

Press Release

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Council of Europe organises a forum on "The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the development of language policies"

Strasbourg, 05.02.2007 - The Council of Europe is holding a forum on "The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the development of language policies: challenges and responsibilities" in Strasbourg from 6 to 8 February 2007.

The forum will look at the various policy issues that have arisen, and responsibilities to be assumed, when using this widely adopted common European instrument as a basis for revising language teaching programmes, examinations and textbooks. The European language competence standards contained in the CEFR can enhance quality of teaching and help to make results more transparent. Experts from all over Europe and beyond (Canada, China, Japan and the United States) will contribute to the discussions, which will be supported by the numerous publications of the Council of Europe (Language Policy Division).

Finally, the forum will discuss the challenges facing ministries and institutions in developing tests that are transparent throughout Europe, diplomas based on European standards, coherent curricula and appropriate teacher education.

About the CEFR

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): Learning, teaching, assessment* has already been translated into 35 languages, including non-European languages such as Japanese and Arabic. It establishes language competence standards that are widely used by ministries of education and in the private sector. It can be used to set learning objectives at different levels, design coherent language education programmes and to train teachers. It is also used in testing and examinations, making it possible to compare diplomas.

In particular, the CEFR was the basis for the development of the *European Language Portfolio*, a personal tool for every language learner that is used by almost a million Europeans. These Council of Europe instruments have been incorporated into the European Union's *Europass*, which contains a European CV (one million were downloaded in 2006 alone) where applicants can indicate their level of language proficiency according to the Council of Europe's standards, and a Language Passport (100 000 downloads in 2006).

The Council of Europe's programmes have contributed greatly to the development of language education in its 46 member states for more than five decades, especially through the development of common European standards that have been adopted all over Europe and have become a reference on other continents.

Information: Language Policy Division, Strasbourg, www.coe.int/lang

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A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 46 member states.