



'Europe in Education' Priority Areas:

The European Dimension and Modern Language Tuition:
Best Practice Manual – EdGATE Interim Report

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Contents

Foreword	0
Introduction: EdGATE, the 'EdGATE Vision' and European Networking	1
What is EdGATE?	
The EdGATE Vision – MOBILITY for Europe – a MOBILE Europe - The European Regional College (ERC)	
European Networking EdGATE Component 3: Mobility and Exchange	
Priority Areas Workshop 3 'Europe in Education' focussing on Priority Areas 5) The European Dimension and 6) Modern Language Tuition	
Introductory Statement	3
Europe in Education - The European Dimension	4
A journey through the EdGATE landscape	
Examples of European Dimension Best Practice in the EdGATE regions	
Europe in Education - Modern Language Tuition	6
A journey through the EdGATE landscape	
Examples of Modern Language Tuition Best Practice in the EdGATE regions	
Summary and Outlook	8
The European Dimension and Modern Language Tuition	
EdGATE European Dimension and Modern Language Tuition Regional Experts	9
The EdGATE Partners	10

Foreword

'The regions of the enlarged Europe are confronted with similar economic and social challenges, in particular the rapidly evolving technological changes, the need for sustainable development, the progress of the information society and its consequences, trade globalisation, safety of supplies, unemployment, and the continuing need to promote equality of opportunities.'

Jean-Pierre Berg, Head of the ECOS Unit, Innovative Actions, European Regional Development Fund (2002)

Education definitely plays an important role to meet these challenges. The function of education in this regional development process is manifold. It could act as an ice-breaker to overcome barriers and prejudices; it could also function as a supporter and promoter of regional development; but it could also be a door-opener for new perspectives.

Having this in mind educational experts from ten regions across Europe decided to set up a network within the framework of the EU Programme INTERREG IIIC in order to share experience, develop ideas and to initiate projects for the benefit of their regions - in other words they decided to open a gate - the 'EdGATE'.

To fulfil the tasks they set themselves means a lot of work and commitment of the partners involved. The results achieved so far are very promising and the impact on regional development is more than could have been expected or dreamt of.

At this interim stage of the project let me take this opportunity of thanking all those who have contributed to the project.

In particular I would like to thank the EdGATE Teams in the partner regions and the continuous support of the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) of INTERREG IIIC East.

My special thanks go to the coordination team in Vienna guided by its highly committed Project Coordinator - Stuart Simpson.

Franz Schimek, Head of Project

Impressum

© 2006, EdGATE, European Office, Vienna Board of Education (Lead Partner)
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 Design and layout: creativwork.com; Production: 'agensketterl' Druckerei GmbH

Introduction: EdGATE, the 'EdGATE Vision' and European Networking

What is EdGATE?

EdGATE (Education Gate) is a network to foster professional educational exchange between institutions and their representatives from all over Europe with the aim of strengthening economic and social cohesion. 12 partners from ten regions are involved in the project.

EdGATE is part-financed by the EU in the context of INTERREG IIIC, a programme that helps Europe's regions form partnerships to work together on common projects; by sharing knowledge and experience. These partnerships enable the development of solutions to common economic, social and environmental challenges. There are currently 270 INTERREG IIIC projects running involving 2700 local and regional actors from 50 countries.

EdGATE is:

Management and Coordination

Organisation of the project.

Regional Implementation

Regional decision-makers are cooperating to find ways and means how specific project outputs can help strengthen their regions.

Mobility and Exchange

Regional experts are meeting to exchange best practice models and to develop new educational concepts for their regions.

Pilot project: European Regional College (ERC)

Regional experts are developing a concept for a new type of European school for the 6-18 year-olds (the European Regional College (ERC) the 'EdGATE vision').

Dissemination

Information and publicity measures are informing an interested public about the progress and outcomes of the project.

The EdGATE Vision – MOBILITY for Europe – a MOBILE Europe - The European Regional College (ERC)

A modern united Europe needs **MOBILITY**. Why?

The European labour market is in a process of transition. Citizens, if necessary, might have to move to other European regions. An important consideration for parents contemplating such a move is the type of schooling for their children. If families have to move to another region, they will want to find a school that, in terms of its basic concept, is similar to the one attended at home.

