

## Foreign Languages Advisory Group (FLAG)

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018. 10.30 am G13/14

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Attendees: Eamonn Moran PO CAP (Chair)  
Leona De Khors AP CAP  
John Harper HEO CAP  
Niamh Houlahan EO CAP  
Karen Ruddock PPLI  
Emma Grainger Leargas  
AnnMarie Manton  
Trudy Duffy AP Higher Ed  
Regina Butler NAPD  
Don O'Connor DBEI  
Wilma Slevin  
AnnMarie Flynn  
Celine Healy Language Expert  
Deirdre Kirwan Language Expert  
Evelyn O'Connor NCCA  
Margarita boyle TES  
Gerry O'Sullivan HEA

Apologies: Ruth Carmody ASG DES, Eddie Ward PO T.Ed, SEC, Alan O'Callaghan International, Alma Ni Choigligh, Maria Lorigan DES

EM opened the meeting. Introductions & Apologies.

1. **Minutes of meeting** from 22/03/18 agreed

### 2. Terms of Reference (ToR) for FLAG

ToR agreed.

Suggested to the group that a speaker at each meeting may be beneficial. Propose to have someone speak about an aspect of the language strategy that may be useful.

PPLI can try identify somebody suitable and welcome any other suggestions.

Meetings of this group are intended to take place every 2 months. However July meeting will not go ahead and so September will be the next one. In the meantime the group can communicate through emails if needed.

### 3. Q1&2 Updates

KR provided an update on PPLI progress. Some points noted were;

In relation to videos people in business and enterprise are needed.

Language Champions are needed.

Audit is completed and with the Minister now.

Lithuanian Short Course is completed and Korean is in progress. Chinese is being looked at.

The only slight delay may be with the awareness raising campaign. New staff have started and working hard on this but would have like the staff to be in place sooner.

A discussion was had on the awareness raising campaign and the best way to proceed with it. It was agreed that the aim of the Information Campaign was to change the mind set of learners towards language. The Higher Options day is a good conference to aim for but it needs to be followed on from there also. A stand should be available but the awareness needs to be followed up at a school level to reach students. Parents need to be informed and made aware that language and jobs are connected. The Higher Options day should not be depended on as the main source of information for students. People from the sports, music or film industry would be good to have on the awareness raising campaign. Members of the group may be able to look at alumni of their schools and see who would be suitable. There was a suggestion that a quality assurance is needed similar to the 'green flag' for schools. Sometimes it is underestimated how seriously students take their education. The best possible role models are needed for the campaign.

Exposure to the language is invaluable. There are initiatives available to teachers but they need to be made known. In Ireland we are doing at level 2 and 3 what other countries are doing at level 1 and 2. Learning how a language works is essential and then that can be applied to all languages eg masculine/feminine. Adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> language at primary level would be beneficial to learning language at second level. Support services need to be available for teachers and teachers need to have links with each other. This would be beneficial for the transition and flow between school levels. One way of doing this could be through technology in education.

There are maths and science Olympics for students. But there is also AILO for languages. They are an internationally recognised organisation and maybe they should be contacted?

NCCA gave an update on their ongoing actions in the strategy. Following on from this there was a discussion about time and structure and the importance of it in teaching. Teachers require support and initiatives and courses to help their teaching would be beneficial. Teachers need to be aware of the many different languages that are present in their classrooms now. Léargas provides summer courses for teachers and are also involved in E-Twinning. They have seen a more than 50% increase in the European Language Label Awards entries and will showcase the winners in September which is positive. There will be lots of teachers of all levels present at the showcase. PPLI can help raise awareness of the ELLA's which is going to tie in with the European Language Day and Schools Week. It would be beneficial to have staff rooms informed of ongoing initiatives. PPLI videos may be of use here. While Erasmus+ is available to new teachers there are a lot of older teachers who never got this opportunity and any courses are welcome.

The HEA gave an update of their Actions in Q1&2. A discussion arose on whether any comparison studies have been carried out e.g. how is English taught abroad. The EMASI Report is about enhancing mobility of access for students in Ireland. The HEA are considering how to align the programme better with other countries and is consulting with other agencies. The higher education grants need to be reviewed. It is not mandatory to go abroad and some students who do participate in Erasmus+ are finding it hard to keep their grants. There is a test at the start and end of the

Erasmus+ programme which helps measure the learning throughout the programme. This test is not mandatory.

The idea of forming sub groups of this meeting was suggested. It may provide benefits to members who have actions in the strategy that cross over with each other. Eg Higher Education Subgroup, Post Primary Group etc. While this may be a good idea, it is often hard to find time to schedule meetings and attend extra groups.

The HEA is holding a meeting in June and would welcome members of this group to that meeting.

The question of why there is degree courses offering e.g. Law + Language or Business + Language but not Education + Language was asked. The group heard details of the new course being offered by Maynooth University which will offer BA in Language and Education. DCU and UL also have a variation of it and it is thought that more education centres will begin to offer it also.

There was an update from Higher Ed in DES and TES.

TES met the Teaching Council , which is working on how to integrate strategies, including the Foreign Languages Strategy, into their review of the Criteria and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education.

#### **4. Q3 Actions**

Q3 actions need to be focused on. The next meeting of this group is end of Q3. The group were told of the red, amber, green update system which is used for reporting to higher level.

#### **5. AOB**

NCCA will be advertising for MFL Officer. The ad will be circulated to the group.

Next FLAG meeting is Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September at 10.30am.

