



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# **Languages Connect – Ireland’s Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026**

Interim Review Report and Implementation Plan to 2026

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## Executive Summary

*Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026* was published in December 2017 following a lengthy and extensive consultation with stakeholders which demonstrated clear agreement on actions that needed to be included. It also sought to align foreign languages policy in Ireland with the European policy context. There was a need to increase awareness of the opportunities that foreign languages offer for careers and mobility; to diversify the offering of foreign languages available in schools; to address the shortage of qualified teachers of foreign languages; to increase the uptake of foreign languages in further and higher education, to provide more support for immigrant languages and to enhance employer engagement in the development and use of trade languages. The vision for the strategy was to create a society in Ireland where the ability to learn and use at least one foreign language would be taken for granted. Cultivating the languages of the new Irish was seen as a means of harnessing languages capacity and expertise already in our society.

Over the past five years a significant number of actions have been and continue to be implemented. These include the following:

- The number of Foreign Language Assistants coming to work in schools has nearly doubled and training and support have been put in place for them.
- Participation in Erasmus +programmes has increased.
- A new specification for modern foreign languages at Junior Cycle was implemented.
- New Leaving Certificate Established specifications in Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish and Portuguese were developed and are being implemented.
- A significant body of innovative resources and materials was developed.
- Communities of Practice and other supports for in-service teachers were introduced.
- Schools were incentivised to introduce new school exchanges and increase the numbers going on existing exchanges.
- Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was introduced in Transition Year (TY) in a number of schools and teachers trained.
- Summer camps were funded to increase interest in new and heritage languages.
- A system of additional allocation and ex-quota teachers for schools were introduced to incentivise diversification of the languages curriculum.
- Addressing supply of Foreign Language Teachers through new teacher education and language upskilling programmes.

- Blended learning, online classes, and other modes of provision outside the regular school curriculum were successfully piloted and will be explored further and expanded.
- Collaboration between post-primary schools and the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the enterprise sector has been developing.
- A foreign language module in primary “*Say Yes to Languages*” was implemented in 2021/22 with 1,210 primary schools participating in 2023/24, preparing the ground for the introduction of foreign languages in the primary curriculum.
- The awareness raising campaign also called *Languages Connect* has leveraged partnerships with stakeholders including schools, teachers, embassies, cultural services, community groups, the HEIs, and bodies such as Ibec, Business in The Community (BITC), Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland to promote the benefits of languages to all areas of society. Research commissioned by PPLI and conducted by Red C highlights the relevance and benefit of targeting schools with awareness raising content, information and support.
  - A key achievement has been #ThinkLanguages for TY students which increased from participation of 600 students to 15,000 students last year and feedback highlights the excellent opportunity it provides to promote languages within the school and to celebrate the languages and cultural diversity within the school community.
  - Video resources, lesson plans, and additional information on paper, online, and at events have been used to encourage students further on their language learning journey.
  - Specific information leaflets have been produced, targeting a range of different groups including primary school parents, post-primary parents, post-primary students, teachers and guidance counsellors, and for school management teams, the aim of which is to ensure that the message is continually disseminated that languages matter both for personal and professional development, that supports are available for schools and students, and to raise awareness of the range of languages available for study.
  - Grants for HEIs to promote their foreign languages courses and increase participation in foreign language learning at third level have been facilitated with positive results including an increase in uptake on language courses in some colleges.

- A group of student language ambassadors was formed in 2019 to support peer-to-peer promotion of languages at student events such as Higher Options.

The original strategy publication signaled a significant change of mindset that would be required stating that it would take time, commitment, and additional resources to implement. Much has been accomplished but there is still much to be done. The following include some specific areas to be addressed:

