

Key findings ECML programme 2020-2023



Inspiring Innovation in Language Education



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR
MODERN LANGUAGES
E C M L
C E L V
CENTRE EUROPEEN POUR
LES LANGUES VIVANTES

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

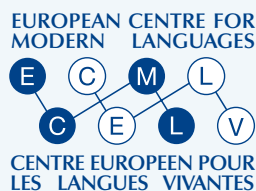


About the European Centre for Modern Languages

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) is an Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe. It was established in Graz, Austria in 1994. The ECML's mission is to encourage excellence and innovation in language teaching and support its member states in the implementation of effective language education policies.

The ECML initiates and coordinates 4-year programmes which provide the framework for multilateral development projects, bilateral in-country capacity-building (ECML Training

and Consultancy), additional professional development opportunities for language professionals such as the Summer Academy for language teacher educators, as well as a range of activities for a wider public.



What these key findings offer

- A brief overview of the structure and content of the ECML 2020-2023 programme and of the adopted approach to its evaluation.
- The key findings from the full evaluation report (available on request), together with sample quantitative and qualitative evidence to support these findings.
- A summary of the main challenges and success factors to be taken into account in future ECML programmes.

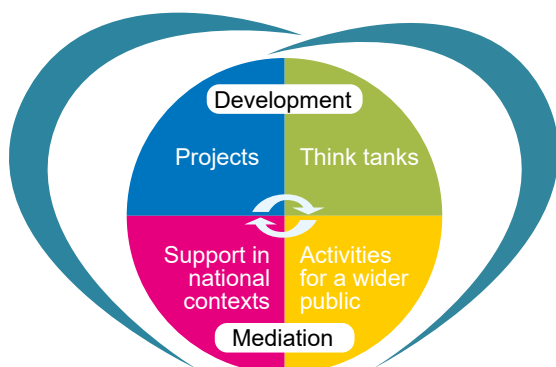
"The project resources are comprehensive and well-organised, offering both theoretical insights and practical strategies for educators."

"My experience at the Summer Academy has turned out to be very productive and fruitful in a number of respects. It has provided me with the most up-to-date information on the latest trends in foreign language education, more specifically, plurilingual education, innovative elements in foreign language assessment, as well as different types of learning design. No less importantly, it has provided me with an opportunity to expand my academic network and establish connections with my colleagues from other countries."

Overview of programme structure and activities

Inspiring Innovation in Language Education: Changing Contexts, Evolving Competences

As in previous programmes, the structure was broadly based on two strands: development and mediation.



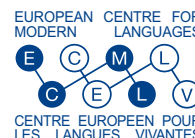
- **The development strand** is intended to create new solutions to the challenges identified by member states, usually via projects which are sometimes supplemented by other activities, such as thematic working groups or think tanks.
- **The mediation strand** provides member states with opportunities to access ECML expertise and to explore, adapt and implement existing ECML resources, through Training and Consultancy (TaC), national support events and the Summer Academy.

Several activities were co-financed through the **ECML's Cooperation Agreement with the European Commission**: Training and Consultancy workshops in three areas, the Summer Academy for language teacher educators (established in 2022), and colloquia on different topics including the impact of Covid on language education and on regional and minority languages.

The programme also demonstrated the ability to respond to major crises: new activities and digital working methods were introduced during the **Covid-19 pandemic**, and targeted support was provided for educators welcoming refugee learners following the Russian aggression against **Ukraine**.

Furthermore, the ECML was directly involved in the development of the **Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)1** on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture and raised awareness via a series of webinars to support understanding and implementation.

Activities for a **wider public** enabled participants from all countries to take part in conferences, webinars and colloquia, and to celebrate the European Day of Languages.



