

LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER: A HANDBOOK FOR LANGUAGE TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Empowering Language Professionals: the LACS Project (Language Associations and Collaborative Support)

The LACS Project was developed at the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz with a view to supporting the work of language teacher associations in Europe and beyond whilst raising classroom teachers' and teacher trainers' awareness of the work carried out in ECML projects.

The central idea is that through collaboration, whether with other teachers, other associations, other organisations and institutions, or policy makers, there is increased access to support, whether the focus is on teaching, teacher training, curriculum development, research, administration, or political impact. Support comes from shared ideas and strategies, from access to additional sources of funding, and from enhanced contact with a broad spectrum of other teachers, learners, language teacher associations and other organisations (such as the ECML) around the world. It also comes from more effective dissemination of new language pedagogies, including teaching and learning methodologies as well as language policies and curricular models appropriate to the 21st century.

This project, then, offers a double layer of support. Through offering support to language teacher associations, or rather through facilitating support by encouraging collaboration, the project is able to enhance support for teachers themselves and, of course ultimately, for language learners. Such support extends also to representation of teachers at a policymaking level, through which teachers' voices can be heard and their ideas taken into consideration in order, hopefully, to make their working conditions more conducive to effective learning and teaching.

It is through such collaborations and support that the project contributes to the overall theme of the ECML programme, which is Empowering Language Professionals. Language Professionals in this project means not only those who work in schools and training institutions, but those who work to support the profession in language teacher associations. Through the ideas which have been contributed by other associations, these professionals can develop strategies to have their voice heard more loudly in language policy and curriculum development arenas, at local, regional, national and even international levels.

2. Who is involved?

LACS is coordinated by three major international federations of language teacher associations. FIPLV (the International Federation of Language Teacher Associations) was formed in Paris in 1930 and is the only international multilingual association of teachers of languages. FIPLV is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) official partner of UNESCO (consultative status) as well as having NGO status with the Council of Europe. As a federation of language teacher associations, national and international, unilingual and multilingual, it is at the hub of a wide range of member and associated organisations and institutions and only exists to cooperate with them in order to support teachers and promote multilingualism. It is experienced in the skills and challenges of cooperation and aims at promoting new opportunities for cooperation whenever possible, for example through supporting and advising on the formation of new national and international associations. Through its ever-increasing number of constituent associations, it enables the sharing of expertise and experience which, by its very nature, adds value to the (often voluntary) efforts of those committed to the same aims.

In this project, FIPLV is collaborating with two of its members, who are themselves major federations of language teacher associations with hundreds of member associations around the world. FIPF (the International Federation of French Teachers) was established in 1969, and brings together over 80,000 teachers of French (as first, second and foreign language) through the 180+ associations in about 140 countries which are FIPF members. IDV (the International Association of German Teachers), similarly represents the interests of some 250,000 teachers of German through approximately 100 teacher associations in 85 countries.

Through their constituent members, these federations have unrivalled access to language professionals not only across Europe, but also globally. They are committed to promoting the teaching and learning of languages, to improving the quality of language teaching, to developing continuity and cohesion of inclusive and lifelong multilingual education, to supporting, both directly and indirectly, language teachers and other professionals involved in language teaching, and to encouraging the development of effective and supportive networks of teachers both within and across its member associations. They thus embrace all of the themes included in the ECML's second medium-term programme (linguistic and social diversity, communication in a multicultural society, professional development and innovative approaches to teaching and learning).

3. The Project Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the LACS project was to add value to the work of individual language teacher associations through encouraging collaboration and sharing of expertise. In addition, it provided an opportunity to showcase ECML projects to all of the teachers and trainers at the chalkface who are members of these associations, providing them access to the innovative practices and resources which these projects had developed.

