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**CONTROL OF THE LEVEL OF LINGUISTIC
COMPETENCE AS PART OF THE PROCEDURE FOR
RECRUITMENT OF NON-NATIVE SPEAKER TEACHING
AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STAFF**

**APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS ON
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CONTROL OF THE LEVEL OF LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE AS PART OF THE PROCEDURE FOR RECRUITMENT OF NON-NATIVE SPEAKER TEACHING AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STAFF

I. INTRODUCTION

The announcement by the Anglophone countries that they will no longer in future be able to second all the teachers requested and the concern for fairer financial burden-sharing amongst the Member States in terms of the cost of seconding teachers led the Board of Governors, in the context of the discussions on 'Cost Sharing', to give non-Anglophone countries the opportunity, as a 'structural measure', to second bilingual or near native speaker teachers to teach certain subjects.

What is in fact involved is making official a situation which has long existed and which is not, incidentally, restricted to the English language or solely to subjects taught in a vehicular language.

The introduction, in a broader framework, of a code of practice for control of the level of linguistic competence in cases of secondment of teachers who are not native speakers is therefore applicable to all cases where such a situation will arise in the future. It therefore also concerns locally recruited teachers. However, the appointment of a non-native speaker should remain a pragmatic and exceptional response to a shortage situation.

II. BACKGROUND

Although the question did not form part of the mandate given by the Board of Governors at its Mondorf meeting, the 'Issue of Languages' Working Group decided to address the question, following the discussions of the Teaching Committee and of the AFC in November and December 2007. It approached the subject from the angle of assessment of the linguistic competence of non-native speaker teachers after their appointment. Those proposals were agreed by the Boards of Inspectors but were not submitted to the Board of Governors at either its extraordinary meeting in March 2008 or at its Helsinki meeting in April. In the meantime, the 'Cost Sharing' Working Group explored the question in greater depth and reached the conclusion that the linguistic competence of non-native speaker seconded teachers should be checked prior to their appointment, to preserve the quality of teaching of the subjects concerned.

In the light of the discussions held first by the 'Cost Sharing' Working Group, then by the 'Reform' Working Group, and on a proposal from the Secretary-General, the 'Issue of Languages' Working Group was invited to look into the matter again and to propose a method of assessment of linguistic competence.

The Directors have identified three groups of subjects which could be taught by non-native speakers and have suggested that linguistic levels be defined in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages for:

- The teaching of art, music and physical education
- The teaching of science subjects and mathematics and also of history and geography (academic subjects)
- The teaching of foreign languages.

In addition, another category of seconded posts is concerned, that of Educational Advisers and Principal Educational Advisers.

III. DEFINITION OF 'PROFILE POSTS' AND OF THE LANGUAGE LEVEL REQUIRED

If Directors are not certain that the posts created will be filled by native speakers, they will produce a description of the pedagogical situation of the classes to be taught and of the linguistic profile required. As a result such posts can be referred to as 'profile posts'.

The outline descriptions of pedagogical situations appearing in the following sections are given for guidance only. They need to be expanded on by the Directors who draw up the profile of these posts.

On the other hand, the language level defined in this document should be considered to be one of the essential prerequisites to be able to apply for such a post, the other being pedagogical competence. Since assessment of pedagogical competence is common to all teachers as part of the different recruitment procedures, it is not the subject of this document.

The definition of the language level required follows the Common European framework of reference for languages developed by the Council of Europe.

A) Posts of (Principal) Educational Adviser – (P)EA:

(P)EAs normally have to deal with linguistically mixed groups of pupils and therefore find themselves in a particular situation. To meet the requirements they will need to:

- have very good listening, reading and speaking skills in the language which is predominant in the school (normally the language of the country) and good listening, reading and speaking skills in, preferably, two additional vehicular languages.
- be capable of writing more or less standard letters to parents, of handling contacts by telephone and of conducting pedagogical discussions with pupils, parents and teachers.