Approach to evaluation

The evaluation report of the ECML 2020-2023 programme set out to answer the following key questions:

- How far did the programme succeed in addressing the priorities and needs of member states, on which it was based?
- How, and how well did it contribute to overall mission of the ECML as defined by the following objectives:
 - promotion of innovative approaches to language learning and teaching;
 - collaboration and exchange among the various actors in the field;
 - organisation of training of multipliers;
 - collecting and disseminating examples of good practice.

The evaluation focused on projects and TaC activities, as well as the newly introduced Summer Academy. Evaluation tools included both quantitative and qualitative data from three main sources: reports from programme consultants and from project and TaC coordinators, participant surveys following project, TaC, and Summer Academy events, and a wide-scale post-programme survey addressed to National Authorities in ECML member states.

Key findings – categories

- **RELEVANCE:** The programme successfully addressed member states' priorities in language education.
- **QUALITY AND USEFULNESS:** New project outputs resulting from the programme, as well as resources from previous ECML programmes used in TaC activities, were considered to be of a high standard and practical.
- **OUTREACH:** The programme involved a large number of language professionals, both in terms of direct participation in programme activities and in follow-up activities at national level, such as the training of multipliers and the dissemination of good practice.

- **CHALLENGES:** These arose primarily from the complexity and range of tools produced within certain projects, resulting in possible information overload and inaccessibility.
- **OUTCOMES:** The programme has had a positive influence on individual professionals, at institutional and national levels and on the ultimate beneficiary, the learner.

Taken together, these categories provide evidence of the overall **impact** of the ECML programme on language education across Europe.

Key findings – sample evidence

Relevance

Chart A shows that the completed projects corresponded closely to the actual needs of both decision makers and language professionals.

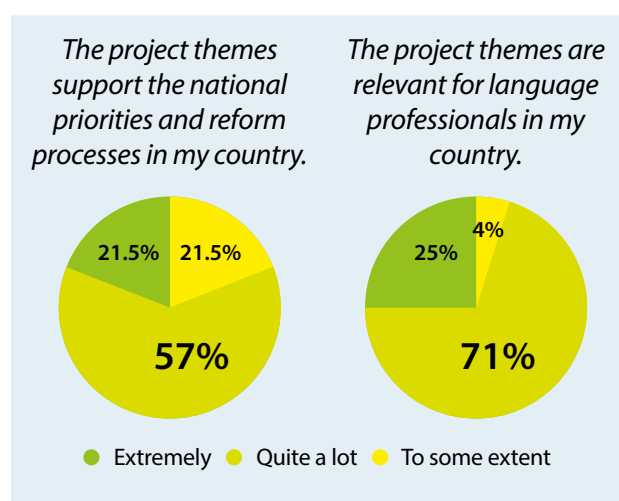


Chart B illustrates that the vast majority of respondents considered the Summer Academy programmes highly relevant to their professional needs.

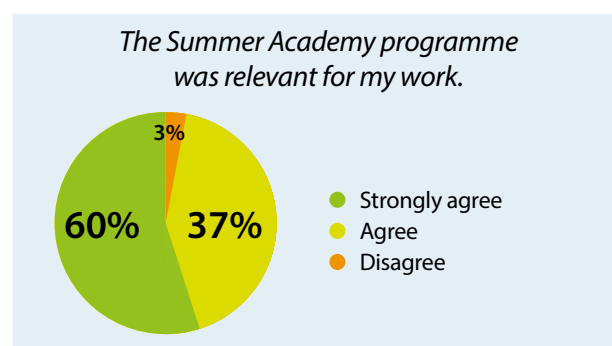


Table C (on the next page) indicates a high degree of match between language education priorities as identified by ECML member states and the activities within the 2020-2023 programme.