The specific project objectives were defined as follows:

1. To disseminate to a wide European audience (and beyond) innovative and effective developments and projects, initially focused around the work carried out under the auspices of ECML.
2. To map the ways in which a wide range of language teacher associations are organised (nationally, regionally and locally) in order to support their own networks of members through practical interventions (workshops, publications, newsletters, websites and web fora etc.) as well as through opportunities to influence policy towards the development of a vibrant, high quality and inclusive environment in which multilingualism can flourish.
3. To create spaces in which associations can interact, both face to face and virtually, in order to optimise the impact of their efforts.
4. To produce materials to support language teacher associations in the review and development of their own working structures and processes.

4. The Project Milestones

In order to achieve its aims and objectives, the Project consisted of a number of milestones:

- i. Two major surveys of language teacher associations were designed to map their structures and activities, as well as their priorities, the challenges they face, and their strategies for meeting these challenges. The first was sent out twice, in 2008 and 2009, in order to increase the number of responses, and the second was completed in 2011. (A breakdown of responses can be found in Ressource materials and case studies 1.1.) Altogether there were over 90 responses from a wide range of associations on all continents (apart from Antarctica). What was surprising was the number of commonalities across the associations, regardless of their geographical location.
- ii. A project workshop was organised in Graz in December 2009, attended by 29 delegates from different Council of Europe member states. This provided the opportunity to share experiences in greater depth and face-to-face, to explore how this might be continued, and to disseminate ECML projects. A report on the workshop, written by Rosa Antonakaki from Greece, can be found later in this chapter, in Case study 1.2.
- iii. Presentations and discussions were held at other meetings and conferences held at the ECML and elsewhere, including FIPLV meetings.
- iv. A number of e-newsletters were distributed, containing information on different associations, featured ECML projects as well as news from FIPLV and ECML.
- v. A blog has been designed which is intended to continue the project work beyond end of the programme. It will be managed by FIPLV and will expand to offer other forms of virtual communication and collaboration such as podcasts and webinars.

5. Introduction to this handbook for language teacher associations

Europe is faced with a number of paradoxes. Never has there been so much political support for the development of multi- and plurilingualism, and increasing numbers of children and adults are using or learning a repertoire of different languages in their everyday lives. The Council of Europe, through the Language Policy Unit and the ECML, offers developing frameworks and practical resources to encourage the valorisation of linguistic diversity, and the European Commission also supports the development of a much more inclusive context for languages and language users. Yet there are still challenges which language professionals must face, and these were recognised in the Final Report of the Commission of the European Communities' High Level Group on Multilingualism (European Communities, 2007): the need to raise awareness and enhance and sustain motivation in order to promote the learning of a wider range of languages (not just English); the need for stronger messages about the value of language learning to be communicated to the public through the media; the importance of languages for business; the need for increased diversity in translation and interpreting skills; the development of regional and minority languages and the opportunity to learn from bilingual communities; and the need for further research. All of these suggest that language professionals need to work together with a common vision, and to build networks which extend beyond their usual horizons.

This Handbook has been produced collaboratively as a means of sharing good ideas as well as analysing trends in different aspects of association work. The content of the Handbook comes from a number of sources: data collected in the two questionnaires; the LACS workshop, described elsewhere in this introduction; case studies of practice shared by associations around the world; reports written by representatives of associations; and numerous discussions which have taken place in FIPLV meetings and conferences.