- Leadership and research are required to increase awareness in the Higher Education, Further Education, and enterprise sectors of the value of investment in foreign language learning in the development of transversal skills required by the workforce in a globalized market, skills such as communication, intercultural competence, empathy, and adaptability. Ireland needs global citizens who are multilingual with strong intercultural competence who can navigate diverse cultural contexts and this message needs to be embedded beyond school.
- In line with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe [Recommendation CM/Rec \(2022\) 1](#) to member states on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, we need to actively promote language learning and its benefits for both personal and professional development from an early age.
- Language learning needs to be promoted in the context of the vital role they play in sustainable development, not only as a component of cultural diversity and a tool in intercultural dialogue, but also in attaining quality education for all and strengthening cooperation, in building inclusive knowledge societies and preserving cultural and linguistic heritage. Our learner population is linguistically and culturally diverse and more ways of valorising and supporting home languages need to be explored.
- There is an opportunity to increase the number of English Language Assistants (ELAs) going abroad with a view to creating additional professional capital and foreign language capacity within Irish classrooms and in society into the future (research has shown that many of them become teachers).
- Mechanisms for developing capacity in Asian languages need to be explored in the context of Higher Education.
- Teacher education pathways for the new Leaving Certificate curricular languages (Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish and Portuguese) need to be developed.
- Models of provision beyond the traditional school context need to be further explored as a response to lack of critical mass for language classes in many schools. Such an

investigation should consider the longer-term possibilities and viability of out-of-school class provision as currently provided by PPLI.

- Avenues for data collection in the context of participation in Higher Education courses with languages that don't have languages in the course title need to be explored to facilitate meaningful target setting regarding language learning.
- In general, a more coordinated and cross-sectoral approach in which all the stakeholders input and collaborate will ensure that all sectors work towards common objectives creating efficiency and coherence.

While most children in the European Union (EU) learn at least one foreign language during their compulsory education and the 2002 European Council ["Barcelona Agreement"](#) recommends that at least two foreign languages should be taught to all pupils from an early age, Ireland has the lowest percentage of students learning two or more foreign languages among European member states ([Foreign language learning statistics - Statistics Explained \(europa.eu\)](#)).

Multilingualism supports mobility and cooperation within the European Union. Multilingual individuals provide a better understanding of other cultures encouraging social inclusion, enabling full participation in society and the labour market and fostering personal fulfillment.

Despite the European policy context, evidence on the ground suggests that participation in foreign language learning at post-primary level in Ireland is decreasing. Languages Connect aims to ensure that every effort is made to prioritise actions which support the development of a society in which plurilingualism and multilingualism are celebrated and in which participation in language learning is encouraged.

## Languages Connect Interim Review Report - 2023

This interim report outlines some of the key achievements to date under Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017 – 2026, highlights some remaining challenges, and sets out a roadmap for implementation to 2026.

### Context

[Languages Connect , Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026](#) was published in December 2017 following an extensive consultation process with stakeholders which assisted in the identification of key actions for inclusion in the Strategy. There had been a growing awareness in Ireland of the need for an integrated policy covering all aspects of languages in the education system. Significant challenges that were identified included a lack of awareness of the opportunities that foreign languages offer for careers and mobility; the perceived difficulty of learning languages; the limited choice of foreign languages available in schools; the shortage of qualified teachers of foreign languages; low uptake of foreign languages in further and higher education and a lack of adequate support for immigrant languages.

The vision for the strategy was to create a society in Ireland where the ability to learn and use at least one foreign language would be taken for granted, because of its inherent value for individuals, society and the economy. In order to achieve this vision, the strategy aimed to improve proficiency levels of foreign languages in Ireland, improve the quality of teaching and learning, and offer a more diverse range of languages in the education system.

The strategy was very much contextualised in European policy with its designation of language learning as an important priority, a focus on multilingualism as an important element of Europe's competitiveness and the 2002 Barcelona agreement of 'Mother Tongue plus two'. Multilingualism supports mobility and cooperation within the union, enabling citizens to benefit more from the opportunities the internal market offers, such as free movement of workers. EU programmes such as Erasmus+ demonstrate the commitment in Europe to provision of opportunities to improve language skills.

Languages Connect was also a response to recognition by the United Nations (UN) of the importance of language learning in education, for cultural understanding and communication and the importance of support for languages spoken other than those of schooling and

particular emphasis by UNESCO on the promotion of linguistic diversity and multilingualism in the context of education.

Several research reports provided a clear strategic context.