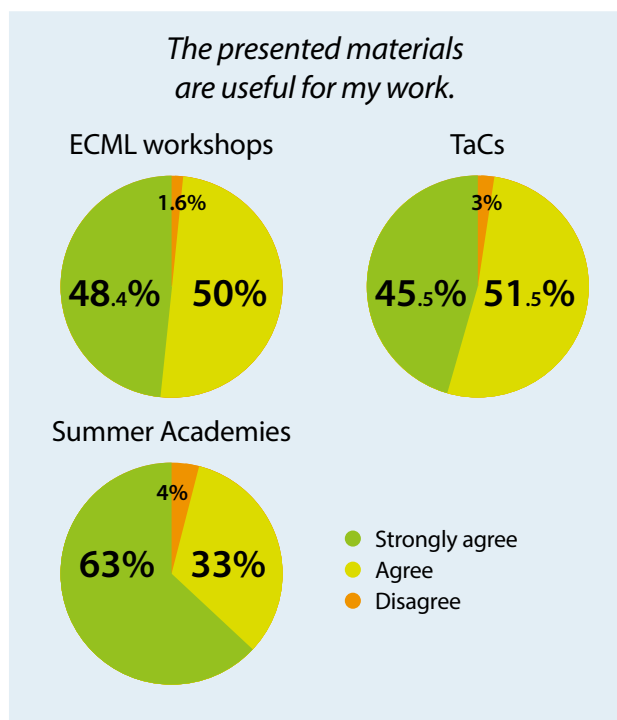
Table C: National priorities and corresponding activities

National priorities	Development strand	Mediation strand	Activities for a wider public
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES, ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND VALUES	P Developing teacher competences for pluralistic approaches	TaC Action research communities	▶ Action research communities for language teachers
	Think tank: Transversal competences in foreign language education	Summer Academy for language teacher educators	
	Think tank: Future of language education in the light of Covid	TaC ICT in language teaching and learning	▶ Take your language teaching online
METHODOLOGY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	P Digital citizenship through language education	TaC CLIL and beyond	▶ Fostering digital citizenship through language education
	P CLIL in languages other than English – successful transitions across educational stages	TaC Learning environments where modern languages flourish	▶ Language learning pathways of young children – Making early language learning visible
WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACHES; LANGUAGE-AWARE SCHOOLS	P Building blocks for planning language-sensitive teacher education	TaC Supporting the language(s) of schooling	▶ How to ensure that languages flourish in your school
	P Young children's language learning pathways	TaC Language of schooling in subject learning	▶ A roadmap for schools to support the language(s) of schooling
CEFR IMPLEMENTATION	P CEFR Companion Volume implementation toolbox	TaC Testing and assessment – Relating language curricula, tests and examinations to the CEFR	Colloquium: Innovative methodologies and assessment in language learning 10 years on
	P Mediation in teaching, learning and assessment		
MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS; PLURILINGUAL REPERTOIRES	P Enhancing language education in cross-border vocational education	TaC Plurilingual and intercultural approaches	Colloquium: Regional and minority languages within a plurilingual context
	P Resources for assessing the home language competences of migrant pupils	TaC Young migrants – supporting multilingual classrooms	▶ Supporting the linguistic integration of young refugees from Ukraine
	Initiative: Supporting the (linguistic) integration of refugees from Ukraine	TaC Quality education in Romani	
LANGUAGE POLICY/POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	A new Council of Europe Recommendation on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture		▶ A new Council of Europe Recommendation on language education (3)
ALL PRIORITIES			Closing conference

Legend: **P** Projects
TaC Training and Consultancy
▶ Webinars

Quality and usefulness

Chart D indicates the degree to which practitioners working in language education considered approaches and materials presented at TaCs, and Summer Academies, and developed through projects to be applicable in their own contexts.



"The target group using the ECML website and resources is made up of teachers, language educators, experts, lecturers at university level, etc. These beneficiaries can find and use very good material, videos, documents, etc."

"ECML resources contain databases of ready-made practical exercises which can be immediately used in class or adapted to a particular context. There are comprehensive and concrete guidelines and tips complemented by a wealth of activities."

Table E presents the rich array of 2020-2023 project outputs, tailored in both content and format to a range of different target groups.