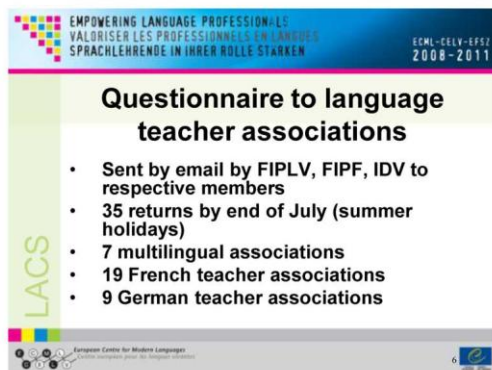
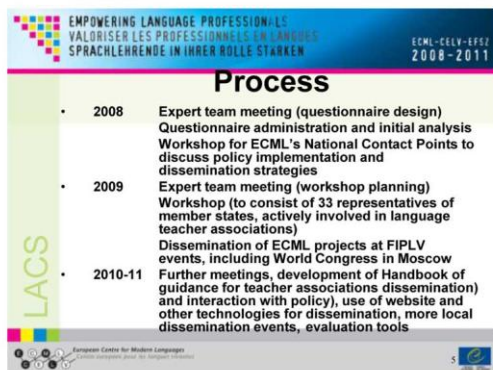
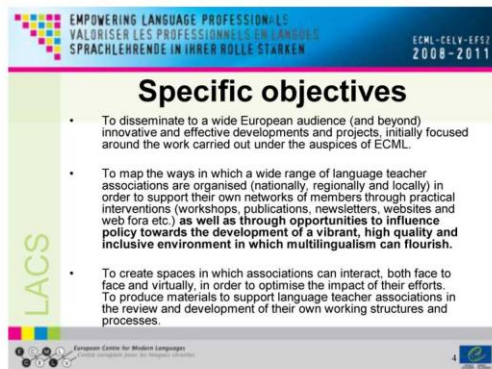
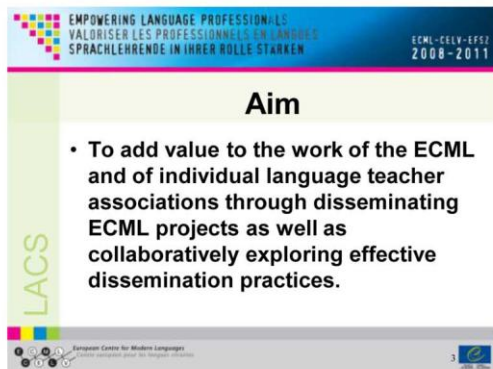
The Handbook has been divided into 12 sections, which consider important aspects of association work as identified by those associations represented at the LACS workshop, as well as the priorities identified in the questionnaire returns. Each section analyses feedback from associations in order to identify key principles and orientations, and contains rich exemplification of association activity through direct use of quotation as well as the inclusion of case studies contributed by associations. The sections are:

1. Introduction
2. Definition of a language teacher association
3. Rationale for membership of a language teacher association
4. Member recruitment and retention activities and resources
5. Dissemination through events
6. Association websites
7. Publications
8. Involvement in policy
9. Involvement in research
10. Fundraising activities
11. Useful collaborations
12. Evaluation

We hope that associations will find it useful to learn about other associations, and that this will provide food for thought in considering their own priorities. It is intended that this handbook will be regularly updated online, so if you have any additional ideas or contributions, please contact the FIPLV President (Dr Terry Lamb, T.Lamb@sheffield.ac.uk).

RESOURCE MATERIAL 1.1

(Powerpoint presentation)



EMPOWERING LANGUAGE PROFESSIONALS
VALORISER LES PROFESSIONNELS EN LANGUES
SPRACHLEHRENDE IN IHRER ROLLE STÄRKEN
ECML-GELV-EFSZ
2008-2011

Questionnaire to language teacher associations

Returns in 2008 from:

- Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Macedonia, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Togo, United Kingdom, USA, Venezuela, Zambia

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2008-2011

Questionnaire to language teacher associations

19 further returns in 2009:

- Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Russia (Baschkortostan), Russia (St Petersburg), Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Rumania, Switzerland

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2008-2011

Questionnaire to language teacher associations

- Functions
- Strategies to support teacher development
- Strategies to influence policy
- Information on policymaking bodies on which the associations have been represented
- Barriers to influencing policy
- Sources of funding
- Projects
- Main challenges

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2008-2011

1a. Functions fulfilled by language teacher associations

• Representing teachers' views on policy making bodies	31
• Providing in-service training by experts	30
• Disseminating information about new developments in policy	34
• Carrying out research	20
• Acting as a forum for teachers to disseminate good practice	32
• Enabling teachers to collaborate in development activities	32

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2008-2011

1a. Policy influence as most important function...