- [The European Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning \(2007\)](#) which recognises communication in a foreign language as one of the key European competences for life-long learning for personal fulfilment and development, and for active citizenship.
- The EU's Strategic Framework— ["Education and Training 2020"](#) which adds foreign language competences and attitudes as key to enhancing employability and innovation.
- The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) report which highlighted foreign languages skills as a requirement to trade internationally. The National Employer Survey 2015 in which approximately one quarter of employers indicated a specific requirement for foreign language proficiency skills.
- [Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025](#) which lists foreign languages and cultural awareness among the cross-sectoral skills which improve an individual's employability and enable occupational mobility.
- The identification of eight languages by Enterprise Ireland as important for Ireland's future skills needs: German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Arabic and Japanese.

More recent publications add to the original strategic policy context:

- Recommendation [CM Rec\(2022\)1](#) of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to member states on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture gives fresh impetus to the promotion, development, and implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education, recognising its importance for personal and professional development, equity, societal integration, the exercise of human rights, and participation in democratic culture' (Appendix to Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)).
- The EGFSN in [Addressing the skills needs arising from the potential trade implications of Brexit](#) (2018) in which foreign languages and cultural awareness are listed as skills requirements likely to become more pronounced due to Brexit.
- The European Commission ["Languages for jobs"](#) highlights languages as a way for small and medium-sized enterprise (SME's) "to broaden their access to markets", to



"promote language skills in career development", to "provide job-specific language courses in vocational education and training (VET)" and to "use the linguistic competences of citizens with migrant backgrounds". '.

- [\*The demand for language skills in the European labour market: Evidence from online job vacancies\*](#) (OECD Report 2023) indicates that language skills are very much in demand (p.41) and highlights the increased employability and higher wages associated with multilingualism.
- A body of research has emerged which highlights not only the increased employability and higher wages associated with multilingualism (e.g. Hahm and Gazzola 2022 and Araújo et al., 2015), but also highlights the increased productivity of workers who possess language skills as a result of the associated transversal skills such as adaptability and openness to other cultures, superior divergent thinking skills and abstract and symbolic representation skills. It also points out that individuals who can communicate in more than one language are more likely to actively participate in global issues (e.g., Della Chiesa, Scott and Hinton, 2012).
- Research in the Anglophone context led by the [\*American Academy of Arts and Sciences \(2022\)\*](#) called for an increase in investment in learning languages other than English as a means of solving global challenges.
- The withdrawal of the UK from the EU in 2020 has heightened the need for stronger linguistic competence and sociocultural awareness within society as Ireland pivots more towards engagement, cultural exchange and trade with fellow EU member states.
- [\*The Primary Curriculum Framework\*](#) published by the Department of Education in March 2023, includes the introduction of foreign languages in senior classes at primary level from September 2025 and is intended to foster a greater appreciation of the value of languages and increase uptake at post-primary level.

## Consultation Process

A process of consultation on Languages Connect commenced in Q1/Q2 2023 to take stock of progress to date and to look to the future in terms of developing an updated Implementation Plan to 2026.

## Research methodology

Focus groups were held with a range of key stakeholders, including school management body representatives, teachers, guidance counsellors, representatives from higher education institutions, representatives of Asian languages, initial teacher education and government

stakeholders including the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science (DFHERIS), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). Other input from embassies and cultural institutes was received via surveys and consultation with students and primary pupils took the form of a variety of surveys as well as targeted research on student attitudes commissioned by PPLI and facilitated by Red C. Research on the attitudes of parents was also conducted by Red C.

Positive feedback as well as useful insights on progress to date emerged from these consultations and research, which also included helpful suggestions in relation to future pathways for implementation. Reflection is timely to ensure that the actions within Languages Connect, now some years into its implementation phase and operating in a changed local and global context, remain relevant and appropriate.

## Progress Report

### Introduction.

The Languages Connect Strategy set out four overarching Goals for achieving its aims derived from the vision, the strengths and challenges identified as part of the consultation process:

- Improving language proficiency by creating a more engaging learning environment
- Diversifying and increasing the uptake of languages learned and cultivating the languages of the new Irish
- Increasing awareness of the importance of language learning to encourage the wider use of Foreign Languages
- Enhancing employer engagement in the development and use of Trade Languages.

The Strategy was accompanied by an Implementation plan 2017 – 2022, setting out the roadmap for achieving the Goals.