Range of output types

- 1 Background information on project themes
- 2 Guiding principles/guidelines for teacher education and teachers
- 3 Activities for teacher development/training modules
- 4 Practical resources – examples of modules, lesson plans and activities for use in class
- 5 Matrices, grids and checklists for analysing educational scenarios
- 6 Instances of promising practice/inspiring stories showing the resources in use
- 7 Surveys/self-evaluation/quizzes and games
- 8 Videos and webinars
- 9 Recommended reading lists

Range of target groups

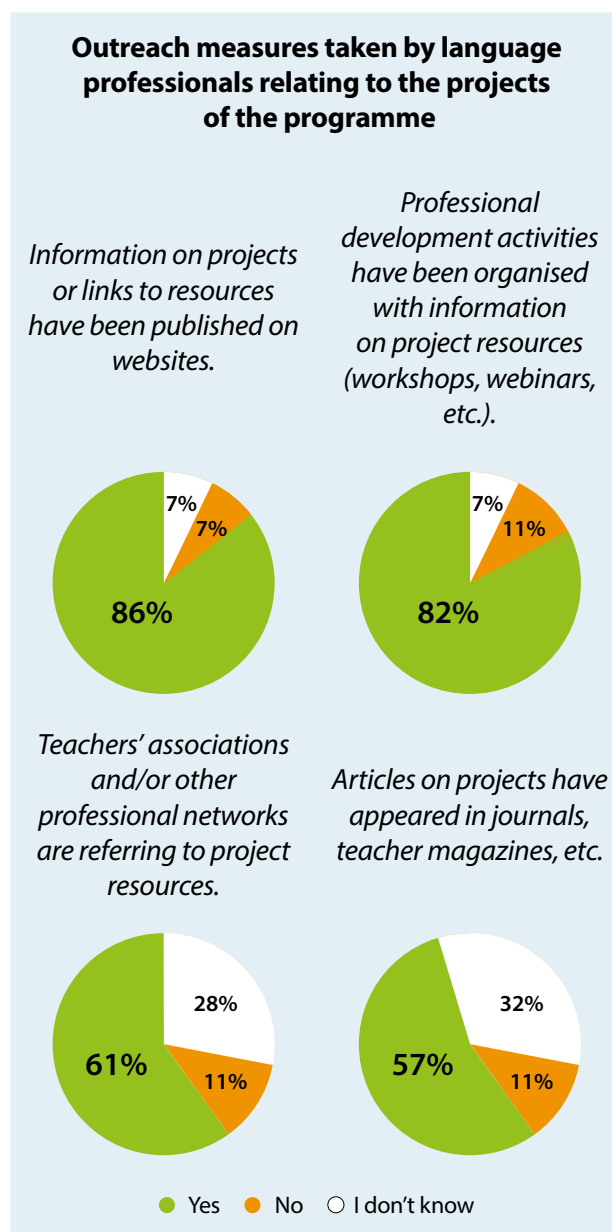
Teacher educators	8
Language teachers	5
Curriculum designers	4
Subject teachers	3
Decision makers	2
Researchers	1
School advisors	1

Outreach

Table F shows that 2020-2023 programme activities enjoyed a broad outreach, with large numbers of language professionals taking part, including online.

Activity type	Quantity	Number of participants
Workshops	10	416
Network meetings	15	352
Think tanks	3	87
TaC events in 28 countries	73	2 105
TaC events (EC co-funded) in 28 countries	82	2 000
Colloquia	3	154
Final conference of the programme	1	107
Summer Academy (EC co-funded)	2	54
Webinars for a wider public	15	30 162
Newsletter "Gazette"	8 682 subscribers in 2020 10 200 subscribers in 2023	

Chart G provides evidence that in addition to implementing what has been learnt at workshops in their own educational settings, language professionals are making important contributions to one of the ECML's key objectives: the training of multipliers and the dissemination of examples of good practice.