In this context, one of the main aims of EdGATE is to develop a new educational concept for a European Regional College (ERC) that will enable European students aged 6-18 to become mobile in a united Europe of tomorrow.

MOBILITY of Communication – ERC students will be perfect European ambassadors with outstanding competence in their mother tongue plus English plus another European language. They will learn to listen to others and communicate without difficulty.

MOBILITY of Thinking – ERC students will learn to be mobile in thinking, studying according to a European Curriculum and focusing on European themes in a new study field called 'European Studies'. They will learn to understand European issues and positively contribute to the region and the wider society they are living in.

MOBILITY of Interaction – ERC students will learn to work and cooperate with other European students either at their own ERC or in other European regions. They will learn to face challenges, solve problems and look for common solutions with colleagues from all over Europe.



European Networking – EdGATE Component 3: Mobility and Exchange

An important aim of EdGATE is to bring together regional educational institutions, their experts and decision-makers in a lasting Europe-wide network.

Shared knowledge and experience is being used in a networking process to identify best practice and develop joint concepts to improve regional educational policies, which in turn are helping to strengthen economic and social cohesion within the European Union.

Component 3: Mobility and Exchange is dedicated to networking *between* the regions. It is also the component in which the majority of content work is being carried out. The aim is, in joint exchange between the regions, to understand and describe the connection between educational measures and a positive regional economical development.

Goals:

- Building durable networks between the project partners, regional representatives and regional experts, which are supporting and fostering a dynamic exchange of knowledge and experience between the various regions and varying actors, and as a result documenting the connection between education and regional development
- Fostering and supporting exchange between regional experts through workshops and study visits
- Fostering and supporting partner mobility
- Exchanging and comparing *Best Practice*
- Producing *Best Practice Manuals*, containing examples of best practice in various educational areas – in the EdGATE context they are called *Priority Areas*. Based on this *Priority Areas New Models Catalogues* are being developed
- Supporting the development of a concept for a European Regional College.

In the context of this component, workshops and study visits are being carried out focusing on the eight listed Priority Areas. These Priority Areas represent the central content axis of the EdGATE operation and can be divided into the following four emphases areas:

Equality in Education 1) Social inclusion 2) Gender mainstreaming	Europe in Education 5) European dimension in education 6) Modern language tuition
Quality in Education 3) Quality assurance 4) Teacher education	Vocation in Education 7) Vocational education 8) ICT (e-inclusion)

Results are being implemented at regional level and will contribute to the development of the concept for a new type of regional school for students aged 6-18 (the European Regional College - ERC) for the benefit of the ordinary European citizen – the 'EdGATE Vision'.

Priority Areas Workshop 3 'Europe in Education' focussing on Priority Areas 5) The European Dimension and 6) Modern Language Tuition

On 23-24 January 2006 Regional Experts from the EdGATE partner regions met in Vienna, Austria to exchange Best Practice models from their regions in the Priority Areas: 5) The European Dimension and 6) Modern Language Tuition.

The following publication will give insight into the varying models and challenges throughout Europe in the area of 'Europe in Education' – The European Dimension and Modern Language Tuition - based on spoken and written statements made by these experts as well as drawing conclusions and making suggestions for the way ahead.

For updates on the Priority Areas 5) The European Dimension and 6) Modern Language Tuition visit 'Project Results' at www.edgate.eu.com

Introductory Statement

The European Dimension

'It is this diversity that makes the European Union what it is: not a 'melting pot' in which differences are rendered down, but a common home in which diversity is celebrated, and where our many mother tongues are a source of wealth and a bridge to greater solidarity and mutual understanding.'

(Brussels, COM (2005) 596 final)

Modern Language Tuition

'At long last, Europe is on its way to becoming one big family, without bloodshed, a real transformation ... the continent of humane values, of liberty, solidarity and above all diversity, meaning respect for others' languages, cultures and traditions.'

(Laeken Declaration, 2001)

The necessity for language acquisition and intercultural understanding in a European context

Taking into account Europe's history and the philosophy of the European Union towards Europe's diversity, it becomes obvious that the acquisition of languages and the integration of the European dimension into school education are closely related. Mutual acceptance of peoples with different languages, histories and traditions can be greatly supported by acquiring language skills and promoting the European dimension in all teaching areas.

