

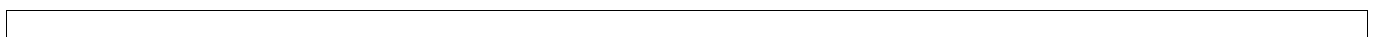


Report on appropriateness of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages for language module provision

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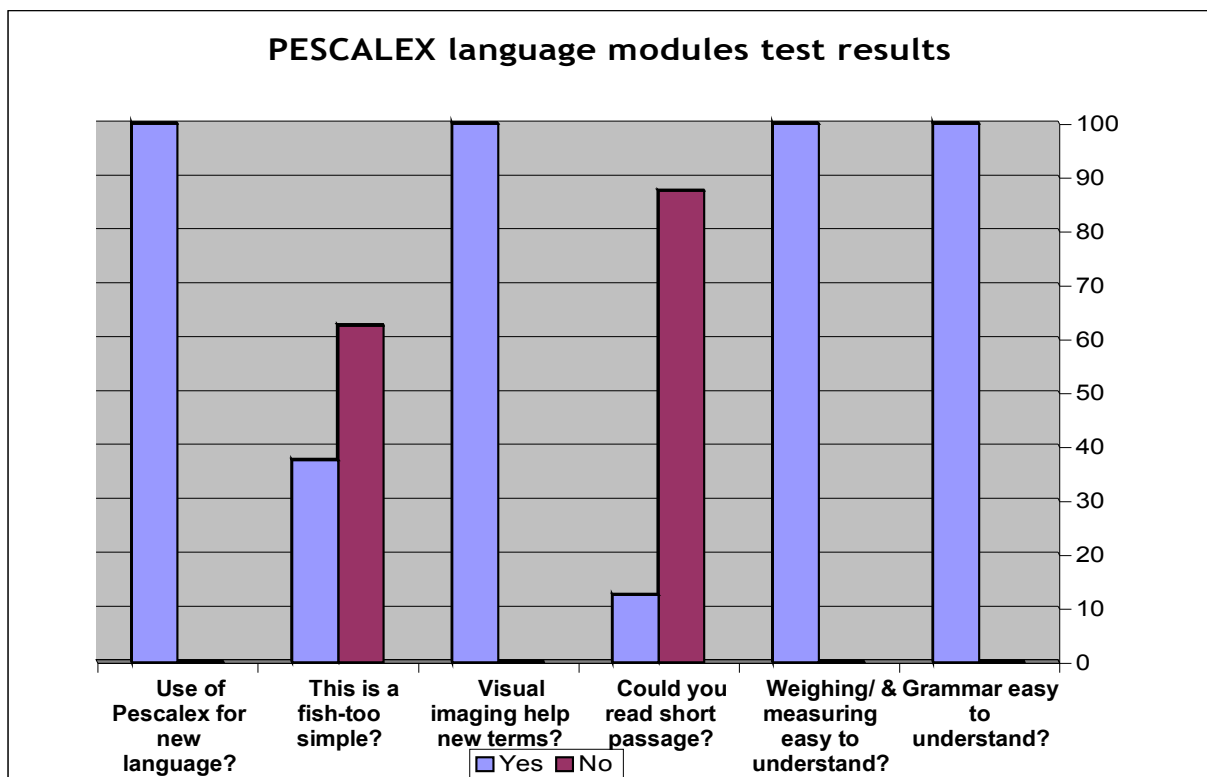


Introduction

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a framework for language learning, teaching and assessment developed by the Council of Europe (2001). Its main aim is to facilitate transparency and comparability in the provision of language education and qualifications. The CEFR describes in a comprehensive manner the competences necessary for communication in a foreign language, the related knowledge and skills and the situations and domains of communication.

The CEFR has been extremely useful and indeed is widely used (now available in over 30 language versions) because of its definitions of six levels of proficiency (from A1 Basic user to C2 Proficient user). These levels, of course, provide a tool with which to measure the progress of foreign language learners and users.

The CEFR Basic user language descriptors (A1 level) were the basis for the choice of linguistic items in the PESCALEX language learning modules which are part of the deliverables for the AQUATNET project. The choice of this language level was made at a WP6 core group meeting after considering various options, from the LDV ORION project. The appropriateness of this choice was validated by the results of a survey into language provision carried out among students as part of the AQUATNET ongoing work.





The Common European Framework of References for Languages

Background

An Intergovernmental Symposium in Switzerland in 1991 "*Transparency and Coherence in Language Learning in Europe: Objectives, Evaluation, Certification*" concluded that "*It is desirable to develop a Common European Framework of Reference for language learning at all levels in order to:*

- *Promote and facilitate cooperation among education institutions in different countries*
- *Provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications*
- *Assist learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educational administrators to situate and coordinate their efforts*".

