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CELAN D5.2
A policy brief setting out recommendations for policy development and programme priorities

1 Introduction
The EU’s multilingualism policy agenda has undergone further development since the creation of the Business Platform for Multilingualism and the launch of the CELAN Network project.

- There is now a clear focus on business – languages for jobs, mobility and growth.
- Although the European Commission continues to adhere to the 1 + 2 formula adopted by the heads of state and government at the 2002 Barcelona summit, the idea of the equality of languages has been slightly modified. Whereas at the Barcelona European Council of 2002, the notion of basic skills was, among others, linked to the formula of “teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age”, the Commission has now come to acknowledge that English is, in principle as well as in practice, a basic skill.
- Languages cannot be seen as the one and only factor of economic success – be it in terms of competitiveness or employability. They have to be seen as part of a bigger picture, incorporating several skills and competences as well as knowledge about available resources. This is welcome news because in the past there has been the idea of attributing professional and economic success to multilingualism only – which clearly is too limited an approach. This is part of the rationale behind the European Commission’s “Skills Panorama”.

2 Recommendations for the implementation and further development of the EU’s multilingualism policy in the business sector

(i) CELAN would like to recommend that the European Commission organise a major stakeholder meeting before the end of 2013 – and this for the following purposes.

- To obtain pertinent feedback on the principal CELAN outcomes and outputs.
- To discuss and agree on ways to reach out to business users on the ground with a view to raising awareness among them and to receiving feedback from them as well.
- To discuss opportunities for creating synergies between CELAN outcomes and outputs and the new language-relevant initiatives taken by the European Commission.
- To encourage and stimulate partnerships and collaboration between all relevant stakeholders and in particular the various Directorates-General of the European
Commission to raise awareness of the pertinency of language expertise in the skills panorama

(ii) The European Commission should continue to emphasise the potential for language learning inherent in the fact that European languages belong to language families. This should be fully exploited. Member States’ attention should be drawn to this. In line with the lifelong learning paradigm, people in Europe will increasingly have to recognise and respond to changing needs. The fact that many European languages are interrelated is a valuable precondition for accelerated language learning – not just for intercomprehension. Maybe, the Commission could make this a priority in Erasmus+.

(iii) In view of the fact that so much language learning relevant to business takes places outside formal education, the European Commission should – in co-operation with Member States – identify and focus on factors relevant to lifelong language learning. This is a tremendously complex issue – scenarios for informal and non-formal learning; development of systems designed to recognize the outcomes of informal and non-formal learning; self-assessment. However, the importance and relevance of these questions have been recognised at Commission level, as is demonstrated in the working papers released at the end of 2012, encouraging Member States to set up schemes by which informal and non-formal learning can be more closely integrated into assessment systems and educational curricula. Language learning and training is clearly an area which would benefit from greater recognition of expertise gained outside the formal classroom context, and, of course, moves in this direction are also closely related to the further development of the European Skills Passport. Moreover, this is an area where collaboration between the European Commission and the Council of Europe could be very fruitful.

(iv) The European Commission, members of the original Business Platform for Multilingualism and other stakeholders should – building on the work and outputs of the CELAN project – seek to provide a framework in which business users can effectively express and understand their linguistic and language-related needs and take remedial action. (Cf. D5.3).

The CELAN project team believes that the issues mentioned under (ii), (iii) and (iv), above, are also directly relevant to the Erasmus+.
3 Recommendations for Erasmus+

Transnational partnerships between enterprises and education institutions in the form of Strategic Partnerships

CELAN partners firmly believe that there is every reason why a Strategic Partnership should be created to promote European co-operation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and businesses, business representative organisations (BROs), and the social partners to underline the key role of multilingual “European comprehension” and to reach agreement on the language competences enterprises, especially SMEs, require when facing global competition. Needless to say, we have the Business Platform for Multilingualism, but we also have to think of strategic partnerships at regional level that can be brought together at European level.” Of course, this should lead to the development and implementation of new HE curricula / courses.

More specifically, the following issues need to be addressed.

- **Identification and description of multilingual business communication processes (MBCPs) in the context of internationalisation.** For example, a manual could be developed, presenting a catalogue of common MBCPs and providing a strategy for enabling companies to identify their specific MBCPs. Of course, there are commercial language consultants, but CELAN revealed that they tend to be linked to language service providers. Large-scale companies have their own language management units, and SMEs will have to think along those lines as well.

- **As CELAN revealed, neither HEIs nor SMEs are fully aware of the potential of language technologies.** For this reason, a knowledge alliance should be created with a view to supporting SMEs and HEIs in this dynamic field. The CELAN survey carried out among the members of CELAN HE networks revealed that HEIs are by and large unaware of these developments and do not integrate them into their language provision.

- **When Bologna was introduced, forward-looking universities designed language modules that were to take students from levels x to y.** We have now come to realise that the world has changed. As a result of trans-European mobility – Erasmus babies, migration into the EU, non-formal learning, language tandems and trios, technology-supported language learning – the language learning scenarios relevant to business have changed beyond recognition. Hence, we need a project that can understand and respond to these developments and come up with pertinent proposals.
4 References

