

# Quality in Language Services through the Use of the *European Language Portfolio (ELP)* - The example of QLS, Greece - \*

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## **Abbreviations**

**ELP** – European Language Portfolio  
**CEF** – Common European Framework  
**EAQUALS** – European Association for Quality Language Services

**ALTE** – Association of Language Testers in Europe  
**COE** – Council of Europe  
**QLS** – Quality in Language Services

# Abbreviations used in this presentation

- **ELP** – European Language Portfolio
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## A bit of History

- The ELP comes as the result of the implementation of the CEF Recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on Linguistic Diversification (1998).
- The European Ministers of Education resolve to create conditions favourable for the implementation and wide use of the ELP (15-17 Oct 2000) .
- EAQUALS & ALTE submit their ELP and approval is granted by the Council of Europe (2000).
- The ALTE - EAQUALS ELP becomes the most widely used ELP in Europe as a result of its translation and circulation in many other languages (2000 -2005).
- QLS is granted undertakes to translate and discriminate the Greek version of the ALTE - EAQUALS ELP (2005).

## The three PARTS of the ELP

1. The Language Passport
2. The Language Biography
3. The Dossier

# 1. Language Passport

This is a Personal Document , in which the holder records:

- All his/her language skills in the form of self assessment
- His/her intercultural experiences with regard to the particular language
- The years of study of the language
- The certificates obtained and other credentials

The Language Passport cannot function alone. It comes as the result of the use of the second important part of the ELP, the Language Biography.

## 2. Language Biography

This is the main educational part of the ELP. It is based on the “Can Do Statements”, which have come as a result of the CEF. It contributes in the following ways:

- Assists self assessment and evaluation of skills
- Encourages autonomous learning
- Develops a “student - teacher” co-operation during the learning process
- Gives the necessary platform on which self-assessment can be based before filling in the Language Passport.

It is the “Can Do Statements”, which the ELP holder needs to work on. They offer a yardstick for measuring language skills, and also provide a vehicle for life long language learning.

## 3. Dossier

The Dossier provides support for the Language Biography. This is where the ELP holder files all evidence, which would prove that his self-assessment has been accurate.

The Dossier may contain any of the following items:

- Exam Certificates
- Course or School Certificates of Attendance
- Pieces of written work or projects
- CD or DVD recordings of presentations etc, which the holder has made
- Any other document that may be regarded as evidence

## The Dual Role of the ELP

- **Recording and Proving Language Skills**
- **The Educational Role**



## Recording and Proving the five Language Skills

- Understanding
  - Listening
  - Reading
- Speaking
  - Spoken interaction
  - Spoken production
- Writing

- **Recording and Proving Language Skills**

**YES**

- The ELP provides for the language learner a means for showing and proving his skills.

**NO**

- It is not coming to replace the Exam Certificates but to support them in proving CEF Levels and Language Skills at a particular moment in life.

# ELP versus EXAM Certificates

In the following cases exam certificates cannot help a language learner.

- a) The learner has completed a course and acquired a certain level of skills, but has - for whatever reason - not taken any exams.
- b) The learner has lived in a foreign country and acquired language skills of a particular level, but has not taken the exam or an exam has not been readily available for him.
- c) A learner has achieved a very good level of listening or reading skills, yet his production skills are not good enough. "I understand everything, but I cannot talk" is a very common statement.

## ELP versus EXAM Certificates

### *continuing*

d) A language learner acquires a Certificate of Proficiency at the age of 16 and from then on does not use his language skills. Twenty years later the learner needs to prove his language skills.

Is the Certificate worth the paper it has been written on?

e) A language learner settles for his B2 Certificate at the age of 14. However, his studies involve continuous use of his language skills and later his employment is such that it brings him into continuous contact with the language.

He has become a C2 level on his own, but should he go for the exams at the age of 40?

The ELP is a living personal document,  
which can actually develop  
as the learner's Language Skills do,  
  
in contrast with  
the static value of the skills certified  
by a Language Exam Certificate.

# The Educational Role

**Second - but equally important - role of the ELP  
Is that it involves both the learner and the teacher.**

- Bringing the ELP principles to the classroom can
  - urge the learner to assess his needs and set priorities
  - encourage learning initiatives
  - develop learner critical thinking
  - enhance learner responsibility
  - create learner autonomy
  - turn the learning process into a transparent one
  - promote life-long learning in languages

## ***The “pre-ELP” student***

1. doesn't quite know what his skills are at the beginning of his course.
2. doesn't have the faintest idea about what he will be taught during the year.
3. hardly ever knows what he would have learned by the end of the course.
4. rarely cares about the syllabus content.
5. determines his level of skills by the name of his class or the name of his book.
6. considers a successful learning year, the one during which the material of the whole book has been covered.
7. holds the teacher responsible for feeding him with the right or wrong material.
8. is 100% teacher dependant.
9. is accustomed to passive learning.

## ***The “ELP” student***

1. can define his level of skills by just ticking off the “CAN DO” Statements.
2. can participate in choosing what he wants to learn during the course.
3. contributes towards appropriate use of the course material.
4. becomes fully aware of what he is to be taught.
5. sets goals and tries to achieve them.
6. considers a successful learning year, the one during which his “CAN DO” goals have been achieved.
7. seeks his own learning sources in addition to the course material.
8. minimises teacher dependency and autonomous learning is achieved and maximised.
9. is no longer a passive learner; he is actively involved in the learning process.

The ELP has come  
to enhance and support  
all the innovative changes,  
which have come about  
with the introduction  
of the CEF in Europe!



## Closing note

- The ELP has been developed to stimulate and support the learning of languages.
- The ELP has become a tool to accompany the learning of languages inside and outside the classroom.
- The ELP has been designed to help learners to reflect on and improve their language learning and to show others (employers, teachers, etc) the knowledge acquired of other languages and cultures.
- The ELP has been based on the language levels described in the Common European Framework of Reference developed by the Council of Europe.

# EuroIntegrELP

Equal Chances to European Integration through  
the use of the European Language Portfolio

A Socrates Lingua 1 Project

## Project Objectives

Raising awareness to the importance of plurilingualism in a multicultural and multilingual Europe for:

- language learning
- valuing already existent partial competences in various languages and developing new ones
- taking responsibility for one's own learning
- developing self-evaluation skills

Raising support for the ELP by informing:

- decision makers in the educational and political fields
- employers, state and private educational institutions

on the importance of innovative approaches to language learning, teaching and assessment.

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## Project Participant Countries

Austria - OSZ

Belgium - KdG

Croatia - the Association for Foreign Languages at the Croatian Chamber of Commerce

Estonia - Dialog College

Greece - **QLS & ELT News**

Italy - British School of Trieste

Lithuania - Utena College

Poland - PASE

Romania - PROSPER-ASE Language Centre (ccord.), EURISC, EuroEd, International Forum,  
QUEST Romania

Slovakia - Technical University of Kosice