Need for solid teacher voice

“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.” (Australia, Multi)

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2008-2011

1a. Policy influence as most important function...

Changing nature of education

“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.” (Denmark, Multi)

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2008-2011

1a. Policy influence as most important function...

Threat from English

“Pour que l’enseignement du français, et surtout en français dans le cadre des projets internationaux, ne succombe pas évincé par l’anglais, il faut que les autorités linguistiques et éducatives développent et/ou soutiennent des programmes liés à la mise en pratique du multi- et plurilinguisme dans l’esprit de la politique linguistique européenne. Ceci permettrait de remplacer l’attitude „au lieu de...“, qui prédomine toujours lors du choix des langues d’enseignement et de recherche, par l’attitude „à côté de...“ qui est la plus efficace et prometteuse dans le contexte existant.” (Russia, French)

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2008-2011

1a. Policy influence as most important function...

Threat from English

“Die LehrerInnen erwarten, daß Ihre Arbeitsstellen gesichert werden, indem nicht nur Englisch, sondern auch andere Sprachen unterrichtet werden.“ (Poland, German)

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2008-2011

1a. Policy influence as most important function...

Teacher support

“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.” (Finland, Multi)

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2008-2011

3a. Strategies used in order to attempt to influence policy

• Letters to policymakers	31
• Membership of policymaking bodies	17
• Meetings with policymakers	28
• Surveys of members	23
• Letters to the press	18

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2008-2011

3a. Strategies used in order to attempt to influence policy

- “Aller faire des propositions concrètes de démarches méthodologiques adaptées à la réalité locale sans passer avant par les autorités éducatives. Se mettre au travail et résoudre le problème sur place en concordance avec ses partenaires.” (Chile, French)

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2008-2011

3c. Main barriers to your association influencing policy (external)

Not invited

- Geringe Häufigkeit der Einladungen zu diesen Entscheidungsgremien (Poland, G)
- Nous ne pouvons influencer sur la gestion ou les décisions d’ordre financier (suppressions de postes ou de groupes d’allemand), nous pouvons conseiller mais ne sommes pas les décideurs de l’institution (France, G)
- such little input is requested. (Australia, M)

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2008-2011

3c. Main barriers to your association influencing policy (external)

No history of involvement

- L'Association ne possède aucun pouvoir de décision et d'influence sur les politiques linguistiques (Macedonia, F)
- Les associations, même professionnelles, ne font pas partie à des organes de décision, ne sont pas partenaires obligatoires pour le Ministère. (Czech Republic, F) L'Association ne possède aucun pouvoir de décision et d'influence sur les politiques linguistiques (Macedonia, F)

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2008-2011

3c. Main barriers to your association influencing policy (external)

No history of involvement

- Les mécanismes de la participation des associations comme la nôtre en tant qu'acteurs institutionnels pouvant influencer la prise des décisions à un haut niveau est en train de se développer en Russie dans l'esprit de la nouvelle loi sur les organisations et groupements non commerciaux datant du 2006. (Russia, St Petersburg, F)

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2008-2011

3c. Main barriers to your association influencing policy (external)

Location of policymaking

- Decentralization of policy making to municipalities and even schools. (Finland, M)

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2008-2011

3c. Main barriers to your association influencing policy (external)

Low status of language learning

- The lack of interest until recently by our legislators on the national, state and local levels to consider the study of languages important. Even now the security and defense interests are the major support centers for the increase in the study of languages (usually less commonly taught) presently taking place. (USA, G)
- La volonté des autorités de parler des Politiques Linguistiques. C'est un sujet trop cher. (Chile, F)

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2008-2011

3c. Main barriers to your association influencing policy (external)

Constant changes of policy

- Changements permanents (Hungary, F)
- Decisions on policy tend to be made by politicians and subject to constant change! (UK, M)
- Les équipes des décideurs changent souvent et leur vision manque de continuité. (Bulgaria, F)

