

6.7 Skills for innovation

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Innovation in formal education

Bilingual teaching in primary schools

In the [Decree on Measures in Teaching 2015 \(29 June 2015\)](#) a change in the law on the decree on language use in teaching was made which, in a pilot phase, like in bilingual nursery schools, allowed pre- and primary schools in the DG to offer bilingual teaching in the primary school from now on. The legal basis for the bilingual nursery schools was created in the Decree on Measures of 27 June 2011. The adaptation for the primary school now follows.

As part of a pilot project, the government is allowing a school governing body to teach the subjects of mathematics, history, geography, sciences and technology in the first foreign language in all or individual establishments or language departments or in the individual classes. This is only done, however, under the condition that the scope of the subjects taught in the first foreign language takes up a maximum of 40% of the total lesson time. Before such a pilot project may be launched, here strict criteria – analogous to the conditions in the nursery school– apply: 1. A teaching concept accepted by the teaching inspection service must be present; 2. A pilot project in the mainstream primary school must be the continuation of a pilot project started in the nursery school; 3. Here too scientific support is required; 4. The project is evaluated after each school year by the school inspection service. 5. The teachers who teach the above subjects in the first foreign language must be able to demonstrate thorough knowledge of this language and possess sufficient knowledge of the teaching language. Thus, as continuation of the bilingual nursery school, the bilingual primary school can become a further important component for acquiring language skills.

REK II

The education system in the German-speaking Community continues to set itself the challenge of pursuing the promotion of multilingualism for all citizens as one of its foremost aims. This is a decisive factor for networking with other regions and countries and a significant strength of border regions in Europe both for the individual citizens and for the location of the DG as a whole.

In the last few years, decisive structural and organisational measures have been taken to

improve the promotion of multilingualism in school. For the second implementation phase of the Regional Development Concept (REK II), the government has decided to devote its own future project to the theme of multilingualism.

The Decree of 19 April 2004 (*Document no. 146 (2003-2004) no. 12*, www.dgparlament.be => *Dokumentendatenbank*) on the teaching and use of languages in the educational system has created a solid basis for a coherent concept for the promotion of multilingualism in the schools of the DG. In addition, it is constantly being adapted to the most up-to-date findings and needs. Thus for example in 2007 a passage was inserted that enables schools to run a bilingual nursery school. In the said decree, for nursery schools, primary schools and secondary schools in the DG, the number of lessons and subjects to be taught both in the respective teaching medium and in the first foreign language was laid down as obligatory. The language and teaching requirements for teachers were likewise defined.

With the definition of development goals for the nursery school and the creation of framework plans for the primary and secondary schools, quality assurance and improvement has been promoted and secured. The basis for the defined goals was the [Common European Reference Framework](#) for Languages 63 and the corresponding specification of the level of competence as well as the regular testing of the level reached by means of standardised tests.

A wide professional development provision for teaching staff of all school levels and forms rounds off the measures.

Planned measures and work steps

The process of quality improvement must now be continued and the foreign language lesson improved so that all citizens can gain the foreign language skills that they need for their professional and personal development and as a basis for lifelong language learning. This also applies to citizens with disabilities and for people with a migration background who are to be helped in language acquisition in line with their possibilities and needs.

In terms of quality improvement, the possibility of the exchange of teachers between the three communities of Belgium should be extended. This exchange enables the use of native speakers for foreign language teaching. This should also be used in school forms not previously considered as well as in subjects with subject matter taught through the medium of the foreign language. Apart from that, the use of native speakers should be used for longer.

The standardised certification of foreign language skills on the basis of the Common European Reference Framework for Languages is increasingly required on the job market. This standard certificate is of benefit to the citizens of the DG when looking for work. In consensus with the schools and the institutions for professional academic development, a coherent concept should be developed for this.

With the DELF tests for French as a foreign language, which are based on the Common European Reference Framework for Languages, a standardised certification of foreign language skills in the education system of the DG is being tried out. Following this model, further foreign

languages can now be certified.

The promotion of French as the first foreign language should continue to be carried out regularly and in a targeted fashion for all children from nursery school. The measures offered in the decree on the use and teaching of languages (2004) in this respect should be used more strongly and in more depth. Corresponding awareness raising for quality upgrading of the activities must be carried out.

For the "bilingual nursery school" pilot project a legal basis for the possible expansion of the pilot project to the primary school should be created to secure the continuity to the already existing bilingual departments of the secondary schools and to continuously promote the language skills acquired.

Upgrading the Dutch teaching will be carried out via the creation and implementation of framework plans for this subject.

As part of a conciliation with the secondary schools, new possibilities for embedding Dutch teaching in certain departments of these schools should be sounded out and implemented as part of pilot projects.

Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

There are no specific measures to foster innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work in the German-speaking Community yet.