This report sets out the progress that has been made under each of the four Goals as set out in the 2017-2022 implementation plan:

### Goal 1 – Improve Language Proficiency by creating a more engaging learning environment.

Languages Connect aims to provide teachers with the necessary support, resources, and professional development opportunities to enhance their language teaching skills and to harness digital tools and resources to enhance the quality of language education in Ireland.

#### Measurables for Delivery

	Baseline (2016)	Target 2022	Actual 2022	Target 2026
Number of Foreign Language Assistants coming to Ireland	110	160	181	220
Participation in Erasmus+ in Higher Education and Other Study and Work Placements Abroad	3,135	4,400	4,509 (2021/22)	5,400
Improvement in CEFR Levels of Returning Erasmus+ Students	63% at B2 or Above	68%	N/A	75%

## **1.A Initial Teacher Education and Registration**

The Teaching Council reviewed and revised its Initial Teacher Education Criteria & Guidelines between 2018 and 2020, with the resulting Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education, published in November 2020. All existing programmes of ITE were aligned with Céim for first year intakes from September 2022 and a full accreditation cycle under Céim, involving 52 programmes at 14 providers was conducted from November 2021 to January 2024. Between 2019 and 2022, the Council accredited four Bachelor of Education language focussed programmes which included Gaeilge and modern foreign languages, at DCU, UL, UCD and UCC. These programmes were reviewed again under the Céim cycle to ensure they were compliant with Céim and revised subject registration requirements. These programmes provide pathways for graduates to register with the Council as teachers of two curricular languages.

The Visiting Spanish Teacher (VST) scheme has been facilitated by the Department of Education (DoE) and PPLI in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Spain as a means of addressing Spanish teacher supply issues. The scheme was piloted for 3 years from 2021/22 to 2023/24 with a small number of VSTs and will continue on a more permanent basis from 2024/25 with the aim of increasing the number of VSTs. Under the scheme, a fully qualified teacher in Spain is appointed to a school in Ireland for one year with a second year option under the scheme.

## **1.B Continuing Professional Development**

The implementation of the redeveloped specification for Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) as part of the new Junior Cycle curriculum commenced just prior to the publication of *Languages Connect* in the 2017/2018 school year. A programme of continuous professional development (CPD) was facilitated by Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) focused on guidelines for new forms of assessment and on effective teaching and learning methodologies. This was delivered to clusters of schools at national level with one annual CPD workshop and elective workshops and webinars offered throughout the school year and workshops also provided at conferences and events. Training workshops for Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) facilitators were offered via the education centres network.

PPLI established a framework to develop teachers' understanding of the curriculum and methodologies that suit new language subject implementation contexts. This includes the provision of CPD and training sessions, group and individual projects, school visits and class

observation, communities of practice, mentoring and self-directed learning to support teachers of new and lesser-taught languages.

The Teaching and Learning Forum developed a professional development framework for staff in Higher Education. In addition to completing the Enhancement of Digital Literacies project and provision of general support to staff and institutions in enhancement of teaching and learning in a digital world, the Teaching and Learning Forum funded a project with partners from University College Cork, Waterford Institute of Technology, Dublin City University, and Maynooth University which focussed on the development of language teacher skills development activities as well as a framework for the design of related accredited professional development initiatives.

A number of measures have been taken to help address the shortage of foreign language teachers. The DoE has funded a new Higher Diploma in Spanish for teachers' course in University College Cork (UCC) and to date there have been 33 graduates, 43 are currently enrolled and a further 30 teachers enrolled in September 2023. This programme has served to incentivise and increase the development of Spanish teaching capacity among in-service teachers.

A number of new concurrent teacher education and language degree programmes were established to increase language teacher supply. These programmes incorporate study abroad, school placements, and modules delivered through the target language, which encourage the development of high levels of language proficiency in both languages.

Teaching Council (TC) data indicates an 80% Increase in the number of MFL teachers registered over the last 10 years: The Department is currently working to identify how many of these registered teachers are currently practicing.