Outcomes

Chart H reveals that participation in ECML activities has led language professionals to actively promote plurilingual and intercultural education, strengthen networking within their professional communities, and become more involved in reform processes within their professional environments.

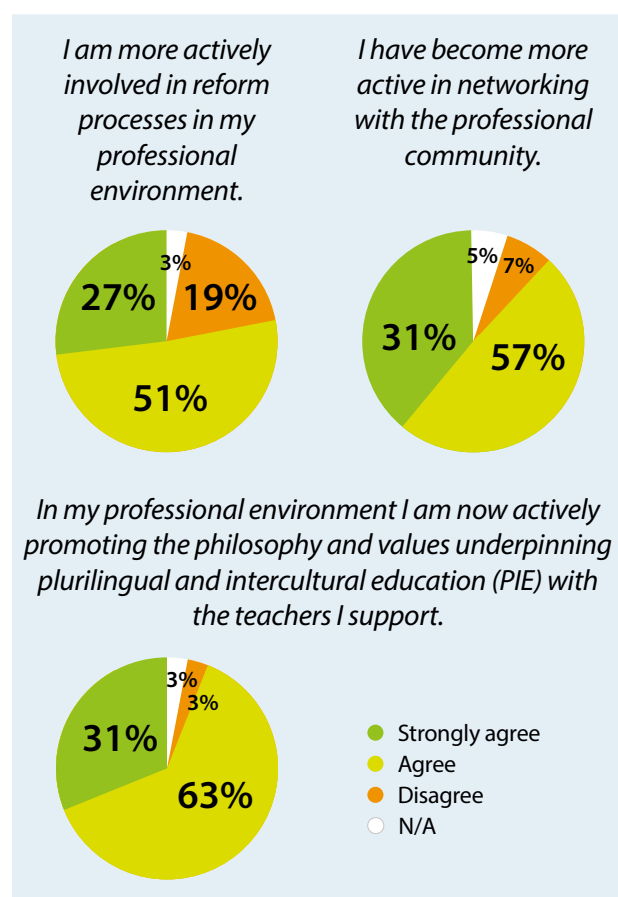


Chart I provides concrete evidence of how ECML projects and TaCs have impacted on individual professionals working in the field of language education, as well as on schools and teacher education programmes (institutional level).

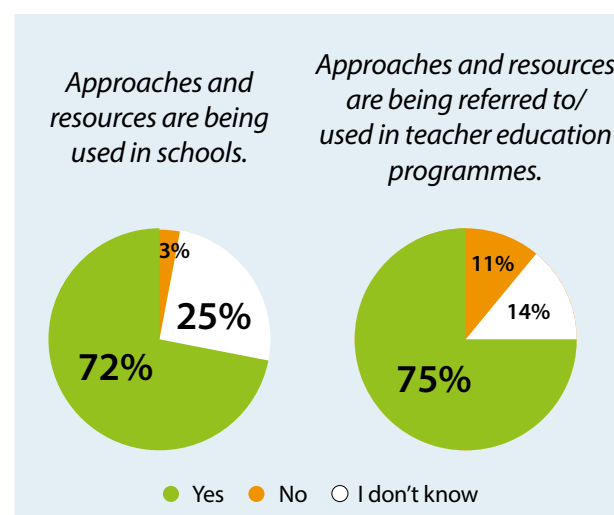
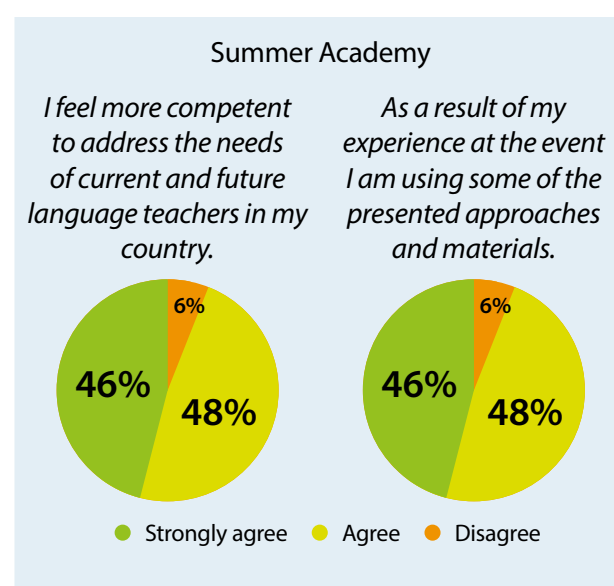