Details of their work situation and of the linguistic profile sought must be given by the directorate. The language level required is defined as follows:

Priority languages required for the post: priority 1 (P1) and priority 2 (P2)

	Understanding		Speaking		Writing
	Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
P1	C 1	C 1	C 1	C 1	B 2
P2	B 2	B 2	B 2	B 2	B 1

B) Teachers of the subjects ‘Art’, ‘Music’ and ‘Physical Education’ often have to deal with multilingual situations in a single class. The medium of instruction is either the language of the country or one of the three vehicular languages, often the pupils’ Language 2. Details of their work situation and of the linguistic profile sought must be given by the school’s directorate. As a result, they must have a command of the technical vocabulary of their subject in the language or languages of tuition at level C1 and be capable of satisfying themselves that their pupils have correctly understood their instructions.

Their required level in the language(s) of tuition is as follows:

Priority languages required for the post: priority 1 (P1) and priority 2 (P2)

	Understanding		Speaking		Writing
	Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
P1	C 1	C 1	C 1	C 1	C 1
(P2)	(B 2)	(B 2)	(B 2)	(B 2)	(B 2)

C) Non-native speaker teachers of Mathematics, Science Subjects and Economics must have a command of the subject to be taught at the highest level (C2). As far as their general linguistic competences are concerned, it might be acceptable for them to be at level C1. Having studied partly in or having had work experience in one of the countries of the language of tuition is an asset.

Level required in the specialist terminology of the language of tuition of the subject: C2

Level required in terms of general linguistic competences in the language of tuition: C1

	Understanding		Speaking		Writing
	Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
Specialist terminology of the language of tuition of the subject	C 2	C 2	C 2	C 2	C 2
General linguistic competences in the language of tuition	C 1	C 1	C 1	C 1	C 1

D) Non-native speakers of foreign languages (L2, L3, L4) and of History and Geography must have a command of the language to be taught in general, together with knowledge and some cultural experience, both of which are essential for the teaching of a language, and, in the case of teachers of History and Geography, of the specialist terminology of the language of tuition of the subject – at the highest level (C2). They are the linguistic benchmark for their pupils.

	Understanding		Speaking		Writing
	Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
L 2, 3, 4	C 2	C 2	C 2	C 2	C 2
Vehicular language for the teaching of History and Geography	C 2	C 2	C 2	C 2	C 2

E) In the case of other subjects and pedagogical situations which may arise occasionally, such as for Latin, Ancient Greek and Sociology or for a Laboratory course, which are also sometimes taught to groups of pupils from different language sections, the rules mentioned in this document are applicable by analogy and appropriately.

IV. OBLIGATIONS OF COUNTRIES WHICH SECOND NON-NATIVE SPEAKER TEACHERS

Countries which propose to fill one of the ‘profile posts’ will need to satisfy themselves, through a formal process of language evaluation, that their candidate fulfils not only the prerequisites for the teaching of this subject but also really has the level of language defined in this document and described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages produced by the Council of Europe, in order to meet the requirements described in the post profile developed by the school’s directorate.

V. TIME FRAME

It is important to inform as soon as possible the countries prepared to fill such seconded posts of the posts which are available. The schools, for their part, need to know by the end of June at the latest whether or not a post will in the end actually be held by a seconded teacher. A summary list of these posts will be published in April.

To that end, details should be given at the January meeting of the Board of Governors of the posts which will not be held by native speakers and of the country which has offered to fill such and such a post.

If by the end of June the schools have not, despite their insistence, received information about the appointment, they will be able to appoint a locally recruited teacher for the year and thus seek to ensure the school’s smooth operation.

They will duly inform the authorities of the country which had signalled its intention to fill the post in question, and also the Office of the Secretary-General.

The teachers will need to be appointed by the deadline set, so that they have time to settle at their place of employment before the beginning of the school year and to be present on the day on which teachers report for duty at the beginning of the new school year (normally the day before the first day of the new school year on which pupils return after the summer holidays).