

VIDEOCONFERENCE
**THE CEFR COMPANION VOLUME:
A KEY RESOURCE FOR INCLUSIVE
PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION**

16 DECEMBER 2020

www.coe.int/dce

Concept note and
draft agenda

BlueJeans

CONCEPT NOTE

RATIONALE

Twenty years after the publication of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, best known worldwide as the CEFR, the Council of Europe proudly announced in April 2020 the publication of the final edition of the *CEFR Companion volume* (www.coe.int/lang-cefr).

The *CEFR Companion volume* is the product of over six years of conceptual reflection and empirical validation in a multi-phase international collaborative project. It;

- completes and clarifies the CEFR descriptive model by defining and further expanding constructs,
- extends and completes the CEFR set of descriptors, and
- broadens the conceptualisation of language education.

In the past 30 years, since the beginning of the development of the CEFR, societies have become more complex, characterised by an escalating movement of people and goods and an increasing number of migrants and refugees. In this changing socio-political landscape, the role of languages needs to be reconsidered. Far from being necessary for transactional communication only, languages are pivotal for mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, and access to knowledge. Education is faced with new challenges such as valuing and fostering linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom, promoting inclusiveness, reconsidering the role of the languages of schooling, distance learning and developing “21st century skills”. At the core of these challenges are languages. Everything happens through languages and languages are everywhere.

The CEFR has contributed to fostering reflection about language policy, offering to the different stakeholders involved in language education a transparent metalanguage and common foundation to assist them in pursuing their respective goals. The new *CEFR Companion volume* builds on these foundations and brings the reflection about languages to a new level. With its focus on mediation and the related concepts of plurilingualism, pluriculturalism and learners as social agents, and with its wealth of targeted descriptors, the *CEFR Companion volume* is a tool which is both informed by research and practically oriented to facilitate innovation in curriculum development and teaching.

AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE

This online event intends to draw attention to the full potential of the *CEFR Companion volume* in the field of education, and in particular:

- familiarise the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE) and other decision-makers in the field of education with the *CEFR Companion volume*;
- highlight the link between the *CEFR Companion volume* and the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)* and the possible synergies between the two frameworks;
- discuss the innovation potential of the new scales of descriptors and possible avenues for facilitating their dissemination and use;
- introduce the upcoming series of 2021 webinars which will deal with specific aspects of the *CEFR Companion volume* and their implications.

The working language of the videoconference is English.

HOW TO JOIN THE CONFERENCE?

The videoconference will be held on **16 December 2020** from **15.00 to 18.00 (CET)**. There will be a **chat-moderated recorded broadcasting** of the videoconference in the following morning (17 December 2020) from **9.00 to 12.00 (CET)** which will allow participants from other time zones to participate and address questions to the experts.

It is a registered event and you can register at <https://primetime.bluejeans.com/azm/register/ykevdfvk>.

Once your registration is approved you will get personal join link. For the best experience please use Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge to join the event.

If you are unable to join please do the following:

- Leave the event and try to reconnect or
- Download the BlueJeans Events app from <https://www.bluejeans.com/downloads#events> and join via app on smart phone or tablet.

DRAFT AGENDA

16 DECEMBER 2020, 15.00 – 18.00 (CET)

15.00 Opening

Welcome speech by **Snežana SAMARDŽIĆ-MARKOVIĆ**, Director General of Democracy, Council of Europe

Languages for inclusive education

15.15 Enriching 21st century language education: the CEFR Companion Volume

This session introduces the main innovative aspects of the CEFR Companion Volume, published this year in its final form. Participants may pose questions to the speakers in the chat and some of these will be taken in the discussion after the four presentations.

Moderator: **Daniela FASOGLIO**, SLO (Dutch Institute for Curriculum Development)

Speakers: **Brian NORTH**, Eurocentres Foundation

CEFR Companion Volume for Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The updated CEFR broadens the scope of language education with an integrated approach that moves beyond the four skills, seeing language as mediated action rather than just code, thus recognising the centrality of mediation and plurilingualism. CEFR descriptors, new and old, link planning, teaching and teacher-/self-assessment, inspiring aims and classroom tasks in an action-oriented approach.

Enrica PICCARDO, University of Toronto

Mediation

Language emerges from complex webs of actions, which all require some form of mediation. Mediation is central to understanding, thinking, meaning-making, collaborating – and thus to acting as a social agent. The CEFR descriptors for mediating communication, mediating concepts, mediating texts and mediating strategies offer great potential for innovating language education.

Bernd RÜSCHOFF, Duisburg-Essen University

The CEFR Companion Volume Descriptors for Online Interaction and Transaction

Digital tools have become a normalized part of everyday life. This has led to significant changes and increasing multimodality in digitally enhanced communication and interaction in social and professional practice. The presentation discusses how the CEFR Companion Volume reflects this and now provides descriptors concerned with online interaction and transaction intended to contribute to approaches in language education aimed at empowering learners to effectively interact in real-life (digital) contexts.

