



Minutes of the Third Meeting of INNLAC
Held at 111 Westminster Bridge Road, London, England
Thursday 4 – Friday 5 June 2009

Participants

- Austria (ÖSZ): Gunther Abuja, Ulrike Haslinger
- France (CIEP): Olivier Steffen
- Hungary (Tempus Public Foundation): Eszter Csesztregi
- Norway: Johanne Ostad, Steinar Nybøle
- Wales (CILT Cymru): Ceri James, Claire Parry
- Scotland (Scottish CILT): Catriona Oates
- England (CILT): Kathryn Board, Giulietta Driver (secretary), Anne Davidson Lund, Geoff Swinn, Teresa Tinsley

Observers

- Sweden (Swedish National Agency for Education): Suzanne Mehrens

Apologies

- Finland (Opeko): Kim Haataja
- Northern Ireland (NICILT): Eugene McKendry and
- Chirine Anvar, France (CIEP)
- Roger Persson, Sweden (Swedish National Agency for Education)
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Working Languages

English and German

Target Outcomes

These are appended to the minutes.

1 Welcome: Kathryn Board OBE, Chief Executive.

KB welcomed everyone to CILT and gave a brief presentation about CILT's Vision and Mission. CILT's Vision is of a society in which everyone recognises the value of languages and intercultural relationships and is able to use more than one language.

- GD will circulate the presentation to those who request it.

2 Round table presentation from each country

All members updated the group on issues and progress in their respective country

during 2008-2009.

Each INNLAC member is in a different position in respect of the status of any policy on languages in their country. Several common key issues emerged:

- How to continue to promote language study when faced with competition from more 'exciting' subjects such as media studies
- Employers not engaging in making the case for languages
- Mobility – young people have low aspirations in terms of travel or study abroad, especially once English is removed from the picture, and they therefore find it difficult to understand why they should learn another language
- The difficult economic climate is making it harder to compete for funding
- Increasingly diverse populations: for many young people the official language of the country is not the language spoken in their home. It is a challenge to promote foreign language learning in this environment when also protecting and promoting the first languages of immigrants, and supporting their acquisition of an official language
- Having always to justify projects to funders through presenting short-term, tangible deliverables (when many developments will realistically take some years to result in valid, sustainable outcomes)

3 The EC's Multilingualism Policy and likely priorities for future funded activity

After re-familiarising themselves with the main policy recommendations, the group developed a number of themes that could be considered for collaborative working. These have been appended in a separate document. Members may wish to draw on this to form bilateral or multilateral project partnerships

4 Focussing on 'forming partnerships for action'

Members formed smaller groups to discuss the issue. After feedback, it was concluded that the original INNLAC agreement, purpose and main function were still relevant. INNLAC's primary purpose is not to develop projects. It was agreed that a next step for the group is to try to influence European decision-makers, i.e. in the first instance, ECML and the European Commission (Multilingualism DG), to bring about longer term changes in priorities for policy and funding programmes such as would address the known issues

5 A formal Memorandum of Understanding for INNLAC

KB welcomed to the meeting Steve Green from the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC).

EUNIC is INNLAC's 'sister' organisation. It comprises a mix of 20 'arm's length' national cultural institutes (e.g. the British Council) and ministries from across the wider Europe¹. Like INNLAC, EUNIC seeks to support developments in the fields of linguistic diversity and multiculturalism/multilingualism.

Since its inception 4 years ago EUNIC has developed into a formal group, with 'clusters' of members in each country. SG said that the group had evolved slowly and organically at a pace with which members were comfortable. EUNIC only became a formal, legal entity when money became part of the equation. This seems similar to the way in which INNLAC has been evolving and may be a useful model to refer to. EUNIC members pay a subscription to cover the costs of a skeleton administration team.

Being part of EUNIC means that members are able to stage events on a scale much larger than would have been possible if acting alone, and in more recent times, EUNIC members have shared not only in offering input into events, but also in designing them. Like INNLAC, EUNIC members balance the tensions and conflicts of interest inherent in a privileged position, of both seeking to influence policy while also securing funded work to implement aspects of policy implementation and change.

