

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Purpose and scope

The European Commission has assigned to Deloitte and Touche an evaluation of the extent to which the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes have achieved their linguistic objectives. This evaluation covers both the (finished) first phase of these programmes as well as the (ongoing) second phase.

The original purpose of this assignment was to provide the Commission with an assessment of the real impact of each of the actions under the two programmes on linguistic diversity and language learning and teaching. The evaluation had also been launched with a view of feeding its initial results into the preparatory work for an action plan in the field of linguistic diversity and language learning. More generally, the evaluation was meant to provide a useful input into considerations about the new generation of programmes in the field of education and vocational training.

The central theme of the evaluation is the impact of the programmes in relation to their linguistic objectives.

### Linguistic objectives

The general linguistic objectives that are listed in the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes are as follows:

Programmes	General linguistic objectives of the programmes
<b>Socrates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote a quantitative and qualitative improvement of the knowledge of the languages of the European Union, in particular those languages that are less widely used and less widely taught.</li> <li>• To encourage and support linguistic diversity and contribute to an improvement in the quality of language teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Leonardo da Vinci</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support activities aimed at developing linguistic skills as part of vocational training measures (Leonardo I)</li> <li>• To promote language competencies, including for less widely used and taught languages (Leonardo I)</li> <li>• To promote understanding of different cultures in the context of vocational training (Leonardo II)</li> </ul>

These general linguistic objectives – which are themselves part of a much wider range of general objectives for the programmes – apply to all components and actions of these programmes.

Both the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes include a number of “language-specific” actions that have additional “operational” linguistic objectives. These “language-specific” actions are the following:

- For Socrates: Comenius 1 language projects (formerly Lingua E), Comenius 2.1. European Cooperation Projects for the training of school education staff (formerly Lingua A), Comenius 2.2.C Grants for Language Teachers (formerly Lingua B), Comenius 2.2.B Language Assistantships (formerly Lingua C), Lingua 1 Promotion of Language Learning, Lingua 2 Development of tools and materials (formerly Lingua D);
- For Leonardo da Vinci: Language Competences and Mobility of Language Trainers.

Linked to these “language-specific” actions is a series of linguistic objectives that are more operational and can be considered to be complementary to the general linguistic objectives of the programmes.

## **Evaluation framework**

Starting from the linguistic objectives an evaluation framework was constructed, consisting of the following key evaluation questions:

- Did the actions of the programmes lead the project coordinators, or their colleagues or the beneficiaries to undertake more learning of languages and to enhance their foreign language skills?
- Did the actions of the programmes lead the project coordinators, or their colleagues or the beneficiaries to improve their awareness of the importance of foreign language learning and their belief in linguistic diversity?
- Have the actions had an impact on knowledge about and attitudes towards other countries/cultures?
- Did the actions contribute to an improvement in the quality/quantity of language learning and teaching?
- Have the actions had an impact on educational systems, on education policies or strategies, and on authorities in charge of education and training?
- Have the operational objectives of the linguistic actions been reached?
- Were the actions undertaken under both programmes relevant to meet the general linguistic objectives of the programmes?
- To what extent is there subsidiarity of the programmes with respect to national or regional policies?
- Is there any overlap of objectives between Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates or within the programmes?

## **Methodology**

In order to address these evaluation questions, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods was used in order to gather the desired information and to ensure its validity. In particular, the following types of activities have taken place in order to collect the necessary data and information:

- extensive desk research
- contacts, meetings with and visits to
  - Commission officials
  - National Agencies and representatives of Ministries in many countries
  - project co-ordinators and other project staff (both from the language-specific actions and from the other actions)
- dedicated surveys to
  - National Agencies
  - Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci project co-ordinators (of both language-specific actions and from the other actions)
  - project co-ordinators of Institutional Contracts under Socrates/Erasmus
  - direct beneficiaries of mobility actions.

The time frame for the evaluation was roughly as follows:

- Start-up of the project: January 2003
- Desk research and initial contacts (mainly with EC officials): February – March 2003
- First analytical work in view of the formulation of the evaluation questions and the elaboration of the questionnaires and the interview guides: April – May 2003
- Launch and processing of the quantitative surveys: May – July 2003
- Contacts, visits and meetings in several countries: May – June 2003
- Analysis and synthesis: August – October 2003.

## **Surveys, contacts and visits**

Several dedicated surveys were designed and processed in the course of this evaluation:

- survey sent to project coordinators (443 responses)
- survey sent to coordinators of the Institutional Contracts (90 responses)
- survey sent to direct beneficiaries of mobility (3123 responses)
- survey sent to National Agencies (16 responses).

In addition to these quantitative surveys, a considerable amount of qualitative research was conducted. In particular, our team of experts has contacted, met and interviewed over 200 hundred stakeholders in 17 different European countries.