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2008-2011

3c. Main barriers to your association influencing policy (external)

Threats from other languages

- ...Cependant, dans les provinces proches du Brésil, c'est le portugais qui a gagné l'espace donné autrefois au français. En général, notre principal problème est l'entêtement des autorités vers la mise en oeuvre de l'enseignement du FLE dans les écoles secondaires. Il est remarquable la forte influence de l'Anglais dans toutes les décisions qui sont prises dans le cadre ministériel. Malgré nos commandes insistantes, les politiques linguistiques sont seulement ouvertes à une seule langue étrangère en Argentine : l'Anglais. (Argentina, F)
- La plupart des inspecteurs de langues ne sont pas Francophones ou n'enseignent pas le Français (Zambia, F)

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ECML - CELV - EFSZ
2008 - 2011

3c. Main barriers to your association influencing policy (internal)

Membership issues

- The number of members is not adequate to influence politicians and policymakers in general (Italy, M)
- La formation et la mobilisation (Togo, F)
- Le travail trop individualiste de certains professeurs (Belgium, F)

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ECML - CELV - EFSZ
2008 - 2011

3c. Main barriers to your association influencing policy (internal)

Membership issues

- We accept any invitations to participate in meetings or e.g. developing new laws, but it takes a lot of time and effort, and very often you get very little - if any - results (Denmark, M)
- Die finanziellen und personellen Ressourcen sind beschränkt, da wir ehrenamtlich tätig sind und keine öffentliche Unterstützung bekommen. (Switzerland, G)

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2008 - 2011

Sources of funding

• Member subscriptions	34
• Conferences	13
• Other in-service events	10
• Publications	8
• Projects	13
• Government funding	10
• Other	17

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2008 - 2011

6. Main challenges for your association

- Falling or aging membership (16)
- Financial needs (8)
- Cooperation with other unilingual or multilingual associations (4)
- Challenges related to decline in language learning, either generally or specifically e.g. challenge of English (9)

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CASE STUDY 1.2

LOOKING AHEAD AND COLLECTING SOLUTIONS

LACS: Language Associations and Collaborative Support Workshop organized by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, Austria

Rosa Antonakaki

Panhellenic Association of State School Teachers of English (PEKADE), Greece

Preface

Language associations and their activities focus mainly on the enhancement of teacher development. The chance to participate in the Language Associations and Collaborative Support (LACS) workshop organized by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, Austria was a real eye opener in the advancement of educating and learning. The workshop's main aim was to support language teacher associations in the review and development of their own working structures and processes. This opportunity offered interesting insights and new perspectives for the growth of associations across Europe. In this paper, we will give an account of the workshop and present indicative innovations that could be considered for implementation in the Panhellenic Association of State School Teachers of English (PEKADE).

Venue, organizers

The Language Associations and Collaborative Support (LACS) project was organized and managed by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). It is one of the projects in the ECML 2008-2011 programme (Empowering Language Professionals), and it creates opportunities for language teacher associations to benefit from greater collaboration with one another as well as engagement within the range of the ECML projects. The LACS project workshop was held in Graz, Austria for two days, in December 10-11, 2009. It offered us the opportunity to meet professional colleagues from other countries, share ideas and gain a European perspective on our work. Thirty-five educationalists from different countries across Europe attended it. The visiting group consisted of 34 representatives of states, (including some from outside Europe) actively involved in language teacher associations namely teachers, school managers, university professors and teacher trainers.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that the ECML was established in 1995 in Graz, Austria as a Council of Europe institution and it focuses on bridging the gap between language policy theory and classroom learning practice. This unique intergovernmental centre offers concrete approaches to issues and challenges facing Europe's multicultural societies. The hallmark of the ECML is the organisation of international language education projects. Coordinated by teams of experts, these projects primarily target multipliers in language education such as teacher trainers, textbook authors and experts in the area of the development of curricula, educational standards, evaluation/assessment and plurilingual education. Since 2000 the

Centre's projects have been organised within four-year programmes. The second medium-term programme (2004–2007) grouped 2 projects under the title Languages for social cohesion – language education in a multilingual and multicultural Europe. The 2008-2011 programme is entitled *Empowering Language Professionals: competences - networks - impact - quality*. Projects usually last three or four years, a typical operational sequence being: research and development, presentation of preliminary results at a workshop, piloting, drafting of final product or publication, dissemination.