MFL	November 2012	November 2017	August 2023
French	1,964	2,587	3,319
German	819	1,043	1,457
Spanish	527	776	1,201
Italian	154	204	251
Russian	14	16	28

Japanese	7	11	14
Polish	0	0	4
Mandarin Chinese	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	3,485	4,637	6,275

Language Upskilling was made available by PPLI to teachers who are qualified in a language but are not currently teaching it. Forty-two teachers have so far completed a course (including in French, Spanish, German and Italian) and subsequently introduced a language for the first time to their school curriculum or expanded provision in their school curriculum, developing their confidence in the language while also facilitating a growth in capacity. A separate language teacher registration shortfall funding scheme is also being facilitated by PPLI and twenty teachers are currently in the process of acquiring credits to register with the TC. These schemes add capacity to the system and allow for diversification of provision.

The French-Irish teacher Professional Visit scheme was established by the Department in 2009 in conjunction with France Education International – part of the French Ministry of Education. This scheme allows for professional visits by a language teacher (Teacher of French in Ireland) to a school in France or Ireland for a two week visit. (for a teacher of English in France).

The German Teacher Exchange Scheme takes place during the first term for a period of around 13 weeks and provides Irish teachers with a unique opportunity to perfect their knowledge of German and the experience of working in an educational system different to the Irish system. The Irish pupils benefit from the presence in the school of a native speaker of German, with particular gain to the area of oral/aural skills.

### **1.C Supports for teaching and learning.**

The Foreign Language Assistants scheme currently allows post-primary schools to apply to host a native speaker of French, German, Spanish, Italian or Japanese from 1 October to 31 May each year. The scheme is designed to assist students enrolled in participating schools to appreciate a foreign language as a living language and not just a 'school language'.

A growth in the number of Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs) allocated to our schools each year has been accompanied by enhanced induction, support sessions, a designated contact point within PPLI, and Communities of Practice for both the FLAs and their cooperating teachers. The scheme has also been extended to include Japanese. Many students have benefited from the support of an FLA and the possibility of sharing FLAs among smaller schools with insufficient hours to qualify for their own FLA is now being considered.

#### Number of inbound FLAs:

	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
<b>French</b>	60	70	70	75	75	80	80
<b>German</b>	32	40	50	50	50	50	50
<b>Spain</b>	12	20	30	34	34	40	40
<b>Italy</b>	6	9	9	9	9	9	9
<b>Japanese</b>			2	2	2	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	110	139	166	170	170	181	181

The complimentary [English Language Assistant \(ELA\) Scheme](#) provides support to teachers in schools in Austria, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Belgium/ Wallonia-Brussels from Irish participants.

Some research to investigate outcomes in the context of development of professional capital and addition of capacity to the teaching profession as a result of participation in the ELA scheme would suggest that there is an opportunity to develop this further as a means of building foreign languages capacity for the education sector and beyond. Initial results suggest that 42% of programme participants enter the teaching profession, almost all improved their level of competency in the language of the country they were sent to, and 62% said they would be interested in helping to promote the benefits of learning foreign languages. A significant cohort of ELAs had also done two foreign languages at Leaving Certificate highlighting the importance of maintaining this possibility within the system. Work will be done to increase participation in this programme.

#### Number of outbound ELAs:

	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
<b>France</b>	62	54	58	49	53	33	36
<b>Germany</b>	24	29	22	17	25	24	17
<b>*Spain</b>	59	38	83	51	145	41	63

<b>Italy</b>	5	6	4	1	4	3	2
<b>Austria</b>	6	4	4	4	6	6	7
<b>Belgium</b>	-	-	5	2	4	3	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	156	131	176	124	237	110	124*

\*Latest available data

[Communities of Practice](#) for foreign language teachers have been taking place in twenty-one regions, with additional project specific ones on delivering awareness raising in the context of #ThinkLanguages, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), supporting language learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN), FLAs and An Intercultural Look at Our Schools (ILAOS). An average of 100 MFL teachers per term meet to share ideas and ask questions.

The DoE Inspectorate provided a report on the status of foreign language learning in 2020 entitled *Modern Foreign Languages: A Report on the Quality of Practice in Post-Primary Schools* which can be found [here](#). The report recommended more student-centred learning, more use of the target language, more opportunities for co-curricular and extra-curricular promotion of foreign languages, engagement with CLIL, implementation of and support for the introduction of new curricular languages, additional CPD and increased mobility. A system of foreign languages school support sessions is currently being piloted and facilitated by PPLI with a view to developing further collaboration with the inspectorate.

