

## Foreign Languages Advisory Group (FLAG)

15<sup>th</sup> January 2019. 10.00 am G13/14

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### **Attendees:**

Evelyn O Connor CAP (Chair)  
Leona De Khors CAP  
John Harper CAP  
Alan O Callaghan International DES  
Margarita Boyle Teacher Education DES  
Joanne Tobin SPEE DES  
Trudy Duffy Higher Education DES  
Maria Lorigan Inspectorate DES  
AnnMarie Flynn DFA  
Karen Ruddock PPLI  
Celine Healy Language Expert  
Ann Marie Manton SEC  
Alan Power DBEI  
Mary Elaine Tynan NCCA  
Gerry O Sullivan HEA  
Eli Babei Léargas  
Wilma Slevin Language Teacher Professional Networks  
Sarah Berthaud GMIT  
Jenny Bruen DCU  
Riana Walsh DCU  
Deirdre Kirwan

Apologies: Emma Grainger Leargas, Sinéad Middleton Teacher Education DES

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Evelyn O Connor welcomed the group and introduction of members

### **2. Presentation by Sarah Berthaud GMIT**

Dr Sarah Berthaud gave a presentation on Modern Language Provision in Institutes of Technology. The presentation was based on the results of a survey carried out in the IOTs

### **3. Presentation by Jennifer Bruen DCU**

Dr Jennifer Bruen gave a presentation on Languages Connect and the key elements of the strategy which are:

1. Increase numbers studying a foreign language at third level
2. External certification of language teachers
3. Increase student mobility (Erasmus+)
4. Incentivise the study of languages for the Leaving Certificate using bonus points
5. Publish University Language Strategies

#### **4. Q4 Actions Update**

A brief synopsis of work being done by PPLI was provided.

Teaching and Learning: resources (particularly TY) and tutorials are being developed, workshops provided by the ECML are being facilitated, and curriculum support is being provided for Junior Cycle short courses.

Mobility opportunities: the Funding for School Exchanges programme was developed and 10 schools received funding to increase the numbers of post-primary students going on school exchanges for the current academic year. The experiences of these students will feed in to the awareness raising campaign.

Teacher Education: An upskilling scheme which enables language teachers to upskill in a language that they are qualified in but not currently teaching was introduced to add to provision of languages in schools and so far 43 teachers have availed of the scheme. Peripatetic teachers are being employed to teach Japanese, Russian, Lithuanian, Polish and Korean.

Junior Cycle Reform: Training and CPD is being provided for new teachers of new languages, Polish and Lithuanian are currently being piloted in schools, currently working on visibility of short courses, and preparatory research on implementation of short course in Mandarin Chinese.

Awareness Raising: Have been developing resources to accompany the videos created in order to support MFL teachers and guidance counsellors in using the materials to deliver the message that languages are important, and have been disseminating the message via key guidance agencies such as NCGE and Careers Portal'. #ThinkLanguages, an awareness raising event was held for 650 TY students on 22<sup>nd</sup> November and feedback was extremely positive. A sense of the event is available on video at <http://bit.ly/ThinkLanguages18> It is planned to accommodate 4000 students at the 2019 event on 6<sup>th</sup> of December. Also working on schools engagement including guidance fairs and presentations, and showcasing Languages Connect at events such as Zeminar where Paul Mannion was provided as a speaker.

Enhancing Employer Engagement: Initial research is being conducted and a report will be prepared soon.

#### **5. Languages Event 2019**

The PPLI propose to hold a languages event in 2019 to coincide with European Languages Day. While the PPLI usually hold their conference in March this event would be in September and be done in conjunction with the PDST. It would be the conference with additional pillars and would include teachers, parents, enterprise and 3<sup>rd</sup> level.

#### **6. Update on working groups**

Higher Education Policy & Research Unit gave an update on the Higher Education Working Group whose responsibility is to implement Languages Connect in the Higher Education Sector.

Skills Planning and Enterprise Engagement Unit (SPEE) gave an update on enterprise and skills. She noted that she was not hearing language skills needs from employers.

### **7. Next Meeting**

The next FLAG meeting will be held in April 2019 but no date was confirmed.