHOP, LONDON 21st March 2014 at the UK Secretariat of the EU Commission Europe House, 32 Smith Square, London**

### **Actions taken to organise the Workshop**

#### **Background**

As a member of the Nellip Consortium, EAQUALS is required to run three workshops on the European Language Label (ELL) and the management and quality of language projects. The concept was that each partner would run the workshops in the country where the organisation has its base, and that the workshops would take place by April 2014

The workshops should each last 4-5 hours and involve a total of at least 30 participants, i.e. an average of at least 10 participants per workshop.

#### **Special circumstances in the UK**

In mid 2013, the agency responsible for the ELL in the UK, CfBT/CILT, with which EAQUALS had very positive relations, was informed that it would no longer have this responsibility by the UK national agency for Lifelong Learning, Ecorys. With the advent of Erasmus +, Ecorys, for some years the UK national agency for EU lifelong learning programmes, formed an alliance with the British Council. This alliance has now become the national agency for Erasmus +. Enquiries to both Ecorys and the British Council have indicated that, so far, there is no funding for the European Language Label scheme in the UK, and no organisation is responsible for it.

#### **Action taken to organise workshops in the UK**

1. Following e-mail and phone communication with the Director of the UK [Association for Language Learning](#) (ALL), Linda Parker, contact was made with the four most active regional co-ordinators of ALL in Newcastle, Sheffield, Cambridgeshire and London, in each of which areas there are past winners of the ELL. ALL was selected because the ELL scheme in the UK was only open to projects focusing on languages other than English. Replies were received from three of these co-ordinators, one of whom was formerly chair of the UK jury for ELL awards. It became apparent that, while they are willing to help in principle, they believe it will be impossible to involve participants in a workshop of this kind on a weekday. The majority of their own events are run in the evening and on Saturdays, and focus especially on helping to achieve better (exam) results. A typical response is to be found in Annex 2.
2. Following this disappointing feedback, contact was made with the regional offices of CILT, which used to play a part in the ELL scheme in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The responses received were similar, and it became clear that their own internal concerns would outweigh any contribution they might make to organising ELL-related workshops. Last week the Director of CILT in Wales was informed that their budget was to be reduced by two thirds.

**Conclusion:** the only way in which a workshop could be run in the UK is through self-organisation: EAQUALS itself would have to set up and run the workshop, and try to get information to potential participants in the foreign language education community, with the help of ALL. Logically, this would be in London. However, the chances of former winners or people interested in projects being released from work are slim. It also seems that we would not be able to give meaningful information

about the ELL scheme in the UK to participants since no such information is available, so the event would need to focus on project management and project quality more generally.

### **Action taken to organise workshops outside the UK**

Given the difficulties of organising even one (let alone three) Nellip workshops in the UK, EAQUALS has been pursuing the idea of running workshops in up to three countries not covered by other partners. We have therefore tried to reach national agency partners in Germany, Switzerland, and Hungary and have been in touch with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, Austria.

Germany: as indicated in the national report for Germany, there are three agencies in Bonn among which responsibility for the ELL scheme rotates. We have tried, so far unsuccessfully, to make contact with the person responsible in each agency, at least to find out which of them will be responsible for the scheme in 2014. E-mails have gone unanswered, and we have not been able to reach the relevant people by phone, not even the person responsible for posting the Nellip national report on the BIBB website.

Switzerland: there is only one agency in Switzerland, and, unlike all other countries we have explored, at least the 2014 ELL scheme is advertised. However, attempts to make contact with the relevant person and agency have so far been unsuccessful. This is being followed up by Frank Heyworth, who lives in Switzerland.

Hungary: as EAQUALS is holding its annual conference in Budapest this year, we have invited the contact at the national agency to help us organise a workshop just before the conference, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. No response has yet been received. This will be pursued by the EAQUALS Secretariat, which is based in Budapest.

Austria: Frank Heyworth, who has contributed to EAQUALS work in the Nellip partnership, is also a consultant at the ECML. He has negotiated an opportunity for EAQUALS to run a Nellip workshop there for participants from Austria. The date identified is 11<sup>th</sup> April, to coincide with a workshop in Lund, Sweden.

### **Conclusions**

It has proved much, much more difficult than expected for EAQUALS to organise the planned workshops. We believe this is mainly due to the fact that the transition to Erasmus Plus is happening at the same time as the workshops were due to be scheduled and agencies have their hands full trying to adapt to the demands of the much better funded and more significant Erasmus programmes. In the Erasmus scheme of things, the ELL is very much a secondary concern.

The possible dates and venues for EAQUALS workshops are now:

- 21<sup>st</sup> March in London (possible at the offices of the EU) for those who it is possible to reach via ALL and past ELL channels; it seems unlikely that this will attract even 10 participants.
- 11<sup>th</sup> April in Graz for Austrian participants (to be confirmed).
- 23<sup>rd</sup> April in Budapest for Hungarian participants (to be confirmed); no link up with another workshop will be feasible on this date.

In spite of the large amount of time invested in trying to communicate with potential collaborators and in preparing materials for the workshops it is possible that EAQUALS will not be able to meet its full commitment. If this turns out to be the case, we will deeply regret it.

Richard Rossner, EAQUALS