### **Findings and conclusions**

The main findings and conclusions resulting from this evaluation assignment are:

- The programmes have had most impact in relation to intercultural understanding and support for activities improving linguistic diversity or language knowledge. The awareness of the importance of linguistic diversity and intercultural understanding has grown amongst project coordinators and direct beneficiaries.
- The programmes have had less impact when it comes to the more specific “linguistic knowledge” objectives. There is evidence that only limited numbers of beneficiaries have learned a new foreign language. However, the knowledge of already known languages has been improved through the actions.
- In general the impact in relation to these objectives has been confined to project coordinators and direct beneficiaries of the actions and has not been embedded in any long term way within institutions or in policy developed at a local level. Sometimes good practice has been shared and has supported other initiatives in the field of education and learning, but this has been independent of any clear strategic implementation and dissemination process.
- Due to its concept and sheer size, Erasmus mobility has been the most significant contributor to language learning and awareness within the programmes.
- Enabling students and teachers to go abroad is a major incentive for language learning. Mobility plays the role of an eye-opener and develops other important skills and attitudes (such as self-confidence, social inclusion, communication skills ...).
- The objective related to the learning of LWULT languages has been met with little success, despite the efforts and means allocated to this.
- Dissemination between projects within a programme or between projects between the programmes is not adequate and represents a major blocking factor for wide scale impact.
- Dissemination and awareness raising with policymakers is insufficient and not systematic.
- The projects are mainly managed in English, without taking into account the language potential existing within the project group.
- Interest for early language learning is growing and needs further support;

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations have been formulated within an assumed context of a continuation of the EU policy and initiatives with regard to language teaching and learning, including the “programme logic”, i.e. assuming that most of the support and funding in relation to language teaching and learning will be channelled through programmes. It is clear that any implementation of these recommendations will need to involve different players and will not be the sole responsibility of the Commission. The Member States will need to play a significant role if progress is to be made on any of the recommendations even though the Commission might take a lead in its usual catalytic capacity.

The main recommendations are:

- Where the structure of the programmes is concerned, it would seem advisable for there to be one single programme, rather than two so as to achieve more effectively the linguistic objectives that have been set. This would allow economies of scale and facilitate greater coherence. It would also put out a signal that language learning and teaching should be a lifelong concern. If the current logic of two programmes (Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci) were to be maintained in the future, the links between Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci should be strengthened at both programme and project level, in particular where it concerns the linguistic objectives, the priority given to these objectives and the means to achieve these.
- In either logic (one or two programmes), language issues and linguistic objectives should be dealt with more systematically and coherently across all actions – both the language-specific actions and the non-language-specific actions.
- The linguistic objectives of both programmes should be structured in a coherent way and linked clearly to the other objectives of the programmes. Moreover, the linguistic objectives, in particular the more operational ones, should be made more specific and measurable, with the inclusion of indicators.
- Mobility activities are a key driver for language learning awareness and are therefore essential in achieving the linguistic objectives of the programmes. These actions should be maintained from that perspective. A specific focus should be given to language teacher and trainer mobility actions, and more attention should be paid to linguistic preparation, especially for the LWULT languages.
- With regards to the LWULT languages, specific exchange and dissemination networks should be put in place.
- In the long run, early-age language learning will be central to the success of the linguistic objectives. Although this is almost exclusively a matter of national policy, certain activities could be undertaken and supported at EU level in this regard. From a programme design point of view, it may be desirable to have a special action that brings together all the operational means to reach the objectives in this area.
- Some reflection would be useful with regard to the role of Erasmus students as “cultural agents” and the possible use that can be made of this situation.
- Positive discrimination should be given to mobility to countries with LWULT languages if the general linguistic objectives remain unchanged.

- Monitoring of the linguistic objectives should be an ongoing and form a built-in process, based on the measurable indicators that have been defined. More support should become available for the thematic monitoring of language issues.
- It may be necessary to allow for some flexibility in relation to the different national language contexts, in particular where the accession countries are concerned.
- Dissemination should be a central theme both at programme and project level. Specific support for marketing and promotion should be made available, in order to help project coordinators. Support should also be given to initiatives aimed at developing clear language strategies within organisations. More support should be given to actions that include dissemination to policy makers.
- A joint valorisation unit for Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates programmes should be considered. This unit should focus on the most valuable projects and undertake targeted dissemination actions, in line with the needs of the different target groups.
- Self-assessment of foreign language competencies should be encouraged, e.g. through easier availability to appropriate, user-friendly European tools.
- An action plan should be established and implemented in order to promote the use of the European Language Label.
- Awareness of foreign languages and linguistic diversity during initial teacher education should be fostered through mobility actions. The in-service training of teachers could be used as a mechanism to raise awareness for language learning and linguistic diversity.
- The European Year of Languages was a successful initiative that merits repetition on a regular basis (e.g. every 10 years). Failing that, at least some large scale visibility actions should be developed, such as the European Week or Day of Languages.
- The well established cooperation with the Council of Europe should be further developed.