

## PART 2: QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

The Department of Education and Skills is drafting a Foreign Languages in Education Strategy. The views of stakeholders are being sought to inform the development of this Strategy. Outlined below are a number of key questions. You are invited to provide your feedback on each question. There is also a space at the end of this template for any other more general comments you may wish to make that are relevant to the issue of foreign languages in education. It would be important to note that the submissions received will be available for general distribution.

Name of respondents: **Philippe Milloux, Chief Representative of the Alliance française in Ireland and Pauline Silhol, Cultural assistant, Alliance française de Dublin**

Organisation, if any, whose views are being represented: **Alliance française de Dublin**

Email address:

### 1. Raising Awareness

What measures should be undertaken to promote awareness, at national, community, enterprise and individual level, of the importance of language learning and to increase interest in and motivation for foreign language learning?

➔ Encourage broadcasting organisations to promote languages by showing advertising which explains the advantages of foreign language learning. Demonstrate that foreign languages:

- Provide a gateway to the world (politically, economically, culturally)
- Are necessary to tackle a globalized world
- Provide more professional opportunities
- Increase competitiveness with other EU citizens
- Are part of living in another country which means discovering other cultures, habits of living, other world views, experiencing another way of living... ➔ they lead to broadening one's world, and to learning how to go beyond one's comfort zone

➔ Insist on the role of languages as a tool of human communication rather than just a school subject

### 2. Supporting migrant languages in educational settings

How can we encourage our migrant children to become proficient in the language of their adopted community, while at the same time maintaining oral, written and cognitive academic language proficiency in their own mother tongue?

- By enrolling them in typical activities of their adopted language, for example: GAA, soccer, Irish dancing, music, swimming etc...
- By encouraging interaction with children of their age and not keeping them indoors under close parental supervision.

- For their own language, it is easy now as there are so many materials available, all sorts of DVDs, resources on the internet (games, for example). Grammar might be a weakness, so grinds can be good to work on this area.
- The more you expose the child the wider the mind... but for that the parents have to be integrated themselves.

### 3. Learning and Teaching

How can foreign language learning be supported for students from post-primary educational settings and thereafter? You may wish to concentrate on one educational sector.

- Need to develop a national strategy for languages as a key skill → foreign languages contribute to the country's economic and social wellbeing
  - ⇒ Allocate financial resources, prioritise to ensure the most appropriate and effective use of the funds for languages
  - ⇒ Appoint a language High Authority that would work with government departments, national agencies, and various companies to achieve coherence and ensure the relevance of a Foreign Language policy
  - ⇒ Establish business-education partnerships → to match provision with national needs and to promote the link between language and employability

### 4. Teacher Education

How can we ensure an adequate and ongoing supply of highly-skilled, professional teachers/trainers of foreign language at all educational levels to meet ongoing and emerging needs?

- Invest massively in teacher training so teachers will become better professionals. At the moment, training takes place during teachers' free time and on a voluntary basis, which is creating frustration among the teaching work force. The Ministry of Education should aim higher and deliver better by offering an action plan at national level.
- Explore the possibilities offered by new technologies (e-learning, video-conferencing and virtual exchanges, for example), with a view to diversifying and enhancing language education.
- Develop the use of digital technologies for language teaching : digital technologies provide a very good opportunity to enhance the quality and delivery of language teaching → enlivening and making more relevant the teaching of languages
- Financially support the continuation of language assistantship exchanges
- Increase the number of lecturers in Universities

### 5. Assessment and Qualifications

How can enhanced flexibility, choice and continuity in foreign language learning programmes, their assessment and accreditation be provided, particularly at Further and Higher Education?

- Create a Language High Authority that would work with government departments and the EU to implement more foreign languages diplomas recognized, which could be attended by students of all ages

## 6. Assuring Quality

What measures should be in place to support quality assurance measures, evaluation processes and research projects and to provide a knowledge and evidence base for policy making in the area of foreign languages?

- Appoint a Language High Authority to work with government departments, national agencies, companies, NGOs, universities, think tanks, etc. to achieve coherence and ensure the relevance of the Foreign Language policy and:
  - Establish business-education partnerships → to match provision with national needs and promote the link between language and employability
  - Coordinate an evaluation process (language tests for students, diplomas for European language level...)
  - Allocate resources for research projects in the field of Foreign Languages

## 7. Supporting Multilingualism in Business and Society

How can we promote a multilingual society and support service providers, both public and private, in meeting emerging needs?

- Bear in mind and remind students and employers/employees:
  - Many researches points out the clear link between plurilingualism and creativity, as well as between the development of language competence with the development of a range of other skills, such as empathy towards others. Plurilingualism contributes to the development of mental flexibility, problem-solving ability, learning capacity and interpersonal ability
  - If English is essential, other languages may offer new trade opportunities (especially emerging markets such as Brazil, Russia, India, China but also the francophone countries with a huge potential market in Africa), and give a company a competitive edge. Language skills are needed wherever companies interact with service providers and suppliers, as well as in sales and marketing. As the EU seeks to expand its market → language skills become even more important.

### a) What role can the education system play?

The education system

- Should develop intercultural exchanges between other European or international schools → to stress that learning a language is first and foremost a way to interact with other people, trade with others and to discover other cultures
- Should make students learn languages through the discovery of other cultures (cinema, literature, cultural traditions, cities, museums...)

### b) What role can employers play in enhancing the linguistic skills of their employees, particularly their Irish employees?

- Invest in the foreign language training of their employees

- Encourage employees with a review salary to reward those concerned for their language skills, particularly for those companies which rely on foreign trade
- Publicise the link between language skills, cultural understanding, and quality standards in client service and successful business
- Support further education colleges in integrating community languages into vocational programmes
- Explore the possibilities offered by new technologies (e-learning, video-conferencing and virtual exchanges etc), with a view to diversifying and enhancing language education.

## 8. Other Comments

Please add any other comments you may have below that you believe are relevant to the development of the Strategy.

**Invest in an early start** because the sooner an individual understands the role and benefits of languages the better. In that sense, the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative (PLPSI) implemented between 1998 and 2012 was a great initiative that should be reintroduced.

**Develop “International Primary Schools”** for parents who would like to have their children raised in a multilingual and multicultural environment

**Make language learning** in Ireland a continuum and a key part of Life Long Learning to reach the concept of Live Long Language Learning. The National Strategy for Languages should bring coherence and consistency to language education.

**Modern languages** should be taught with an emphasis on cultural, as distinct from purely linguistic, awareness.

**Develop the use of digital technologies** for language teaching: digital technologies provide a very good opportunity to enhance the quality and delivery of language teaching → enlivening and making more relevant the teaching of languages

Thank you for taking the time to complete this template. Your feedback will help to inform the development of the Foreign Languages in Education Strategy

Please email this template to [foreignlanguages@education.gov.ie](mailto:foreignlanguages@education.gov.ie) , or post it to: Tim O’Keeffe, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1