

SECTION 2

DEFINITION OF A LANGUAGE TEACHER ASSOCIATION

1. Networking

A language teacher association is an association of like-minded professionals, usually a nonprofit organization. The members are the focus of all the association's work, because without them there is no association. It promotes professionalism, provides an opportunity to establish contacts and supports the exchange of experiences and cooperation among language teachers (networking), represents the members in public, and more.

„(Der Verband gilt) als Zusammenschluss von allen, die sich mit der Vermittlung und Erforschung der Sprachen – bei uns der deutschen Sprache – in irgendeiner Weise beschäftigen. Er dient dem Austausch untereinander und dem Dazulernen von neuem Wissen von Experten und im Team“. **(SDUNJ, Slowenischer Deutschlehrerverband, Slovenia)**

“The voice of language teachers in the country influencing language teaching (quality of teaching mother tongue and other languages) strategy, teacher development; presenting language education of the country in Europe and the world. Possibility for language teaching professionals to share best practices and innovative ideas”. **(LKPA, Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija, Lithuania)**

„Ein Zusammenschluss von Lehrern einer oder mehrerer moderner Fremdsprachen, der den Lehrer/innen bei ihrer bedeutenden Aufgabe hilft, indem er vor allem ein Netzwerk für sie darstellt, das dazu dient, Kontakte zu knüpfen, Erfahrungen auszutauschen, sich weiterzubilden“. **(IDV, Internationaler Deutschlehrerverband)**

“Une association des enseignants de langue regroupent des professionnels qui ont pour objectif la valorisation des compétences dans diverses langues étrangères en milieu éducatif et social et le perfectionnement scientifique et professionnel de ses membres”. **(Associação Portuguesa Dos Professores De Francês-APPF, Portugal)**

“Place to gather and exchange experiences, knowledge, materials, contacts etc. Platform for language political issues”. **(Federación de Asociaciones de Germanistas en España FAGE, Spain)**

2. Education, training and publications

The promotion of enhanced / increased training and education of the members is an important part of the association's work and serves to professionalize the profession. For this purpose, there are also events or information on innovations in practice and research. The association serves as a forum for teachers in order to spread examples of best practice. In several countries associations are either active in producing teaching materials and other specialized

literature (e.g. SUKOL, Finland - National Language Test), or they review the material prior to publication. (In Iceland, this is the case when the authors apply for grants from government for further development of their materials / books / programmes).

„Unser Verband hat die Ziele, zur Professionalisierung des Berufs und zur Weiterentwicklung des Fachs beizutragen, indem wir Möglichkeiten zur Aus- und Weiterbildung anbieten. **(Arbeitskreis Deutsch als Fremdsprache in der Schweiz, Switzerland)**

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„Idealerweise sorgt der Verband für gemeinsame Fortbildungsmomente, wie Tagungen für alle Mitglieder und kleinere Treffen für die Verbandsvertreter“. **(IDV)**

“sensibiliser les enseignants sur les pratiques didactiques innovantes, créer la synergie entre tous les degrés d’enseignements”. **(APFT, Togo)**

“We have for decades regularly produced material (brochures, booklets, series of transparencies etc.) with the purpose of inspiring children and youth to start studying equally all various languages offered in Finnish schools. Additionally, in order to support multilingualism in Finland, we have also published three editions of a textbook in Swedish for Health Care Institutions, and a French text book series etc”. **(SUKOL, Finland)**

„Der Verband soll die Fortbildung seiner Mitglieder ermöglichen. Er soll die Konstruktion von sinnvollen Materialien für seine Mitglieder fördern, die in der online -Ausgabe der Zeitschrift für Mitglieder veröffentlicht werden“. **(APPA, Associação Portuguesa de Professores de Alemão - Portugal)**

3. Advocacy

As an advisory body for education and school authorities at each school level, a language teacher association represents the interests of members in order to promote languages and the teaching and learning of languages. In many countries, the language teacher associations play an important role as contacts and professional advisers for public policy makers. Often, however, it depends on the minister of education, whether and to what extent the language teachers' associations are recognized as contacts.