For the next ten years development work on producing the CEFR was carried out by many bodies, until its appearance in 2001 (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, Cambridge University Press, 2001).

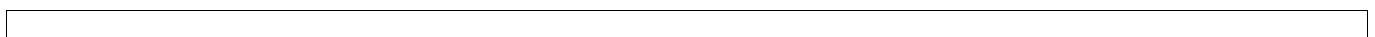
Its opening paragraph reiterates those aims, occasionally in the very same words. "*The Common European Framework of References for Languages provides a common basis for the creation of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc, across Europe*". It provides a tool for evaluating the outcomes of foreign language learning in an internationally comparable way and has now become a common reference instrument for organising language teaching and certification in many member States.

It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communicative purposes, and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The CEFR aims were set very high: the CEFR "*is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among European language teachers, as it provides a way for educational administrators, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies and so forth, to coordinate their efforts and to meet the real needs of the learners*".

The political objectives of the CEFR were also set very high: "*to promote methods of modern language teaching which will strengthen independence of thought, judgement and action, combined with social skills and responsibility*".

Progress and actions undertaken

The European Union adopted a highly pro-active stance towards language learning and linguistic diversity, inserting language learning into its agenda for European mobility and integration, and even the healthy functioning of democracy.





In this regard, the European Union Council Resolution (OJ 2002/C 50/01, February 2002) recommending the use of the CEFR in setting up systems for the validation of language competences, is very significant. The Barcelona European Council called for further action in language learning, by teaching at least two foreign languages at an early age, and that linguistic competence indicator be established in 2003, and that an Action Plan to boost language learning and language diversity be drawn up. The Action Plan was presented in 2004, and much of its recommendations have been and are being carried out (reported in the AQUATNET *Report of Language Provision across Europe*).

The linguistic competence indicator was to assess all four competencies (reading, listening, speaking and writing) and competences/skills were to be reported using the scales of CFER.

Several attempts were made to adapt the CEFR assessment grid so that '*can-do*' skills could be rewritten as '*can*' and therefore utilised as self assessment (DIALANG PROJECT- see **Annex 1** for examples). The most noteworthy use of this development is in the EUROPASS Language Passport, which has been freely available online since 2004 (**Annex 2**).

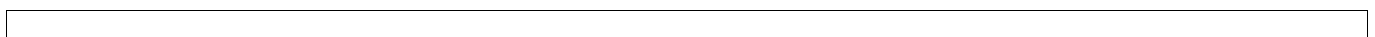
Multilingualism Portfolio

In 2004, Multilingualism was included as a separate component in the Directorate for Education and Culture. The multilingualism portfolio has a significant horizontal dimension, inter-acting closely with other policies of the European Union, such as culture, education, communication, social policy, employment, justice, liberty and security, etc. Its contribution to the development and shaping of EU policies - both internal and external – has been promoted, as previously mentioned, in a truly proactive fashion, because the European Union is committed to preserving and promoting the linguistic diversity of the Union. The Multilingual agenda was fast-forwarded by the publication of "A new Framework Strategy for Multilingualism (2005), followed in 2007 by the appointment of a single commissioner for Multilingualism, with a separate administrative infrastructure. The Commissioner's mandate has as its main objectives defining the contribution of multilingualism to:

- economic competitiveness, growth and better jobs
- lifelong learning and intercultural dialogue
- nurturing a space for European political dialogue through multilingual communication with the citizens.

The latest Communication on Multilingualism (September 2008) has two main objectives: to raise awareness of the values and opportunities of the EU's linguistic diversity and to give all citizens real opportunities to learn to communicate in two languages plus their mother tongue.

"While the European Commission recognises that the goal of "mother tongue-plus-two" is ambitious, it is not beyond reach. Teaching should start [as early as possible](#), even at pre-school level, and should continue through school, higher education and adulthood."





Scope of the CEFR

Language activities in the CEFR refer to productive, receptive, interactive and mediating activities. Oral production activities include speaking, giving instructions or addressing an audience; many communicative activities are interactive, i.e. they involve interaction between two or more people. Productive activities also include writing, ranging from relatively easy activities such as filling in a form and note-taking, to (business) correspondence and creative writing. Receptive activities include reading and listening, where learners may wish to read/listen for gist, for detailed understanding, for pleasure, etc. Mediating activities refer to situations in which the learners are expected to act as intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly. Mediating activities include spoken interpretation and written translation as well as summarising and paraphrasing texts in the same language, when the language of the original text is not understandable to the intended recipient.