Chart J highlights the strong outcomes of the Summer Academies, demonstrating that participants have increased their competence to support language teachers and are actively applying the approaches and materials introduced during the event.



The way ahead

The evaluation report of the ECML's 2020-2023 programme can help orientate future ECML programmes through the identification of challenges and success factors.

Addressing the challenges

"The richness and diversity of content, while appreciated, makes orientation complex for users."

"The biggest challenge is that even if the resources on the ECML site are self-explanatory, we need better national guidance to the resources."

The ECML remains committed to continuous improvement and to responding to the priorities and expectations identified by member states and stakeholders. A number of the challenges highlighted in the previous programme evaluation have already been addressed, such as:

- restructuring the entry pages to project resources on the website to make them clearer and more accessible;
- increasing the number of webinars as an additional source of information and explanation;
- providing a dedicated guidance document to the ECML Governing Board with selected project resources which lend themselves to translation into national languages;
- expanding Training and Consultancy activities in line with evolving national priorities, building on developments from previous programmes.

At the same time, the current evaluation has identified ongoing and emerging challenges, including website navigation, language issues, the scope of materials, adaptation to local contexts, and effective dissemination. A key issue – which concerns both National Authorities and the ECML – is how to ensure that project resources successfully reach potential users. Working together to address these challenges will remain essential in promoting the uptake and impact of ECML resources and initiatives in the coming years.

Self-evaluation and reflection as guiding principles

The ECML's ongoing culture of self-evaluation and reflection ensures that both success factors and challenges identified through the programme guide a process of continuous improvement. This commitment to quality and adaptability will remain at the heart of future ECML activities so that they support the evolving needs of language professionals and member states.

ECML activities and resources...

"The EOL project is strongly connected to our objective of assisting municipalities and educational institutions in the development of local foreign language policies and strategies."

... contribute to **national language policies** and **reforms**

"In a context where the proportion of allophone students tends to increase, resources help to better exploit the linguistic and training potential of these students. They support a fairer and more inclusive assessment of skills in family languages."

... reflect **societal changes**

"The aim was to integrate mediation into teaching practices and the formative assessment of pupils, leading to the establishment of a common culture on mediation and plurilingual/pluricultural skills."

... are in line with **innovative trends in education**

"Participants learn about reflective teaching practices to help improve the quality of classroom teaching, increase teachers' confidence, and support teachers in creating socially responsible language classrooms."

... provide activities which have **practical value**

... facilitate **networking**

"This workshop brought together teaching and non-teaching staff from secondary schools in the Lille metropolitan area with a view to a global approach to the languages of schooling to support the academic success of students."

... are adaptable and respond to **emerging challenges**

"I work in kindergarten and currently I have kids from Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and during the seminar in Graz I have learned a lot useful ideas and tips that I can use in my classroom, for example bringing in parents and devoting classes to the tradition of other cultures."

“The participants in these ECML events had a fantastic opportunity to expand their knowledge, exchange innovative ideas and connect with like-minded professionals. Engaging in discussions during workshops fosters professional growth, boosts confidence and inspires educators to enhance their teaching practices. Also, meeting colleagues from other countries offers excellent networking opportunities forming friendships and professional collaborations.”

European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe
Nikolaiplatz 4/1, 8020 Graz, Austria
+43 316 323554-0
www.ecml.at

Promoting excellence in language education