The ECML seeks to make a positive difference to the language education profession by:

- promoting innovative approaches,
- advancing the quality of teaching and learning languages,
- supporting the implementation of language education policies,
- fostering dialogue between language education practitioners and decision makers.

The purpose of the LACS workshop

The LACS project's primary purpose was to explore the ways in which language teacher associations around the world are organized (nationally, regionally and locally) in order to support their networks of members through professional development activities such as practical interventions (workshops, publications, newsletters, websites and web fora etc) as well as through opportunities to influence policy towards the development of a vibrant, high quality and inclusive environment in which multilingualism can flourish. It aimed at facilitating greater collaboration between the associations and the ECML in order to better support language professionals across Europe through more effective dissemination of new language pedagogies, including teaching and learning methodologies as well as language policies and curricular models appropriate to the 21st century.

The specific objective of the workshop was to find ways in which associations can interact, both face to face and virtually, in order to optimize the impact of their efforts. Furthermore, its main aim was to disseminate to a wide European audience (and beyond) innovative and effective developments and projects, carried out under the auspices of ECML such as “Web journals in language education (Blogs)” and “the CLIL quality matrix” and to discuss how different products may be further spread locally, through existing or new mechanisms. It also involved a “Scavenger Hunt” which required further exploration of the ECML website portal, which is being updated. The workshop offered us a valuable opportunity to meet up and explore educational issues and to obtain collaborative support for introducing changes in modern language teaching in our own local and regional context. The ECML event exceeded our expectations and it has motivated us to become more active in networking with other language teachers associations and to play a more influential role in reform processes in our professional environment. In addition, it has highlighted quality aspects of language education and it has contributed to developing our professional competence.

Main challenges for the associations were also discussed such as:

- Falling or aging membership
- Financial needs
- Cooperation with other unilingual or multilingual associations
- Challenges related to decline in language learning, either generally or specifically

Sources of funding for associations were discussed such as:

- Member subscription
- Conferences
- Other in-service events
- Publications
- Projects
- Government funding

The LACS project also came up with other ideas such as enhancing the ECML website and raising teachers' awareness of what is happening in language teacher associations around the world. The two-day visit to Graz ended with a guided city walking tour around the old town which is one of the best preserved city-centres in Central Europe.

Epilogue

The above mentioned workshop constitutes a sound basis for fostering and increasing links between PEKADE and other associations of language teachers in Europe. PEKADE along with other language associations fulfils similar functions which are:

- to provide in-service training by experts
- to carry out research
- to act as a forum for teachers
- to disseminate good practice
- to represent teachers' views on policy making bodies

Being an association of English language teaching in Greece, PEKADE's main task is to safeguard and improve the rights and well-being of our members as well as to keep a high standard of language learning and teaching in our country by promoting innovations in language education. PEKADE has always tried to concentrate on its main objective which is to open the way for in-depth discussions, debates, and classroom enlightenment with forward thinkers in English Language Teaching. Networking nationally and internationally and a sense of belonging to the European and global community of language teachers open the doors for PEKADE to many networks in Europe and overseas. Projects, such as LACS, enable us to meet colleagues, broaden our minds, and share experiences, expertise, and inquiries on professional matters.

The ECML's website

<http://www.ecml.at> (the central reference point for all individual projects, each of which has its own website)

<http://www.ecml.at/mtp2/mtp2e-overview.htm> (Results of the programme 2004-2007)

<http://www.ecml.at/doccentre> (Results of previous programmes)

Rosa Antonakaki among colleagues from other countries during the workshop