Intercultural communicative skills also assume an important role in trading, global marketing and sales strategies. In the context of the Lisbon Goals, the contribution of language skills is essential for the competitiveness of the EU economy. *'Language competencies are part of the core of skills that every EU citizen needs for training, employment, cultural exchange and personal fulfilment'* (Brussels, COM (2003) 449 final).

Vienna, EdGATE, language acquisition and the European Dimension

For the EdGATE partner region of Vienna it is now more important than ever that its inhabitants possess the intercultural skills necessary to understand and communicate with their fellow Europeans. The Viennese school system is on its way to the implementation of the teaching of at least two modern languages from an early age (*Barcelona European Council, 15 and 16 March 2002, Presidency Conclusions, part I 43.1.*).

The EdGATE Priority Area 'Europe in Education' with its two components 'Modern Language Tuition' and 'European Dimension' and the forthcoming implementation of the EdGATE pilot school European Regional College (ERC) will consequently foster lifelong language learning and enhance the quality and reinforce the European dimension of school education within the region.

Europe in Education

Through the combination of both Priority Areas: 'The European Dimension' and 'Modern Language Tuition', 'Europe in Education' not only includes cognitive (language skills, historical and cultural background of the participating EdGATE regions; analysis of text books with regard to the European dimension etc.) but also affective aims (interaction of national identity and European identity, intercultural understanding, negotiating skills etc.).

As the following pages will show the main aim of enhancing the quality and reinforcing the European dimension in school education is to reduce - in the EdGATE regions - on the one hand unrealistic fears in social contacts and on the other hand prejudices due to a lack of knowledge.

Horst Tschaikner, EdGATE Regional Expert, Vienna

Europe in Education – The European Dimension

A journey through the EdGATE landscape

Explanation: In many cases, regional educational policy is identical with national education policy. For this reason the following statements taken from written and spoken statements from the EdGATE Regional Experts before and during the Priority Areas Workshop 3 'Europe in Education' focussing on the Priority Area 5) The European Dimension (23-24 January 2006 in Vienna, Austria) quote the country.

In some cases, the region is mentioned where it refers to local and regional educational measures.

The European dimension within the curricula of the regions.

In some regions the European dimension has already been integrated into curricula. But there are also regions where there is no provision.

However, there is an overall development in all of the regions to promote the ideal of the European Dimension.

In *Scotland* the European dimension has always featured very strongly within the area of Modern Language teaching. Not only through modern languages teachers promoting the theme of multiculturalism and engaging pupils' interest in other ways of life, but also through student exposure to Foreign Language Assistants (FLA), who bring another culture into the classroom. FLAs are regarded as valued resources, both by pupils and teachers.

Several years ago *Mecklenburg-West Pomerania* was involved in an EU-funded project called 'Primary goes Europe' aiming at introducing the European dimension in primary school curricula. One of the most significant outputs of this project was the fact that the project partners identified areas in their curricula that could be taught in the context of the European dimension. This in turn proved to be of great significance in the development of a primary school curriculum in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. There is still, however, a need to increase teacher awareness regarding the importance of the integration of the European dimension in their tuition.

Ms Quade, Regional Expert from Schwerin/Greifswald, says:

'The integration of the European dimension should not only be the concern of modern language teachers; every teacher should be interested in looking for possibilities of integration.

Every European teacher should have a basic interest in teaching European students. It is, therefore, very important to point out to teachers that they are not losing out on their teaching time if they include the European dimension.'

In *Austria* the European dimension as an overall educational principle is introduced in the first chapter of all national curricula. The important process of European integration is presented as a crucial teaching goal; and as such is a compulsory principle that has to be integrated in all school subjects.

There are in-service teacher training courses at Pedagogical Institutes to enhance and promote this overall pedagogical principle. But there is no national evaluation to evaluate if this general principle is really being implemented.

Mr Tschakner, Regional Expert from Vienna, says:

'A good way to integrate the European dimension is to take part in European projects that are part-funded by the EU.

European Primary Village (EPV), for example, was a Comenius project for primary school teachers that developed an interactive platform. The main aims of this project were to enable teachers to embed the European dimension in classroom work and to use ICT as an integrated tool to foster the European dimension in the primary school classroom.'

In *Poland* the European dimension is integrated in all primary and secondary curricula.

At primary level students become acquainted with images of student life in other countries. They are also familiarised with traditions of national and European culture and develop a sense of belonging through their knowledge of the most important aspects of European and World history. Students also learn about cooperation and integration between Poland and the European Union.

At secondary level, schools are committed to presenting the organisation and responsibilities of the most important European and European Union organisations, and to point out practical possibilities of youth cooperation within the European Union.

In *Romania* the curriculum does not provide special training for teachers to promote the European dimension. However, history, geography and modern languages teachers are expected to create an awareness and respect for other cultures.

In *Bosnia Herzegovina* there is no specific mention of the European dimension in curricula. In subjects like history, geography, literature and modern languages students learn more about other countries, human rights and democracy; but there is a definite need for modifications to curricula to expressly focus on the European dimension.

In the *Ukraine* the main problem is that on the one hand many older teachers show no great interest in the European dimension and on the other hand there is a lack of good teaching material promoting the European dimension.

Ms Myropolska, Regional Expert from Kiev, points out the tasks of her institution:
'The main role of the Municipal Pedagogical University is to encourage open-mindedness. Another main issue is that there are no universal books for studying languages, culture, and tradition. Mostly the books in use have not been adapted and it is very difficult for students and teachers to work with them.'

Examples of European Dimension Best Practice in the EdGATE regions

In 1993 in *Scotland* the SCCC (Scottish Consultative Committee on the Curriculum) produced a useful booklet on the European dimension in Education 5-14 as part of a series relating to cross-curricular issues. This has recently been superseded by revised 5-14 National Guidelines. The suggestions in the area of Environmental Studies have proved particularly helpful for developing international education to the point of enabling students to begin to acquire an international outlook.

In *Poland* there is a bilateral cooperation with Germany through the Collegium Polonicum in Słubice, a joint unit of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the Viadrina European University in Frankfurt an der Oder.

This unit carries out teaching and research activities and supports the activities of Polish and German academics. It also looks into problems of European integration in border regions.

Bosnia Herzegovina cooperates with other European schools in Sweden, France, Italy and Denmark in the fields of sport, music and film.

The principles of the new educational system are based on democracy, ecology and modern technology.

Ms Duraković, Regional Expert from Sarajevo, points out the position of a student in her region:
'The student is no longer an object within the educational process. The learner has become the main actor in our educational system. This means that the teacher is now a coordinator in the learning process organising study trips to other countries where students can learn on the spot everything they want to know about the respective country.'

Persons to promote the European Dimension.

Ms Crichton, Regional Expert from Edinburgh, gave a presentation about the European dimension in *Scotland* and mentioned that there are 32 international coordinators whose task is to promote the European dimension.

In *Romania* schools in rural areas are afraid of partnerships and English language teachers are too busy to promote the European dimension.

The ideal situation would be to have a motivated team in each school interested in promoting the European dimension.

In *Mecklenburg-West Pomerania* two colleagues were responsible for promoting the Socrates programme. Part of their work was to invite teachers to attend regular meetings. Initially, the coordinators were highly motivated, but unfortunately attendance at the meetings was very low. The result was: the colleagues were so disappointed that they stopped their activities.

Ms Quade, Regional Expert from Schwerin/Greifswald, says:
'If you do not have the backing of the school it is a really hard job.'



Europe in Education – Modern Language Tuition

A journey through the EdGATE landscape

Explanation: In many cases, regional educational policy is identical with national education policy. For this reason the following statements taken from written and spoken statements from the EdGATE Regional Experts before and during the Priority Areas Workshop 3 'Europe in Education' focussing on the Priority Area 6) Modern Language Tuition (23-24 January 2006 in Vienna, Austria) quote the country.

In some cases, the region is mentioned where it refers to local and regional educational measures.

The EdGATE regions provide Modern Language Tuition in different ways.

In *Romania* two modern languages are compulsory: the first at the age of eight and the second at the age of 12.

On the one hand there are a number of bilingual classes, on the other there is a lack of teachers, especially in the rural areas. This can be explained by the fact that after the 1989 political revolution, many modern languages teachers started to work in private companies where they could earn more money.

Also the *Ukraine* has a problem with a lack of modern language teachers. Teacher salaries are very low. There is also a lack of good teaching material.

The starting point for learning a modern language depends on the type of school. There are numerous language schools, where children start learning English at 6/7 and at the age of eight other languages.

Similar to Romania and the Ukraine, teachers in *Bosnia Herzegovina* receive low salaries but are expected to organise workshops and introduce new methods.

In *Poland* children start to learn a modern language at the age of ten.

At upper primary (10-13) and lower secondary level (13-16), schools are required to offer one modern language which is included in the compulsory part of the core curriculum.

At higher secondary level (16-19), schools are required to offer two modern languages which are included in the compulsory part of the core curriculum.

Secondary school autonomy means that students can now study more modern languages (as compulsory subject or compulsory curriculum options).

There are also upper secondary schools that specialise in modern languages and organise bilingual teaching.

In *Scotland* students start to learn a modern language at the age of ten.

63% learn French and 26% learn German.

They have the option to choose a second modern language at the age of 15.

In *Austria* students start to learn a modern language at the age of six.

Teaching modern languages to six- or seven-year old children requires specialised didactical and methodological expertise. A large scale training programme was initiated to train these teachers in didactics and methodology as well as fostering linguistic competence.

Examples of Modern Language Tuition Best Practice in the EdGATE regions

In southern *Romania* there is a tendency towards private schools. Parents trust private schools more than they trust state schools.

In *Mecklenburg-West Pomerania* a model was introduced where students aged 6/7 are taught special subjects in English or French. The teacher can choose the language of instruction. The problem is that there is a lack of qualified teachers.

Minorities in the different regions.

In *Scotland* there are special Gaelic schools; in *Romania* Sinti children are taught in Grade 1 in their mother tongue and in *Poland* German, Ukrainian and Russian languages are very much in demand for the people who live near these national borders.

Training for modern language teachers.

Ms Crichton, Regional Expert from Edinburgh, gave a presentation on Modern Languages in *Scotland* focusing on how primary school teachers are trained to teach a modern language. Training lasts for 27 days and includes all aspects of language teaching methodology.

In *Germany* teachers have to attend special modern language training courses for two and a half years. A three-week stay in an English-speaking country is also compulsory. A major problem is that there is a lack of teachers.

In *Romania* modern language training at Pedagogical High Schools lasts up to five years. After graduation teachers are qualified to teach French or English in primary schools although they have not been taught basic primary school methodology and are not equipped to teach young children.

Therefore Ms Barz, Regional Expert from Calarasi, suggests:
'Teachers should be first trained for primary schools.'



Summary and Outlook

The participants of Workshop 3 - Europe in Education agreed on developing language teaching materials that integrate the European dimension into existing curricula.

The research and development plan comprises the following:

1. Analysis of the modern language curricula of the regions for all age groups.
2. Creation of teaching materials for all age groups.
3. Publication of the results on the EdGATE homepage making the materials available for teachers all over Europe.
4. Creation of a separate subject (on a voluntary basis) for European Citizenship, European history, etc. in the context of the European dimension.



EdGATE European Dimension and Modern Language Tuition Regional Experts

Adela Dumitra BARZ: Calarasi; Open & Distance Learning Centre

Hazel CRICHTON: Edinburgh; University of Glasgow

Sabina DURAKOVIC: Sarajevo; Grammar School Dobrinja

Yevheniya MYROPOLSKA: Kiev; Municipal Pedagogical University

Piotr OKAS: Cracow; Pedagogical University of Cracow

Ada QUADE: Greifswald; Institute for School and Further Education, Mecklenburg- West Pomerania

Horst TSCHAIKNER: European Office, Vienna Board of Education



The EdGATE Partners

There are 12 partners from ten European regions involved in the EdGATE operation. Five regions are in EU Member States and five regions are from so-called Third Countries. The European Office of the Vienna Board of Education is the Lead Partner (LP).

Partners:

European Office, Vienna Board of Education (AT) - (Lead Partner)

Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh (UK)

Cracow Pedagogical University (PL)

Federal Ministry of Education and Science, Bosnia Herzegovina (BiH)

Office for Education and Sport, City of Zagreb (HR)

Department of Education, City Assembly of Belgrade (SCG)

School Inspectorate of the County of Calarasi (RO)

Open & Distance Learning Centre, Calarasi (RO)

Main Education and Science Board, Kiev City State Administration (UA)

Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania (DE)

Institute for School and Further Education, Mecklenburg- West Pomerania (DE)

State Institute for Schools, North-Rhine Westphalia (DE)