Rosanna MARGONIS-PASINETTI, University of Education in Lausanne

Plurilingualism/pluriculturalism and (language) education

Building on the action-oriented approach and the concept of the user/learner as a social agent mobilising a plurilingual repertoire, the CEFR Companion Volume develops and deepens the concepts of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism as fundamental dimensions of language education. This entails in particular the distinction between the prefix “multi” and “pluri”, as well as the connection between the plurilingual and pluricultural profile and the holistic education of the individual.

Questions from the floor

16.30 Break

16.45 Round table: Related Council of Europe projects

The round table will consist of four short (10 minute) presentations followed by a discussion based on questions from participants in the chat.

Moderator: **Susanna SLIVENSKY**, Deputy Executive Director, European Centre for Modern Languages

Speakers: **Brian NORTH**, Eurocentres Foundation

Enriching 21st century language education: the CEFR Companion Volume: Examples from practice

Following the launch of the provisional edition of the Companion Volume in May 2018, a number of researchers and institutes investigated the implementation of some of the new descriptors. Nineteen of these projects were selected for this volume of case studies, from which a summary of findings will be presented.

Johann FISCHER, Centre for Languages and Transferable Skills, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

CEFR Companion Volume Implementation toolbox

This ECML project will provide digital training material (modules including audio-visual materials, tasks, checklists and assessment examples), available for use in initial teacher education, for professional development activities and for self-study purposes, that helps to implement the Companion Volume in language teaching and assessment in university and vocational language education.

Maria STATHOPOULOU, Hellenic Open University

Mediation in teaching, learning and assessment

This presentation focuses on the ME.T.L.A project (“Mediation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment”), which is being currently carried out within the framework of the new programme of the European Centre of Modern Languages (ECML) (2020-2023) and deals with the notion of cross-linguistic mediation, as part of someone’s plurilingual competence. The goal of the project is to develop a Teaching Guide for foreign language teachers of primary and secondary education who intend to include linguistic mediation in their teaching practices drawing upon the CEFR Companion Volume mediation descriptors (Council of Europe, 2020).

Michael BYRAM

Relationships among the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and its Companion Volume

Questions from the floor

17.45 Closing

CEFR Website walkthrough **Brian NORTH**

Closing remarks by **Michael REMMERT**, Head of the Education Policy Division, Council of Europe

BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Byram taught French and German in secondary and adult education in England. He then went to Durham University and is now Professor Emeritus. In the 2000s he was Adviser to the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, and has been recently involved in the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*.

Daniela Fasoglio is curriculum developer and foreign language expert at the Dutch Institute for Curriculum Development. She has been responsible for the integral revision of the foreign language core objectives and attainment targets in primary and secondary education in the Netherlands. She has coordinated several CEFR implementation projects and is in charge of the CEFR digital portal for Dutch education. She has been a member of the CEFR expert group since 2018 and was a member of the consulting board for the development of the Companion Volume.

Johann Fischer is the Director of ZESS (Centre for Languages and Transferable Skills) at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen and Head of the Scientific Committee of UNICert, former Secretary General and President of CercleS, co-ordinator of various European projects with the European Commission and the ECML. His research focuses on task-based teaching & assessment and staff development.

Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti is Associate Professor and the current Head of the Foreign Languages Teacher Training Department at the University of Education in Lausanne. She graduated from the University of Geneva and the Pedagogical Seminar of Lausanne (Switzerland). She has worked for many years as a language teacher and a foreign language teacher trainer. Her scientific interests concern task-based language learning and teaching, multilingualism, interculturalism and language policies.

Brian North has worked closely with the Council of Europe since 1990. After developing the levels and descriptors for the CEFR, he co-authored the CEFR itself as well as the prototype European Language Portfolio. More recently he co-ordinated the project that produced the CEFR Companion Volume, which he also co-authored.

Enrica Piccardo is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Language Education at OISE, University of Toronto. Collaborating with the Council of Europe since 2008, she has coordinated various international projects and co-authored the *CEFR Companion Volume*. Her research includes language teaching approaches and curricula, multi/plurilingualism, creativity and complexity in language education, and assessment.

Bernd Rüschoff is Senior Professor in Applied Linguistics & EFL-Methodology in the Department of Anglophone Studies Duisburg-Essen University (Germany). His research covers applied linguistics and second language acquisition, one focus being the use of digital tools in language education. He is a former President of AILA – the International Association for Applied Linguistics.

Maria Stathopoulou is an Adjunct Lecturer at the Hellenic Open University and at the National Technical University of Athens. From 2014-2017, she was a member of the authoring group of experts of the Council of Europe concerning the update of the CEFR, while now she is the coordinator of the ECML ME.T.L.A. project. Dr Stathopoulou's book "Cross-Language Mediation in Foreign Language Teaching and Testing" (2015) has been published by Multilingual Matters.