



**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LABEL FOR INNOVATIVE PROJECTS
IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING 2005-2007**

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the present report is to inform the participating countries and the wider public about the main achievements and trends within the European Language Label initiative in the period 2005-2007. The Label campaigns are implemented at national level and they are coordinated and monitored by the Commission. This overview is based upon the national activity reports — where available — and descriptions of the Label projects fed into the Label database by the participating countries.

The report follows those covering the periods 1999-2001¹ and 2002-2004². Smaller countries especially may have opted to organise a Label campaign every second year, in which case they naturally reported only on the years when an award ceremony took place. This report could not have been produced without the dedicated commitment of the Label working group, which brings together representatives from the national bodies implementing the Label and from the relevant national ministries.

2. WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN LABEL?

The European Label for innovative projects in language teaching and learning was created following the recommendations of the 1995 White Paper *Teaching and Learning* (Objective 4: Innovative ways to learn languages). It is intended to highlight and reward local or national innovative initiatives in the field of language teaching and learning as best practice to be further disseminated at European level. The European Label concerns every level of education and training.

Every year (every second year for some smaller countries) a public call for projects (“Label Campaign”) is announced at national level, to award a “European Label” to current projects showing innovation in language teaching and learning. Projects are selected against common criteria agreed at European level (i.e. innovation, transferability, their European dimension, active involvement of learners) plus annual priorities. In concrete terms, the European Label consists of a certificate signed by the Commissioner for Education³ and by the relevant

¹ *Report on the implementation of the European Label for innovative projects in language teaching and learning 1999-2001* (http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/awareness/report_1999-2001_en.pdf).

² *Second Report on the implementation of the European Label for innovative projects in language teaching and learning 2002-2004* (http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/doc996_en.pdf).

³ By the Commissioner for Multilingualism as of 2007.

Minister in the participating country. It is handed over at a public ceremony attended mostly by the press and bodies that can further disseminate information about the award winners. Projects that are awarded the Label can mention the certificate and year of the award and use the Label logo in their activities.

The Action Plan for language learning and linguistic diversity proposed that the Label is refocused by “introducing in each country or region an Annual *prize for the individual* having made the most progress in foreign language learning, and the best language teacher”. The aim of these two new strands was to acknowledge and publicise success stories related to language learning or teaching. These two new activities were launched in the following countries: the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. The countries are at liberty to define the nature of these awards: whether they are granted to well-renowned personalities acting as ambassadors for language learning or to recognise some particular 'deed' related to languages.

3. NATIONAL BODIES IMPLEMENTING THE LABEL

Since 2002 the European Commission has co-financed the national Label campaigns through operational agreements under the Socrates Programme — and later the Lifelong Learning Programme — with the National Agencies. These may choose to implement the Label either themselves, alone or in partnership with other organisations, or contract it out to another organisation. For the sake of simplicity, in the rest of the document the national bodies implementing the Label are referred to as “National Agencies” (NAs), regardless of whether they are National Agencies or contracted-out institutions.

National bodies implementing the Label

Country	Coordinator	Leading Agency	Partners
AT	Austrian Centre for Language Competence	LLP NA	Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture; Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research
BE de	LLP NA		Ministry of Education of the German-speaking Community
BE fr	LLP NA		FOREM, Bruxelles Formation
BE nl	LLP NA		
BG	LLP NA		
CY	Ministry of Education and Culture	LLP NA	
CZ	LLP NA		Ministry of Education
DE	LLP NA		Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend
DE	LLP NA		Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
DK	LLP NA		
EE	LLP NA		Ministry of Education and Research
ES	LLP NA		
FI	National Board of Education	LLP NA	
FR	LLP NA		
GR	LLP NA		Organisation for Vocational Education and Training
HU	LLP NA		
IE	LLP NA		
IS	LLP NA		Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

Country	Coordinator	Leading Agency	Partners
IT	NA ISFOL for vocational training and NA AS for other parts of the LLP		Ministero del Lavoro e delle Previdenza Sociale, Ministero dell'Istruzione, della Pubblica Istruzione
LT	LLP NA		
LU	LLP NA		
LV	LLP NA		Ministry of Education and Science
MT	LLP NA		
NL	LLP NA		
NO	LLP NA		
PL	LLP NA		Ministry of National Education and Sport
PT	LLP NA		
RO	LLP NA		
SE	LLP NA		
SI	LLP NA		
SK	LLP NA		
TK	LLP NA		
UK	CILT, the National Centre for Languages	ECOTEC — the NA for Leonardo, Grundtvig and the Transversal Programmes	

4. THE LABEL CAMPAIGNS

4.1. Recurrence of the Label campaigns

Most countries organise a Label Campaign with a call for projects every year. Some medium-sized and smaller countries (Belgium, Denmark, Iceland, Malta, Luxembourg and Norway) decided to have two-yearly calls. Liechtenstein has not implemented the Label to date. Malta published a call in 2007 but received no applications. The Label was successfully re-launched in Greece in 2005, following a long break starting in 2000.

4.2. The information campaign

The national bodies used a variety of tools and channels to disseminate information about the Label campaign. In line with what was agreed at European level in order to reach a basic common level of information, every country had some printed material (leaflets, information brochures, posters) and web pages. In most countries it was possible to apply on-line via the official website of the relevant national agency.

Usually the information material also contained descriptions of projects awarded the Label in the previous year, so as to give examples and disseminate good practices. Printed materials were distributed via direct mailing or e-mailing to eligible organisations, circular notices to school networks and local or regional authorities as well as during language seminars, conferences, fairs and training courses for language teachers. Some countries also publicised the Label in connection with information days devoted to other Socrates or Leonardo projects. The European Label campaign was also promoted by advertisements and press releases for the national and regional press and television, as well as in the specialised educational press.

Given the nature of the Label initiative, all levels of mainstream and vocational education were targeted, which demanded a special effort from the National Agencies to reach such different audiences.

4.3. The selection procedures and the jury

The European guidelines state that the Label must be awarded via an open call. All participating countries organised such an open call, published in national newspapers, on official websites and through circular letters to educational institutions.

The call stayed open for some 2 to 6 months during spring and summer, with some countries holding the selection already before the summer and others closing the selection in the autumn. In Italy, the selection of school projects took place in **two steps**: with the Regional Directors establishing a shortlist before the decision of the national jury. In other countries the jury drew up the short list (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia and the United Kingdom), and **met the project organisers** (by visiting the institutions concerned, or by inviting them to give a presentation) before taking the final decision.

On average, the number of applications submitted for a selection round was 34, of which 7 received the Label award. In other words, one out of five applications on average won the award. It has to be noted, however, that national practices varied widely in this respect, from a 0% success rate (Portugal in 2006 and Bulgaria in 2005) to 100% (Estonia in 2005).

The Label juries were composed on average of **ten persons**, usually including one or more foreign members (a renowned language expert, a member of a foreign cultural centre or embassy or a member of the Label working group from another country). The national members of the jury were mostly school inspectors, representatives of the relevant ministries or of the bodies managing the Label, and language teaching professionals from various educational establishments and associations.

4.4. The Label ceremony and the additional national prizes

The Label guidelines recommend that the Label ceremony is held between September and November, so as to bring all participating countries into line and have comparable data at the same time. Most countries organised their Label events accordingly during the period from September to the end of the year, with four of them — Cyprus, Iceland, Ireland and the UK — holding it on 26 September, the European Day of Languages, to give it more visibility. Around 40% of the countries combined the Label ceremony with some other event of national interest — seminar, conference or exhibition — on the theme of language learning.

Around two thirds of the countries decided to grant Label winners a financial or in-kind prize in addition to the Label award. In-kind gifts included dictionaries, didactic materials, or book or travel vouchers. These additional prizes were optional and not covered by the European grant. Usually they were made available by the relevant ministries or by other sponsors (publishers, educational trusts, embassies and cultural centres).

5. THE PRIORITIES OF THE CAMPAIGN

The general principles for implementing the Label are still laid down in the “Guidelines for implementation from January 2001 onwards”⁴, while common European priorities have been added since 2003. These are determined in the light of the recommendations of the key European policy documents concerning multilingualism as well as prior discussions with the Label Working Group. Since 2006 these priorities have been set for two years, to allow Member States to plan their Label campaigns better. Participating countries may, if they wish, further refine the European priorities by targeting specific sectors or themes.

5.1. The 2005 European priorities

Early language learning. At a time when Member States are striving to set up or improve language learning schemes in kindergartens and primary school, this priority targeted best practices already in place in this field at local level. It comprised any kind of language learning taking place during the early years of childhood: in family settings, kindergartens, primary schools and other educational bodies and associations working with children and their families.

Content and Language Integrated learning (CLIL). In this teaching method, language is used as a medium for learning content, and content as a resource for learning language. CLIL offers opportunities for pupils to use their new language skills “here and now”, instead of learning them now in order to use them later. CLIL is defined as any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content.

5.2. The 2006-2007 European priorities

Initial and in-service language teacher training. This priority targeted projects involving teacher trainees as well as in-service teachers who, at any level of education, teach a foreign language, including those using CLIL or other informal methods.

Diversification of the languages on offer. Schools and educational institutions in general can play a substantial role in promoting linguistic diversity by widening the range of languages taught. This priority targeted projects using creative ways to offer more languages, especially less widely used and taught languages, for instance by networking among schools, or by relying on community resources (local foreign residents, migrants, business operators) or on exchanges.

5.3. National priorities

Each country was free to add national priorities to the common European priorities. While in 2005 and 2006 only 7-8 countries reported using this opportunity, in 2007 nearly half of them introduced one or two additional priorities. A few countries (Estonia, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom) decided to maintain one of the 2005 European priorities also in the years 2006 or 2007.

⁴ *European Label for innovative initiatives in language teaching and learning — Guidelines for implementation from January 2001 onwards* (CL/40/2000) (SOC/COM/00/035) Rev. 2002 (addition of participating countries).

6. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Around one third of the countries reported on evaluation activities comprising mainly discussions with the jury or the regional and/or national authorities following the selection with a view to fine-tuning the following year's call. Austria and Italy carry out follow-up activities to assess the impact of the Label projects within one year of granting the award. The yearly national reports are analysed by the Commission on a three-yearly basis in order to provide an overview of implementation at European level.

7. PUBLICISING SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

7.1. At national level

Nearly all countries presented the award winners on their websites and many of them also publish project compendia or other promotional materials for the annual campaigns. These were sent to the educational institutions and disseminated at information events. Most Label ceremonies were combined with various conferences or exhibitions. Five countries — Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland and Ireland — reported that their Label ceremony had been covered by the media. This included articles in the specialised educational press or TV and radio interviews.

7.2. At European level

The European Commission disseminated information about the Label initiative through the following main channels:

1. its various expert groups and committees;
2. its publications;
3. a Europe-wide Language Label event;
4. the Label database and the multilingualism website.

A **Europe-wide event** allows NAs and label winners to meet to exchange their experience and make contacts with each other. The European Language Label event falling in the present reporting period was held on 14-15 October 2005 in Krakow, Poland. It was organised by the Polish National Agency with the support of the European Commission. The Event focused on three themes: young learners; adult language education and CLIL. A website with the speakers' presentations and pictures of the conference can be found at:

<http://www.socrates.org.pl/socrates2/index1.php?dzial=12&node=106&doc=1000347>.

Award winners are presented in the **European Language Label database** on the Commission's multilingualism website at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/european-language-label/index_en.htm.

The members of the Label working group are responsible for keeping this database up-to-date. Its aim is to give access to national good practice in language teaching and learning from which others can draw inspiration. To date around 1 200 projects are listed as of 2000. The database is searchable by pedagogic themes (such as CLIL or early language learning), by target languages and/or by country and year. The Commission's multilingualism website contains further information on the Label in 22 official languages as well as links to the national Label websites.

7.3. Conclusions

The integration of the Label into the Lifelong Learning Programme reinforces their complementarities: the former acknowledges successful initiatives on the basis of the

achieved results, whereas the latter supports new projects on the basis of the quality of their objectives and activity plan. The introduction of the individual awards created the ground for synergies also with the various individual – mobility and further training - grants within the Programme.

From the point of view of the management, the integration brought simplification in the case of the Member States where the Label and the LLP are managed by the same national bodies. In countries where the management of the Label is delegated to an external expert organisation, the National Agency is still granted insight into the related activities being responsible for submitting the Label report and by accessing the communication tool between the Commission and the members of the Label Working Group.

As the Label is managed at national level along rather a set of recommendations than fixed rules, it remains a challenge to maintain it as a European brand, creating a pool of comparable good practises from the participating countries. The integration of all award winners in the European Label database, the recourse to the European priorities and to a common visual identity are some of the possible ways that can strengthen the links between the national campaigns. These are therefore to be further made use of and developed in the next phases of implementation.

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