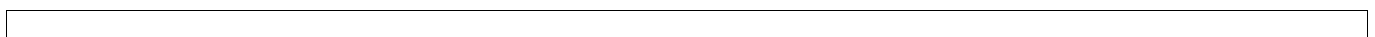
A majority of EU member states now recommend the use of the Council of Europe CEFR for assessment (Key data on Teaching Languages at school in Europe (2008 edition, Eurydice network, 21/11/2008). Proficiency in foreign languages is subject to certification on completion of full-time compulsory general education in the majority of countries. Use of the CEFR is also recommended for assessment-related activities of language learning in a majority of countries.

Language Descriptors

The descriptors are very useful indeed in creating a Language for Specific Purpose set of modules, which is exactly what the PESCALEX modules are. The CEFR also defines levels of proficiency, and these allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a lifelong basis. This latter aspect was a major impetus in the rationale for the EU EUROPASS Language Portfolio (Annex 2).

The [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#) marked a major turning point in describing specifications of language-learning targets; they were no longer designated as 'threshold' or 'Vantage level' etc, but by the appropriate level of the CEFR scale (A1 to C2). The descriptors were created without reference to any specific language, which guarantees their relevance and across-the-board applicability. They are applicable to all European languages, whatever their socio-linguistic status; they facilitate a definition of the competences to be attained in transparent, comparable terms, recalling that language knowledge is accessible to all, in that any competence, at any level, is identifiable and certifiable by means of these very reference instruments.

The present CEFR has developed a description of the process of mastering an unknown language by type of competence and sub-competence, using descriptors for each competence or sub-competence. The descriptors specify progressive mastery of each skill, which is graded on a six-level scale (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2). However, for operators, textbook authors and teachers, the specification set out in the CEFR may appear excessively broad (see **Annex 3** – global reference grid). Therefore work was carried out to draft CEFR specifications language by language (and, as previously mentioned, these now exist for 30 languages). This new generation of reference descriptions (in groups of six) is based on the CEFR level descriptors: it is a case of identifying the forms of a given language (words, grammar, etc), mastery of which corresponds to the communicational, socio-linguistic, formal





and other competences defined by the CEFR. These transpositions of the CEFR into a given language are known as Reference Level Descriptions (RLDs) for national and regional languages. Details are given in **Annex 4**.

Present status of CEFR

Education authorities in the majority of European countries refer to the CEFR in strategic programmes and in other non-binding documents. More than half of the countries go further and issue regulations or recommendations for the direct use of the CEFR as an assessment tool. These countries also specify the CEFR levels of proficiency to be achieved at the end of each of the ISCED levels 1-3. Education authorities set proficiency levels in accordance with the status of a foreign language in the curriculum (as a compulsory subject or core curriculum option) and with the starting date at which provision began (Figure B1). In the majority of countries, the objectives for reaching CEFR proficiency levels are first set at the end of ISCED 1, but in Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania and Hungary this occurs only from ISCED 2 onwards.

Spain: The CEFR is not used as an assessment instrument but is referred to in the Organic Law on Education. However, certificates awarded by official specialised language schools are based on the CEFR competence levels.

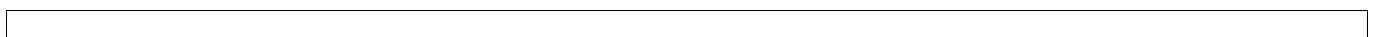
Italy: The Guidelines for the curriculum for pre-primary and primary schools that came into force during the 2007/08 school year recommend the use of the CEFR in assessment.

Netherlands: The CEFR is not formally used as an assessment tool, but research undertaken on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has explored the possibility of linking language examination results to the CEFR competence levels.

Slovenia: Since the 2007/08 school year, the CEFR has been used as an assessment tool. Competence levels to be achieved at the end of each ISCED level have also been agreed and implemented with effect from that date.