“Representing teachers’ views on policy making bodies is very important in these years, as the school system is changing, and we feel the influence of e.g. other European countries...Disseminating information about new developments in policy”. **(Sproglærerforeningen Danmark, German section, Denmark)**

„...die Sprachenpolitik (ist) ein Problemfeld, das gerade sehr akut ist, da es eine Schulreform gibt, die das Sprachenlernen stark einschränken wird, sofern der momentan bekannte Vorschlag implementiert wird“. (**SDUNJ, Slowenia**)

„Für uns hat es sich auch bewährt, grössere Tagungen zu organisieren und so auf uns aufmerksam zu machen“. (**American Association of Teachers of German, USA**)

“Notre ministère de l'éducation procède souvent à des réformes qui concerne l'enseignement des langues étrangères et il est important que notre opinion soit entendue”. (**Association des professeurs de français en Bulgarie, Bulgaria**)

“...representing teachers' views on policy making bodies...the nature of policy making in Australia, being both centralised and decentralised makes it important for a solid voice to represent the trends and practices”. (**Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations, Australia**)

“Being a federation of foreign language teachers in Finland it is our task to safeguard and to try to improve the rights and well-being of our members, the Finnish foreign language teachers, and at the same time to keep a high standard of language teaching in our country”. (**SUKOL, Finland**)

4. Cooperation: cultural institutions and other language teachers' associations

A language teachers' association cooperates with partners of various kinds, such as other language teachers' associations in their own country, embassies and representative offices of foreign culture, e.g. culture sponsors/institutes such as the Goethe Institute, Alliance Française, British Council etc., to promote languages and to support language teachers. It is also about strengthening the cultural ties and understanding of multilingualism.

“Cooperation between teachers of English, German, French and Danish as a second language”. (**Sproglærerforeningen Danmark, Denmark**)

„Er soll mit anderen (nicht) offiziellen Institutionen zusammen arbeiten [Botschaften; Goethe Instituten; verschiedene Universitäten, Sprachschulen usw.] sowie mit anderen (Sprach)Verbänden“. (**APPA, Portugal**)

„Das Ziel des DLV ist die Förderung des Erlernens und Lehrens der deutschen Sprache, sowie die Erweiterung und Festigung der kulturellen Beziehungen der Republik Kasachstan mit den deutschsprachigen Ländern“. (**DLV, Kasachstan**)

5. Public relations

One of the main roles of a language teachers' association is to try to expand the understanding of the importance of languages at all levels in society and contribute to a better understanding

in a multicultural society, by organizing public relations activities such as student competitions, speech days and public events during the European Day of Languages.

„Er soll Strategien definieren, um die Sprache zu verbreiten bzw. bekannt zu geben im portugiesischen Schulsystem“. (**APPA, Portugal**)

“Les Concours Nationaux et les Festivals de théâtre francophones jouissent d’une grande popularité auprès des jeunes, car ils permettent de créer les liens d’amitié, de monter des projets communs”. (**Association des Enseignants de Français/Russie, AEFR, Russia**)

“We have many programmes for high school students of German: national honour society, summer study in German, certificates for outstanding achievement, a national German examination”. (**American Association of Teachers of German, USA**)

„Information und Unterstützung der Lehrer, Werbung bei Eltern, Schülern usw für Wahl der deutschen Sprache“. (**ADEAF, France**)

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6. International cooperation

National associations are often members of either mono- or multilingual international organizations, such as IDV, or FIPF or FIPLV. Networking and cooperation in the broadest sense of the word are the main arguments for a membership. Other advantages include participation in international projects, conferences and seminars abroad. All this also serves to increase the professionalism of teachers, to develop joint strategies to promote languages and to strengthen collegiality. More intensive international collaboration is one of the main tasks for the future.

“(il faut) Développer la coopération à l’échelle nationale et internationale avec des associations et autres organismes dans le cadre du profil de nos activités associatives”. (**Association des professeurs de français, Saint-Pétersbourg, Russia**)

“Die Kooperation zwischen Kollegen nicht nur innerhalb sondern auch außerhalb Italiens (ist) noch stärker zu fördern”. (**AIG, Italy**)

“Développer des partenariats avec d’autres associations au niveau européen.” (**Association Roumaine des Professeurs de Français, Romania**)

“...participation in national and international projects”. (**LKPA, Lithuania**)

Other associations are in the process of discussing membership of such associations.

“Perhaps the association might take into consideration the possibility of joining FIPLV and seek to collaborate with other associations”. **(MATEFL, Malta)**