EUNIC is looking beyond Europe at opportunities for action, e.g. with the MAGHREB countries, supported by the Anna Lindh Foundation. <http://www.euromedalex.org/>

6 Review of INNLAC membership

The principles of INNLAC membership were reviewed. In the context of discussion about extending the membership it became clear that a list of common characteristics would be helpful. It was discussed and agreed that members share some or all of the following:

- National contact point and Nominating Authority for ECML
- In direct and regular dialogue with Education ministry/ies
- Have national responsibilities / reach
- Focus on promoting multilingualism and foreign² languages
- Seek to influence policy

The group looked at the profiles of Linguamón (Spain) and Europees Platform (Netherlands). Both appear to share a number of the characteristics in the list, but not all. It was therefore agreed that both organisations be invited to the next INNLAC

¹ The "arm's length" relationship is not well understood, either by potential competitors or by EUNIC members from Southern and Central Europe.

² "foreign languages" = languages other than the official language(s) of the country in question.

meeting as Observers, after which, if they wished to become full members, they be asked to present their case in writing.

SM asked if there were a possibility of the Swedish National Agency for Education's becoming a full member of INNLAC. It was agreed that the organisation met most of the aforementioned characteristics. A vote was held which was unanimous in favour of the Swedish National Agency for Education.

SM was formally welcomed as a member of INNLAC.

The group gave an oral update to the "requests and offers" document produced in Sèvres in 2008: updated document appended at Annex 2. Finland's update has yet to be included.

7 Keeping in touch

Many of the members find INNLAC a useful forum for discussion. Meeting once a year means that key issues and opportunities for INNLAC are often missed. It was concluded that a 'virtual' discussion space was needed and it was decided that this would take the form of a Wiki. Communications would run via the Wiki and any documents of significance would be exchanged via the Wiki, rather than being placed on the web pages currently hosted and maintained by the Fremmedsprakssenteret.

INNLAC members agreed to trial the Wiki for a 6-month period as the main vehicle of communication for the group. Members were asked to refrain from using the email circulation list developed by CIEP and use the Wiki instead. The email list and the web pages will be maintained but dormant until the outcome of the trial is known.

- JO to ask her technical staff to develop the Wiki.
- **All members** to confirm to JO the email addresses of those colleagues to be given permission to use the Wiki

8 INNLAC 2010

KH had offered to host the meeting in Finland, drawing on the goodwill of colleagues at the University of Jyväskylä if necessary. There was also an offer from GA and ÖSZ in Austria.

There were concerns that, as OPEKO is in a state of flux, it might not be in a position to host INNLAC next year. While appreciating the efforts taken by KH to secure cooperation from Jyväskylä, members were reluctant to agree to a non-member's hosting a meeting. In light of this, the group felt more comfortable in principle with the offer from GA. GA accepted to host the meeting on the proviso that, if hosting INNLAC would strengthen OPEKO's position, KH and OPEKO could still take over the coordination of INNLAC and host the 2010 meeting.

ACTIONS

GD to circulate the CILT Vision presentation to those who request it

ADL to contact Linguamón and Europees Platform, explain the decision of the members, and invite both organisations to the 2010 INNLAC meeting as Observers

JO to ask her technical colleagues to develop the wiki

All members to confirm to JO the names and email addresses of those colleagues to be given permission to use the wiki

ADL to contact Kim Haataja, explain the view of the members concerning the location of the 2010 INNLAC meeting, reach agreement and pass the coordination of INNLAC to Finland or Austria as appropriate, by 30 June 2009

ADL to ask KH to update the Finnish entry in the “requests & offers” document

Themes for collaborative working?

- Chinese
- How (the importance of) language learning is influenced by groups in society (beyond parents)
- Who is influencing young people in their choices? How can languages be addressed in that context?
- Valorisation of periods of time spent abroad
- Intercultural competence / understanding
- Sign languages, official status, equal opportunities in language learning, e.g. for mobility, for sign language users
- Languages as an integral component of a broader range of “enticing” packages (“applied languages”)
- University admissions policy: models of recognition of languages as an incentive for learners and a means of driving system change
- Basing teaching curricula and / or assessment on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference)