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46 member States
700 MILLION EUROPEANS

The Council of Europe: a catalyst for innovation and systemic change in the field of language education

Dr Sarah Breslin

Executive Director, European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) and Head of Language Policy, Council of Europe

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Presentation Overview

Part 1: the bigger picture

Part 2: a comprehensive and systemic approach to language education

Part 3: the way ahead

Part 4: concluding remarks

Part 1: the bigger picture

Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law

REYKJAVÍK SUMMIT May 2023

(Council of Europe, n.d.)
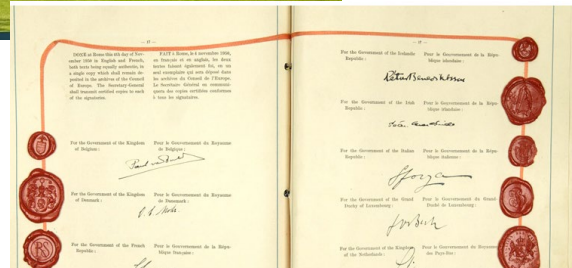
We, the Heads of State and Government, are committed to

- *invest in a DEMOCRATIC FUTURE*
- *ensure that everyone is able to play their role in democratic processes*
- *prioritise education about … core democratic values, such as pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability.*

Reykjavik Declaration – United around our values
(Council of Europe, 2023)

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Preserving and strengthening democracy in European societies

The Department of Education

The answer to the question:

"What kind of education do we need?"

lies in the answer to another question:

"What kind of society do we want?".

Tironi, E. (2005). *El sueño chileno*. In S. Bergan. Not by bread alone. (2011).

PROGRAMMES

Formal and non formal education

Higher and further education

Language policy and practice

Digital transformation

History Education and political studies

Knowledge Hub

(Council of Europe, n.d.)

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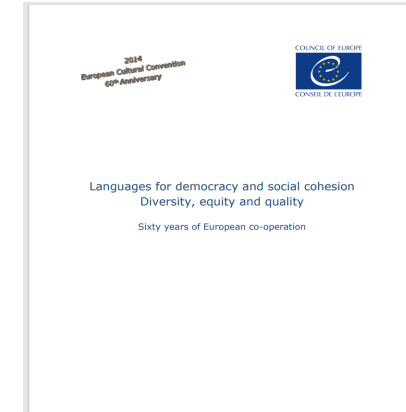# Language policy and practice: almost 70 years of evolutions

- 1954: European Cultural Convention

- 1969: Resolution (69)2: language learning for all

- 1970s and 1980s: from adult education into the school sector, training workshops

- 1990s:extensive enlargement of the CoE; development of the CEFR and the ELP

- 1994: establishment of the ECML

- 2001: publication of the CEFR and the ELP, European year of languages

- 2005/6: focus on inclusion and cohesion: developments began in the areas of language/s of schooling/support for adult migrants

- 2014: Recommendation CM/Rec (2014)5 on competences in the language of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success

- 2018: CEFR Companion Volume

- 2022: LASLLIAM Reference Guide – migrants with low levels of literacy

- 2022: Adoption of Recommendation R (2022)1 on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture

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Language policy and practice: almost 70 years of constants

- **Social justice and inclusion (support for the most vulnerable)**

- **Promotion and preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity**

- **Democratic citizenship**

- **Lifelong learning**

3 defining principles (Little, 2019, p.20-21):
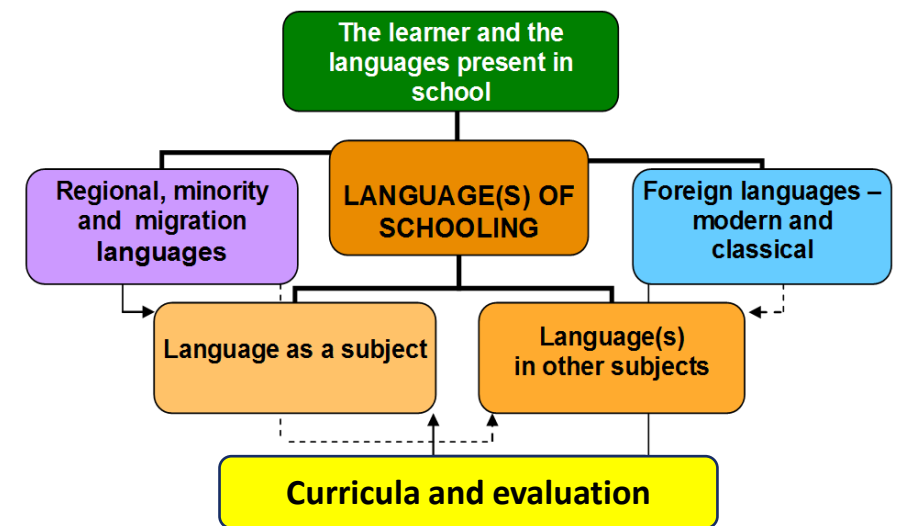
- **The individual learner/citizen is an autonomous social agent with rights and responsibilities**

- **Communicative purpose is prior to linguistic content**

- **Language education should be plurilingual and intercultural**

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Plurilingual and intercultural education: the what

"Plurilingual and intercultural education" is a holistic concept that has an impact on all areas of education policy and practice. Setting out to foster the development of integrated linguistic repertoires in which languages interrelate and interact, it takes explicit account of and seeks to bring into interaction with one another:

- i. the languages and cultures that learners bring with them, including sign, minority and migrant languages and cultures;

- ii. the language/s of schooling, which vary in genre and terminology according to the different subjects taught and differ in significant ways from the language of informal everyday communication;

- iii. regional, minority and other languages and cultures that are part of the curriculum;

- iv. foreign languages (modern and classical);

- v. other languages and cultures that are not present in school and not part of the official curriculum. (Council of Europe, 2022, paragraph 3i.)

CEFR 1.3 defines plurilingualism as "*a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact*" (Council of Europe, 2001)

Plurilingual and intercultural education: the what and the why

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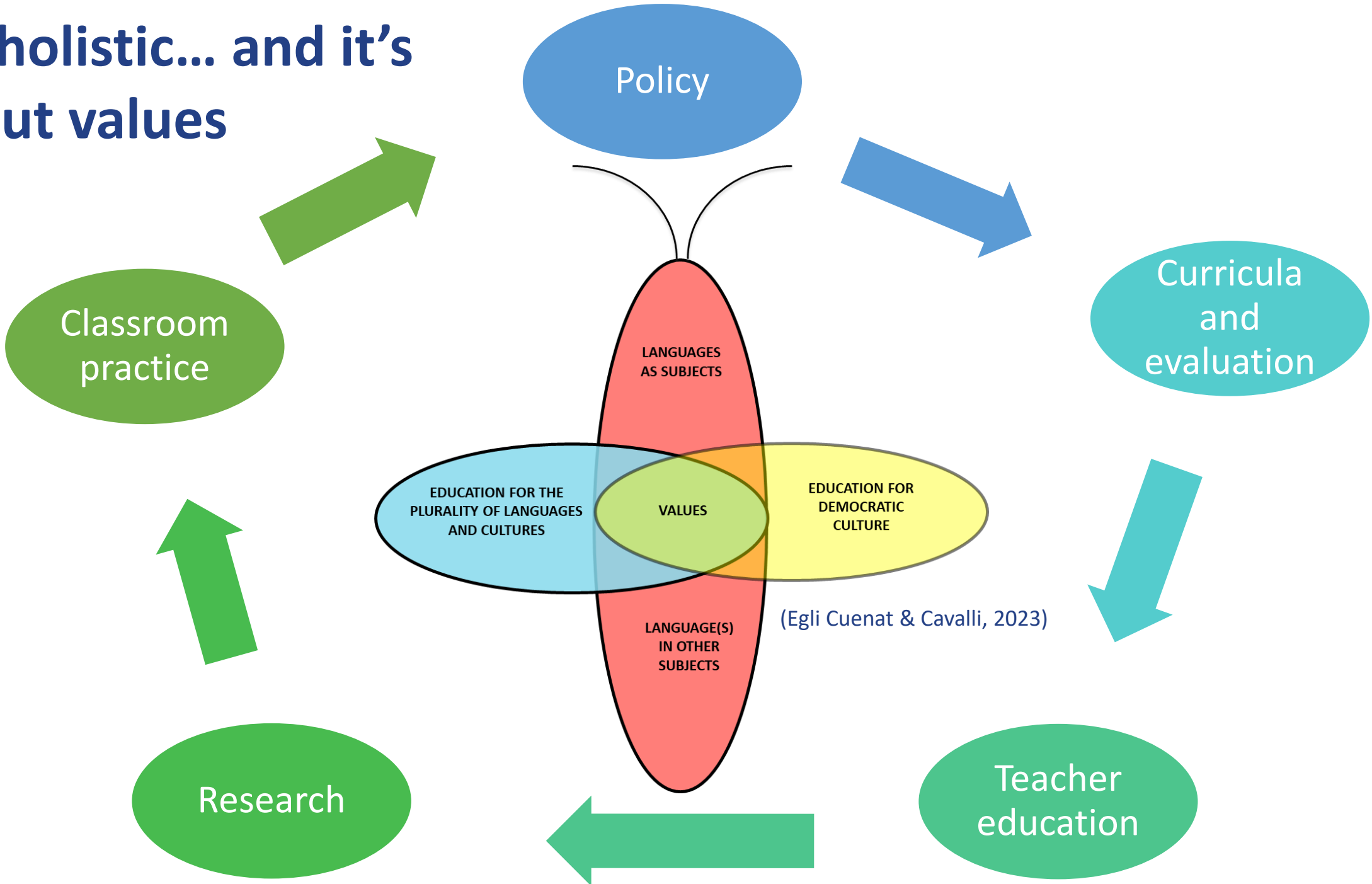
PRINCIPLES

Plurilingual and intercultural education:

I. is essential to education for democratic culture;

II. respects and values linguistic and cultural diversity;

III. promotes language awareness and language sensitivity across the curriculum;

IV. encourages critical reflection on cultural diversity;

V. helps to foster critical digital literacy and digital citizenship;

VI. encourages learner autonomy and values the learner's voice;

VII. supports the inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalized learners on an equal footing with other learners.

(Council of Europe, 2022, paragraph 4)

It's holistic… and it's about values

Policy

Curricula and evaluation

Teacher education

Research

Classroom practice

LANGUAGES AS SUBJECTS

EDUCATION FOR THE PLURALITY OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

VALUES

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

LANGUAGE(S) IN OTHER SUBJECTS

(Egli Cuenat & Cavalli, 2023)

Part 2: a comprehensive and systemic approach to language education

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THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS
Decision-making body

(Council of Europe, n.d.)

- **comprises the foreign ministers of all the member States, or their ambassadors**

- **adopts legal instruments (recommendations, conventions) and approves the Organisation's budget**

- **supervises the execution of the judgements delivered by the European Court of Human Rights**

- **meets annually at ministerial level and several times a month (ambassadors)**

Recommendation R (2022) 1 on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture

The rationale: what's in a name?

It addresses two specific developments of concern to the Council of Europe:

- *"... a tendency on the part of public authorities and civil society to think that proficiency in one additional language is enough as long as that language is English"*

- *"... the populist notion that proficiency in minority or migrant languages, widespread in today's increasingly diverse societies, is harmful to societal cohesion"*
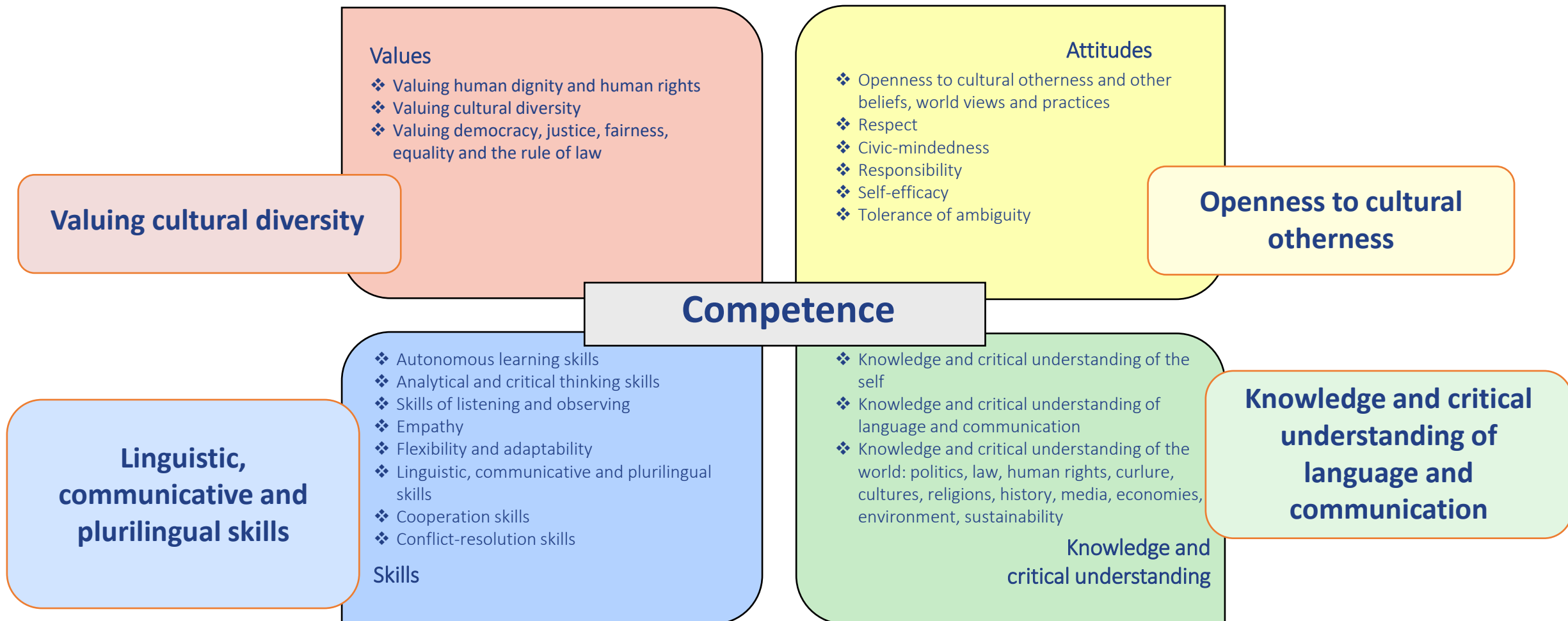
(Council of Europe, 2022)

Recommendation on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education ... for democratic culture

Two specific concerns which relate to one MAJOR concern:
"the backsliding of democracy" (Pejčinović Burić, 2021)

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Reference framework of competences for democratic culture

Values
- ❖ Valuing human dignity and human rights
- ❖ Valuing cultural diversity
- ❖ Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law

Valuing cultural diversity

Attitudes
- ❖ Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices
- ❖ Respect
- ❖ Civic-mindedness
- ❖ Responsibility
- ❖ Self-efficacy
- ❖ Tolerance of ambiguity

Openness to cultural otherness

Competence

- ❖ Autonomous learning skills
- ❖ Analytical and critical thinking skills
- ❖ Skills of listening and observing
- ❖ Empathy
- ❖ Flexibility and adaptability
- ❖ Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
- ❖ Cooperation skills
- ❖ Conflict-resolution skills

Skills

Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills

- ❖ Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
- ❖ Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
- ❖ Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, curlure, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability

Knowledge and critical understanding

Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication

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From awareness-raising to discussion to reform

- **Publicise – website/newsletter**

- **Translate – several language versions now available!**

L'IMPORTANZA DELL'EDUCAZIONE
PLURILINGUE E INTERCULTURALE
PER LA CULTURA DEMOCRATICA

Strumenti legali   Raccomandazione CM/Rec(2022)1
Memorandum

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- **Choose an extract from any part of the text or its Explanatory Memorandum and debate the implications for your role, your institution, your research, your country**

- **www.ecml.at/webinars**

- **Review your institution's language policy/develop an institution-wide language policy**

- **Develop an action plan to implement the policy**

- **Review ongoing research through a plurilingual and intercultural lens**

Assessment plays an essential role in education at all levels, whether its purpose is to monitor progress, diagnose difficulties, offer opportunities to reflect on future learning or measure achievement. If curricula and pedagogy aim to promote plurilingual and intercultural learning for democratic culture, it is essential that all modes of assessment respond to this objective. The central role played by self-assessment in the European Language Portfolio implies the possibility of an assessment culture in which learners also have a voice. (Explanatory Memorandum, 5.b.xvi.)

Current initiatives in the Language Policy Programme – going beyond...policy!

CEFR/CEFR CV

Key concepts · descriptors · ideas for implementation

LANGUAGE POLICY

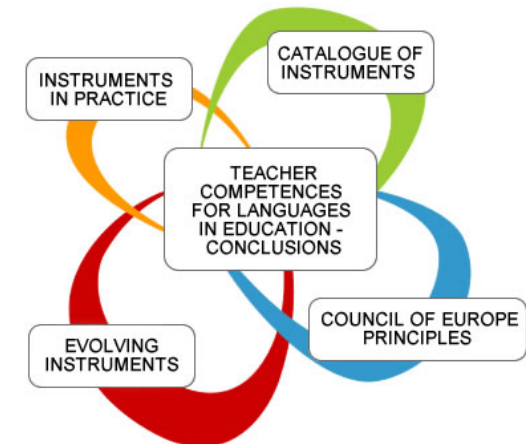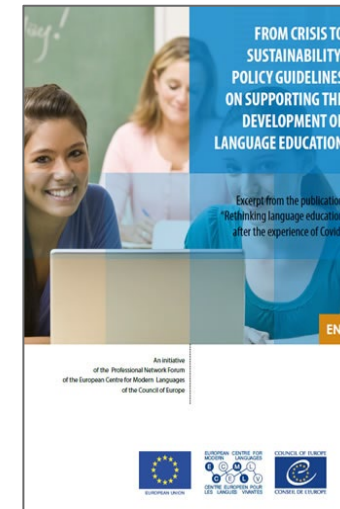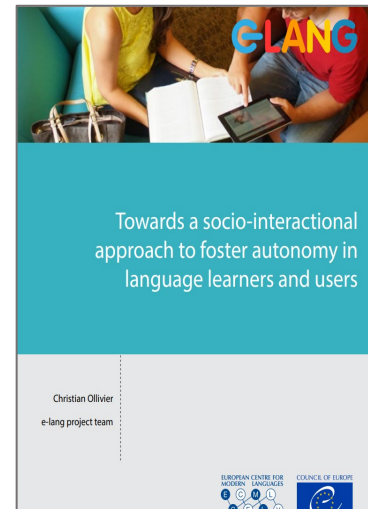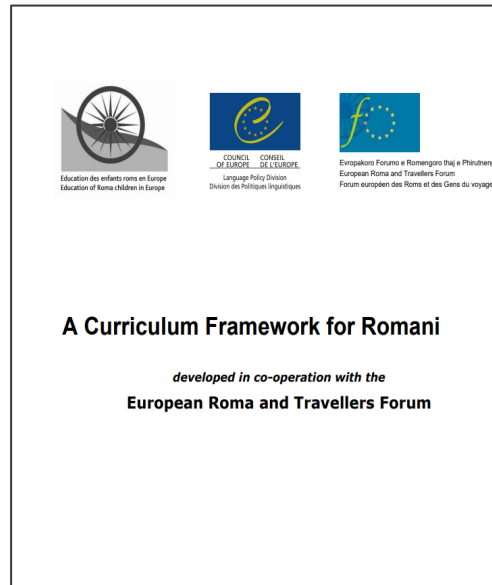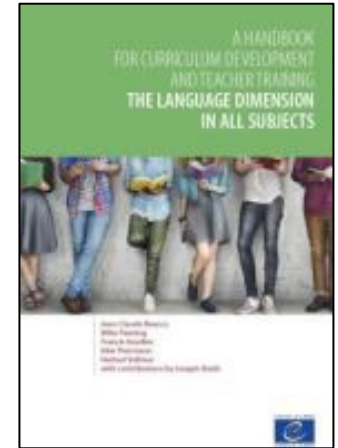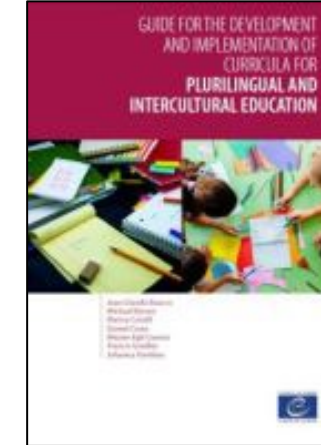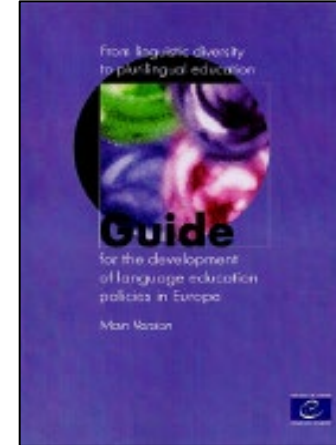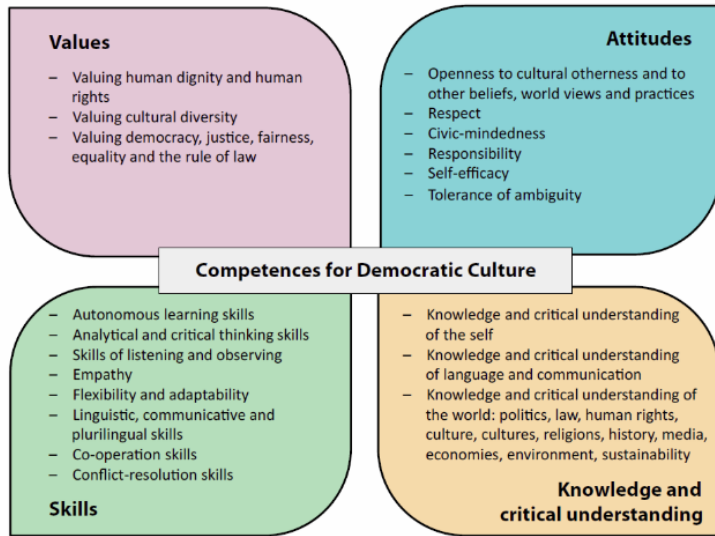## Linguistic support for migrants and refugees

- **Reference guide for Literacy and Second Language Learning for Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LASLLIAM)**
- **Toolkit(s)**
- **Guidelines (Ukraine)**

RPPE

Romani Plurilingual Policy Experimentation

- **Curriculum Framework for Romani (in 10 languages)**
- **Project involving 12 schools in 3 countries**
- **QUALIROM classroom resources**

Frameworks and Guides: a selection

Thematic Area: Curricula and Evaluation

RELANG

QUALITY AND INNOVATION IN EDUCATION
CEFR AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION
PROMISING PRACTICES OF USING CEFR
RESOURCES AND GLOSSARY
CEFR QUALITY MATRIX
RELATED PUBLICATIONS
ABOUT THE PROJECT
TUTORIALS

Tips and tricks to create mediation activities
What we have learnt so far...

Read the theory...
- Familiarise yourself with the concept of mediation
- What kind of mediation activity would you like to create?
- View examples of tasks (e.g. activity bank)

Authenticity matters
- Search for everyday examples in your immediate environment (where people use mediation everyday without knowing it)
- Look for authentic texts
- Wide range of authentic texts, songs, picture books, comics, advertisements, messages on social media

Creation is a process
- Find tools/resources you could use to create multilingual materials/tasks
- Think of text complexity (less complex source texts for lower levels, higher complexity for higher level)
- Relevance to students' needs (modern topics/everyday issues)
- The culture / linguistic features of your students' heritage languages
- Problems the students encounter when learning the target language
- Adapt the authentic texts and construct the activity

Is technology part of the game?
- Tools/resources students can use to decode/use texts/words in languages other than the target language
- Free online multilingual dictionaries (picture dictionary inclusive)
- Social media? (Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok)
- Sites where students can share their productions

Final touch
- Inclusion (any learning difficulties?)
- Formative assessment (self and peer-assessment: metacognitive skills)
- Ask for support and validation from colleagues

RECOLANG

Introduction
For whom and how?
Assessment
How can I get involved?
Survey

Survey on assessment practices of home language competences

In 2021 and 2022 the Recolang project conducted a European survey to investigate and map the role of plurilingual pupils' home languages at school, particularly within different education programmes or curricula involving adolescents with a migrant background aged 11-18. The survey focused on identifying and describing the practices of assessing home language skills and their role in different European education systems and beyond. The survey was composed of two strands aimed at different target audiences:

A strand aimed at **pupils aged between 11 and 18** with a migrant background and who have one or more home languages other than the language(s) of the school.

A strand for **schools and educational institutions**, teaching and supervisory staff in schools, reception centres and organisations involved in initial and further professional development of teachers working with this age group (11-18 years).

Want to know more about the possibilities of including pupils' home languages in assessment? Watch this knowledge clip on **multilingualism in assessment.**

Multilingualism is assessment
Learning oriented assessment:
- Language-neutral plurilingual curriculum
- Language learning diaries
- Observations

Ansehen auf YouTube

ECML-EC COLLOQUIUM DECEMBER 2022

Inspiring innovation in language education: changing contexts, evolving competences
Inspirer l'innovation dans l'éducation aux langues : contextes changeants, compétences en évolution

ECML 6mtp project results:
Themes, target groups and output formats

Teacher competences for pluralistic approaches

Assessing the home language competences of migrant pupils

Mediation in teaching, learning and assessment

Planning language-sensitive teacher education

CLIL in languages other than English Successful transitions

Digital citizenship through language education

CEFR Companion Volume implementation toolbox

Language education in cross-border vocational education

Young children's language learning pathways

Principles, guidelines, recommendations

Teacher education modules

Pedagogical frameworks

Transferable case-studies

Database of classroom activities

Stakeholder engagement – at multiple levels

Committee of Ministers

Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU)

ECML Governing Board
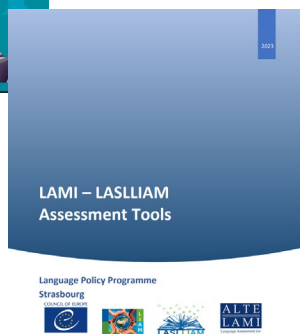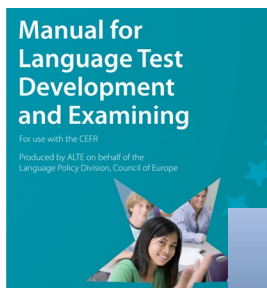Appointed ministerial representatives from each member state

ECML National Nominating Authorities
Agencies in each member state linked to ministries

ECML National Contact Points
National networks in language education

Austrian Association for the ECML (Verein EFSZ)
Representing Austrian authorities

ALTE
Association of Language Testers in Europe

EUROPEAN UNION

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

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ALTE and the Council of Europe: a valued partnership

- **Joint publications and resources**
  - **Manual for Language Test Development and Examining**
  - **LLAT – LAMI LASLLIAM Assessment Tools**

- **Translations**
  - **sections of the LIAM website LLAT Tools**

- **Surveys related to LIAM**
  - **2018: Survey on Language Policies and Language Requirements for Migrants in the Member States and report**

- **Founding member of the ECML's Professional Network Forum**

- **Speakers for conferences/roundtables/colloquia**
  - **2016 ECML Colloquium – *Ensuring quality in language testing and assessment: the contribution of the CEFR***

Part 3: the way ahead

CoE language education programmes 2024-2027: key factors

Language policy programme –
46 member States

ECML Core Programme:
36 member States – additional financial commitment
ECML-EC Cooperation Agreement: 38 member States

HUMAN RIGHTS

DEMOCRACY

Council of Europe Member States

Agreed activities and outputs

Experts

Secretariat

RULE OF LAW
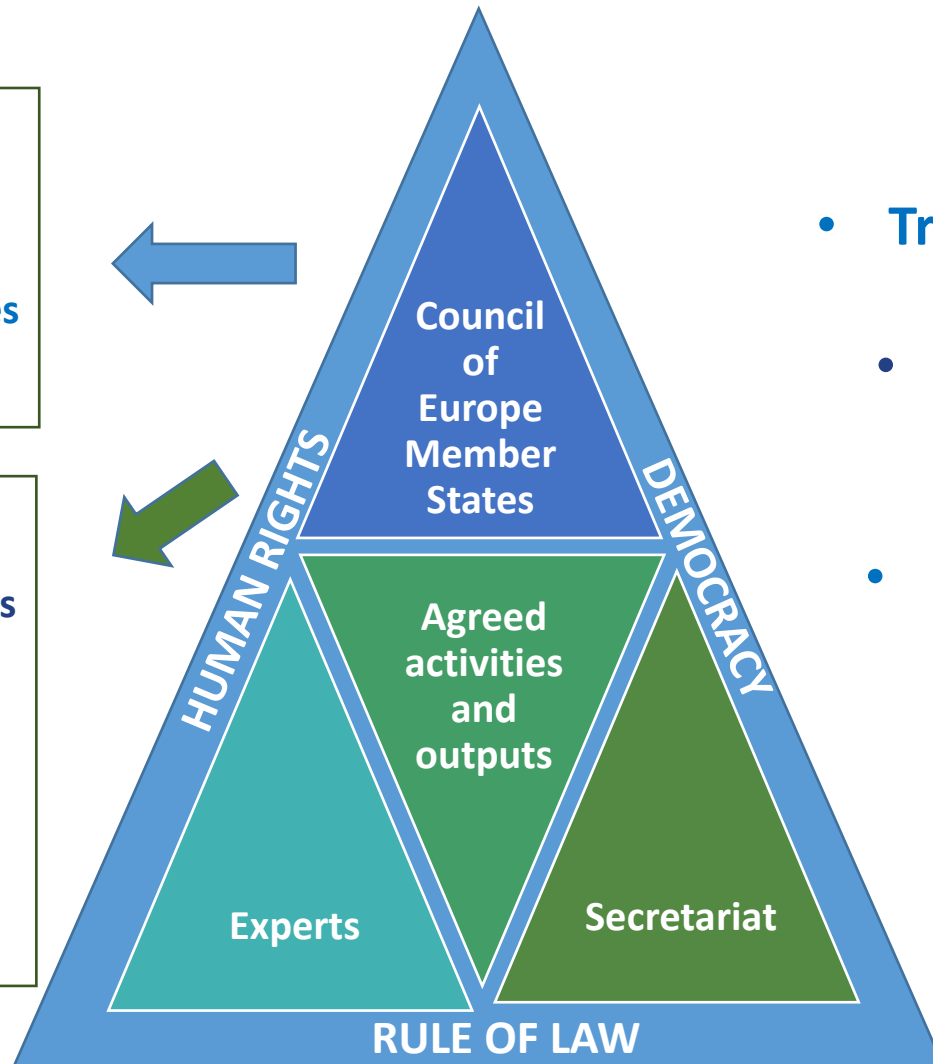
- **Triangulation: Member States · Experts · Secretariat**

- **Transparency · Member State Engagement and Ownership**

- **Coherence – Complementarity – Differentiation**

- **Visibility · Accessibility · Less is more!**

- **Criticality**

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Language Policy 2024-2027
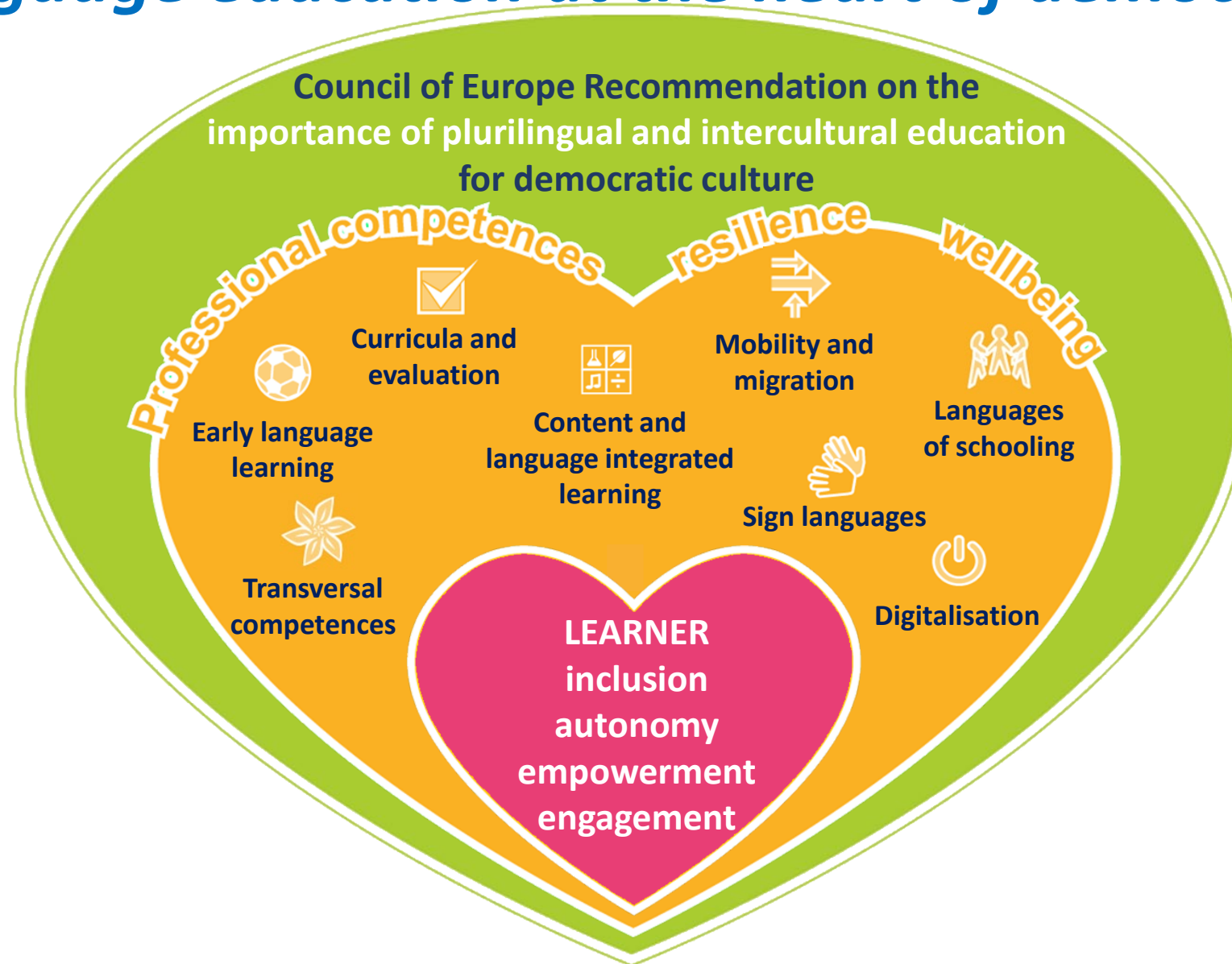
LANGUAGE POLICY

Aim: to provide support, *primarily at the level of policy* **for the implementation of Recommendation(2022)1 on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture via:**

- a compendium of key messages with updated and/or new policy guidelines linked to the Recommendation (e.g., constructive alignment/home languages/early years etc)

- a refresh/simplification of former Language Education Policy Profiles

- new guidelines on the relationship between the RFCDC and quality language education linked to the CEFR/CEFR CV

- case-studies exemplifying good practice in support of Romani resulting from the Romani Plurilingual Policy Experimentation Project (RPPE)

- further promotion of existing resources to support the linguistic integration of migrants and refugees; examples of usage

- identification of examples of good practice which reflect CoE standards and values in relation to knowledge of society teaching and testing
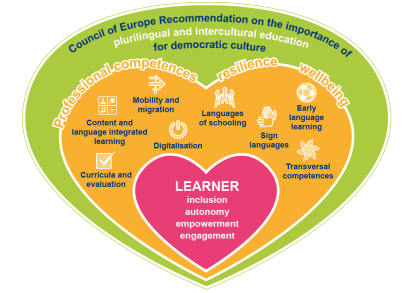
ECML 2024-2027:
Language education at the heart of democracy

Council of Europe Recommendation on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture

Professional competences

resilience

wellbeing

Curricula and evaluation

Mobility and migration

Languages of schooling

Early language learning

Content and language integrated learning

Transversal competences

Sign languages

Digitalisation

LEARNER
inclusion
autonomy
empowerment
engagement

New ECML programme 2024-2027:
Languages at the heart of democracy

Development strand: new projects

Policy implementation

(Language) teacher education

The practice of language learning and teaching

- First steps towards implementing CM/Rec (2022)1
- Developing intercultural competences
- Language development in vocational education
- Language teacher autonomy and criticality
- CLIL for knowledge-building
- Using AI in language education
- Developing 21st century skills through languages
- Formative assessment in language teacher education
- Linguistic diversity in pre- and primary education
- Potential of home languages

Mediation strand: Training and consultancy

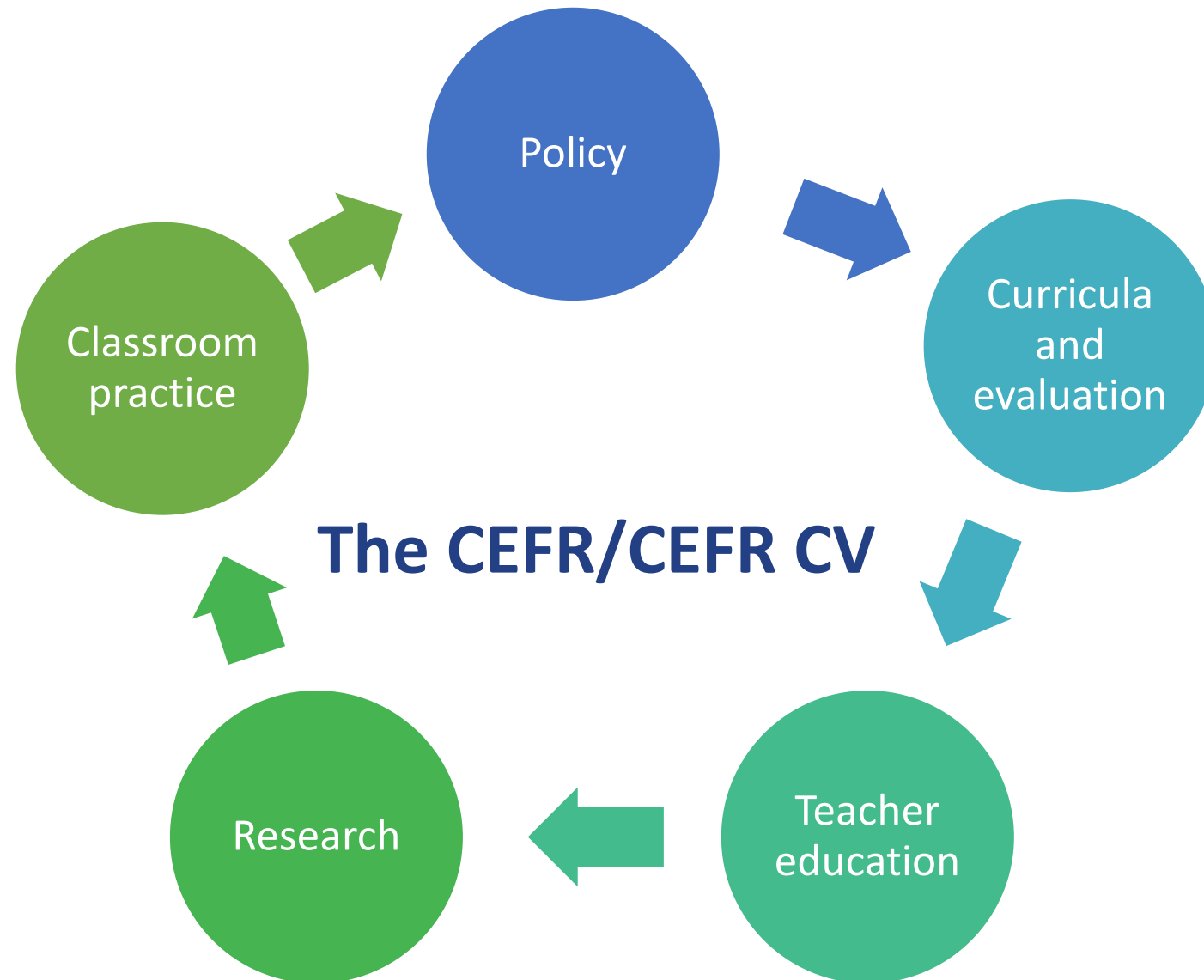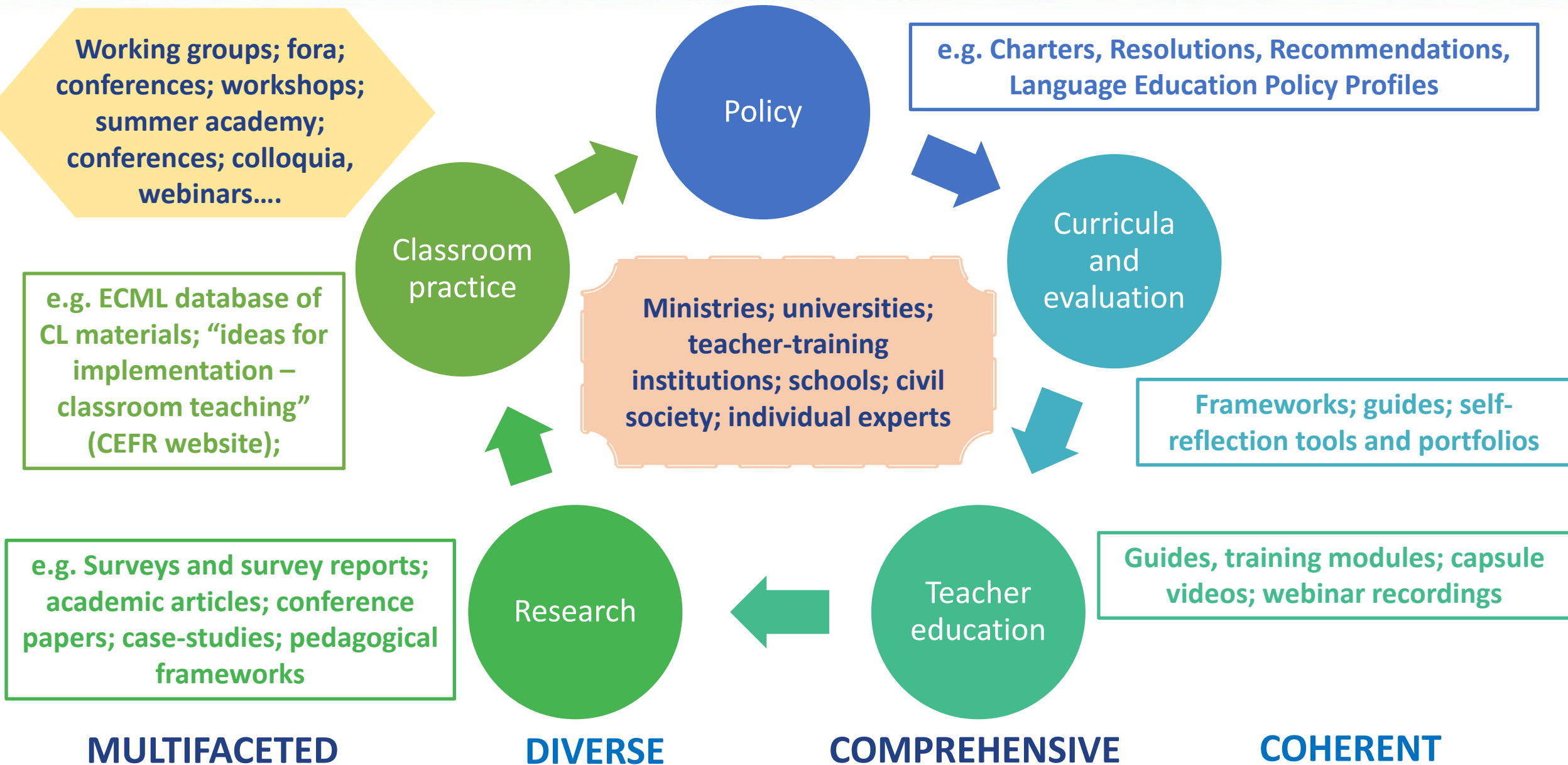**Activities for a wider public: webinars, colloquia, conferences**

Part 4: concluding remarks

The CEFR/CEFR CV

Policy

Curricula and evaluation

Teacher education

Research

Classroom practice

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Working groups; fora; conferences; workshops; summer academy; conferences; colloquia, webinars….

Policy

e.g. Charters, Resolutions, Recommendations, Language Education Policy Profiles

Classroom practice

Curricula and evaluation

Ministries; universities; teacher-training institutions; schools; civil society; individual experts

e.g. ECML database of CL materials; "ideas for implementation – classroom teaching" (CEFR website);

Frameworks; guides; self-reflection tools and portfolios

Research

Teacher education

e.g. Surveys and survey reports; academic articles; conference papers; case-studies; pedagogical frameworks

Guides, training modules; capsule videos; webinar recordings

MULTIFACETED　　**DIVERSE**　　**COMPREHENSIVE**　　**COHERENT**

Food for thought...

All our work should be directed towards criticality. [...] We should talk about "critical language awareness", "critical intercultural awareness", "critical communication" [...]. I understand "empowerment" as something very strong, in the sense that it allows educators, teachers and students to be critical and to recognise social injustice, it allows them to actively and positively critique policies.

Research participant 2, individual interview April 2018 in Breslin, 2020, pp.103; 127-8

[...] we need a firmer commitment to understanding those practices of language teaching, teacher learning, and language teacher education that illuminate how teachers can be helped to make a difference to their students' lives in the language classroom.

(Kubanyiova and Feryok, (2015, p.441)

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