Turkey: No ISCED level 2 exists. The entire single structure (for pupils aged from 6 to 14) is considered to be ISCED 1.

see http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf





Annex 1 based on DIALANG Self Assessment Grid

Listening: Descriptor units

CoE level	Descriptor units	CoE level
A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself when people speak slowly and clearly.	1
A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning my family when people speak slowly and clearly.	1
A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	1
A2	I can understand phrases and normal vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).	2
A2	I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages.	2
A2	I can catch the main point in short, clear announcements.	2
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc..	3
B1	I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when I am spoken to relatively slowly and clearly	3
B2	I can understand extended speech provided the topic is reasonably familiar.	4
B2	I can understand lectures provided the topic is reasonably familiar.	4
B2	I can understand and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar.	4
B2	I can understand most TV news programmes.	4
B2	I can understand most current affairs programmes.	4
B2	I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	4
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured.	5
C1	I can understand extended speech even when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.	5
C1	I can understand television programmes without too much effort	5
C1	I can understand films without too much effort.	5
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.	6



Reading: Descriptor units

CoE level	Descriptor units	CoE level
A1	I can understand familiar names, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	1
A1	I can understand familiar words, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	1
A1	I can understand familiar and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	1
A2	I can read very short, simple texts.	2
A2	I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables.	2
A2	I can understand short, simple personal letters.	2
B1	I can understand texts that consist mainly of normal everyday language.	3
B1	I can understand texts that consist mainly of job-related language.	3
B1	I can understand the description of events in personal letters.	3
B1	I can understand the description of feelings in personal letters.	3
B1	I can understand the description of wishes in personal letters.	3
B2	I can read articles concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.	4
B2	I can read reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.	4
B2	I can understand contemporary literary prose	4
C1	I can understand long and complex factual texts.	5
C1	I can understand long and complex literary texts.	5
C1	I can appreciate distinctions of style.	5
C1	I can understand specialised articles even when they do not relate to my field.	5
C1	I can understand longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	5
C2	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.	6



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Writing: Descriptor units

CoE level	Descriptor units	CoE level
A1	I can write a short simple postcard, for example, sending holiday greetings.	1
A1	I can fill in forms with personal details, for example, entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	1
A2	I can write short simple notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need.	2
A2	I can write short simple messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need.	2
A2	I can write a very simple personal letter, for example, thanking someone for something.	2
B1	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.	3
B1	I can write personal letters.	3
B1	I can describe experiences.	3
B1	I can describe impressions.	3
B2	I can write clear detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests	4
B2	I can write an essay passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.	4
B2	I can write a report passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.	4
B2	I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events or experiences.	4
C1	I can express myself in clear well-structured text expressing points of view at some length.	5
C1	I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in an essay underlining what I consider to be the salient issues.	5
C1	I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in a letter underlining what I consider to be the salient issues.	5
C1	I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in a report underlining what I consider to be the salient issues.	5
C1	I can write different kinds of texts in an assured personal style appropriate to the reader in mind.	5



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C2	I can write clear smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style.	6
C2	I can write complex letters.	6
C2	I can write complex reports.	6
C2	I can write complex articles.	6
C2	I can present a case with an effective logical structure, which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points	6
C2	I can write summaries of professional or literary works.	6
C2	I can write reviews of professional or literary works.	6

Annex 2 EUROPASS Language Passport

SURNAME(S) FIRST NAME(S)	<input type="text"/>
Date of birth (*)	<input type="text"/>
Mother tongue(s)	<input type="text"/>
Other language(s)	<input type="text"/>

Self-assessment of language skills (**)				
Understanding		Speaking		Writing
Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Diploma(s) or certificate(s) (*)				
Title of diploma(s) or certificate(s)	Awarding body	Date	European level (***)	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Linguistic experience(s) (*)				
Description		From	To	
<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	

<input type="text"/>

<input type="text"/>



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Self-assessment of language skills ()**

Understanding		Speaking				Writing	
Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction		Spoken production			

Diploma(s) or certificate(s) (*)

Title of diploma(s) or certificate(s)	Awarding body	Date	European level (***)

Linguistic experience(s) (*)

Description	From	To

(*) Headings marked with an asterisk are optional. (**) See Self-assessment grid on reverse. (***) Common European Framework of Reference (CEF) level if specified on the original certificate or diploma.

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		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings	phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very	regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on	argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I	structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.



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	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on	se whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.



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W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.
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Annex 3
Global Scale

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

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User	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
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Annex 4 Reference level descriptions (RLDs)

The first specification of a so called “threshold level” was formulated for the English language (Threshold level, 1975), quickly followed by French (Un Niveau Seuil, 1976). These two “instruments” were produced subsequently for other languages, but in each case they were adapted to suit the peculiar features of that language. While these threshold levels have gradually changed over the last 30 years, they still play a role in language teaching and are used as the basis for new national teaching programmes.

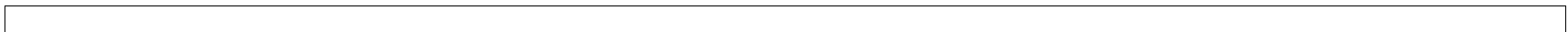
A compilation of [Introductions and Prefaces](#) to the series of level descriptions developed over a period of 30 years (1975 to 2005) provides insights into the development and adaptation for individual languages. Each specification was developed by national teams, usually with guidance from Dr J.L.M. Trim who was Director of the Council of Europe’s Modern Languages projects between 1974 and 1997.

A lower level specification known as Waystage was created for English in the 1970s, and in the 1990s, a level situated above the threshold, also starting with English, was added (i.e. Vantage Level). As for the threshold, other language versions then followed.

The three ascending level descriptions (Waystage, Threshold and Vantage) provided a basis for designing programmes and producing multimedia courses and were developed in parallel with the CEFR. These proficiency levels constitute one of the origins of the six-level scale of the CEFR.

Learning target specifications (for the threshold and/or other levels) have been produced or updated for over 20 languages (including Basque, Catalan, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovene, Spanish and Welsh).

The following diagram shows the relationship between Council of Europe reference instruments for language teaching and learning. This has become known as “the toolkit”.





A seminar was held in Strasbourg in December 2005 for teams reporting on RLDs that have been finalised, being developed, or are planned. Seventeen languages were represented including English. Nick Saville (Cambridge ESOL) presented the early plans for English Profile on behalf of the [English Profile Team](#). There were also presentations from several other members of ALTE at the seminar who described their own projects for French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

The German language project was in fact the first to adopt the new approach to the development of RLDs. On the initiative of the Goethe Institute a tri-national authoring team produced Profile deutsch and it was published by Langenscheidt (2005).

Profile deutsch identifies the linguistic elements of German corresponding to the can-do descriptors of all 6 CEFR levels and is available on CD-ROM together with a reference manual. It provides an overview of the language elements dealt with at each level and the relevant facts needed for examinations. It is also notable as the first reference level description to cover all 6 levels of the CEFR. This was done in two stages: stage one covering the A and B levels and stage 2 adding the C level. The English Profile is taking a lead from the German approach in this respect in that all 6 levels will be described, but the coverage is likely to evolve over time (i.e. it is not envisaged that all levels will be described in the same degree of detail from the beginning).

The seminar in December 2005 examined various approaches to designing RLDs and the representatives were encouraged to exchange ideas and know-how as they develop their own descriptions. The Council of Europe's Language Policy Division has also developed a Guide for the production of RLDs aimed at assisting teams in developing an RLD for a national or regional language and this has been used as one of the inputs to the English Profile. This is available from the [Council of Europe](#) website.

A key point is that the individual language reference level descriptions of the CEFR should follow on from the Threshold levels series, putting that experience to good use, but differing in that they hinge directly on the CEFR.

RLDs should follow some general principles, including:

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- Each reference level description or set of reference level descriptions for a given language implements solutions and makes choices adapted to the language concerned.
- Each set of reference level descriptions may take advantage of descriptions already developed for other languages, but not by simply translating the inventories used for another language.
- Each reference level description specifies what its function is and what it is not in order to prevent misuse.
- Each set of reference level descriptions for a given language is aimed at those in charge of designing curricula. It should be made clear whether the descriptions are also meant for specific user groups and whether they were prepared with particular learners in mind.
- For each reference level description the coherence between the different component inventories should be verified.
- Each reference level description provides for means of adjusting the proposed inventories with time (as the language changes, for example).
- Each reference level description states what is considered as an open inventory and what is not.
- The descriptions are meant to serve as a starting point for the preparation of teaching programmes for the language concerned and take readers and users into account.

Each description for each language should refer to a level of the Framework and its descriptors and provide inventories of the linguistic material necessary to implement the competences thus defined and explain the choice of forms.

For a given level, all the linguistic material identified in the descriptions for that level and the levels below it, and only those levels should be included (e.g. B2 includes everything contained in levels B1, A2 and A1).

It is strongly recommended that the developers of the RLDs should account for their decisions in developing their work in particular ways, and be prepared to explain what theories or other principles they applied in making choices.

For example, in using the CEFR descriptors, or other descriptors, the RLD developers should explain exactly how they arrived at the inventories of linguistic forms. In addition they should provide a description of the approach(es) used to establish such inventories of forms.

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RLDs may also include other common features, such as the following inventories:

- communication fields and situations concerned;
- text forms expected at the level with a distinction between reception (input to the learner) and production (output from the learner);
- types of discourse concerned (e.g. predictable oral exchange patterns);
- cultural and intercultural knowledge and competences concerned;
- phonetic and intonation skills it is considered necessary to command at this level;
- graphical forms;
- learning and self-learning strategies;
- a general index.