There has been significant collaboration with the Council of Europe and the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) to promote excellence in language education. PPLI organised and hosted a variety of relevant workshops for stakeholders e.g., four [RELANG](#) (Relating language curricula, tests and examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference) workshops brought together stakeholders from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), the State Examinations Commission (SEC), JCT, Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), the Inspectorate, and ITE providers to look at assessment in the context of curricular reform, Supporting Multilingual Classrooms initiated the development of *Language and Languages in the Primary School*, a resource by David Little and Déirdre Kirwan to support principals and teachers in primary schools with integrating the home languages of EAL pupils in the activities of the classroom and developing pupils' intercultural learning and [DOTS](#) (Developing Online Teaching Skills) supported the innovative work being done supporting the use of digital technologies.



As an associate partner in the ECML project *Roadmap for Schools*, PPLI developed the [Intercultural Look at our Schools Toolkit](#) which was developed to facilitate schools to support cultural and linguistic diversity. Fifty-two schools are currently registered on the website. PPLI was also a network team member for the project [Developing teacher competences for pluralistic approaches](#) and a member of the CLIL in Languages Other than English (CLIL LOTE) project network. Participation in many other workshops has informed the development of work in Ireland.

Much has been done in the context of encouraging and supporting the use of innovative teaching methods and digital tools for learning languages. Conferences and seminars, both face-to-face and online have been addressing teachers' needs in this area and a self-evaluation tool, [Digi Tech for Languages](#), was developed to support language teachers to self-evaluate and develop their digital practice in the languages classroom. Accompanying this, [forty tutorials on digital technologies](#) have been developed and made available on the PPLI website. A new online course on 'Digital technology for MFL Teachers' is now available from Oide Technology in Education supported by PPLI.

Languages Connect sought to align language curricula with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages to demonstrate a commitment to European language policy objectives. New language specifications were broadly aligned with the CEFR. This common framework and terminology for describing language proficiency levels across European languages allows for better comparison of language abilities between learners and across different contexts and countries, facilitating mobility. It also adopts a learner-focused, action-oriented, competence-based approach. Although the strategy envisioned it being widely implemented across all sectors, it is not yet understood or widely adopted in Ireland. To do so would require significant additional resources.

HEIs have been involved in some interesting projects which support teaching and learning. For example, DCU has been working on a Transversal Skills Competence Framework as part of DCU Futures, funded under Pillar 3 of the Human Capital Initiative, and as part of this students can study seven different languages at varying levels. Project partners from Maynooth University, University of Dublin, University of Limerick and Munster Technological University, and collaborating with PPLI, have been working on the [GELS \(Gender Equality in Language Studies\) project](#), funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), which has been starting a conversation on gender equality in Language Studies and the contribution this can make to the future educational and economic development of Irish society. The project is

researching the under-representation of those not identifying as female in language subjects and hopes to highlight an untapped resource and hidden pool of talent that can transform attitudes towards language learning within society. Currently data is being collected which focuses on exploring factors impacting upon students' decision-making around the (dis)continuation of Language Studies for Senior Cycle and third level.

UCD has been involved in a university alliance called Una Europa to create a European inter-university environment. This development will offer students from the BAES (Languages and Cultures) stream of Una Europa to study languages and cultures at the UCD College of Arts and Humanities on their 2-trimester European mobility as early as 2025/26. Una Europa is also proving very useful for staff mobility in the UCD Centre for English and Global Languages and for links with Una Europa Language Centers.

### **1D Mobility Opportunities**

Exchanges are an essential part of language learning and the European Union actively supports and recognizes the importance of mobility for both students and teachers ([Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages C189/03](#)). Funding, targeted information, support and resources have been provided to schools to establish and increase participation in school exchanges. Resources were also developed to encourage more virtual exchanges when the pandemic prevented in-person exchanges.

It is acknowledged that significant teacher time is involved in the planning and organizing of exchange programmes and in particular addressing child safeguarding concerns which often vary across jurisdictions and PPLI have produced a [manual](#) to support teachers in this regard.

[eTwinning](#) is a free online platform connecting more than 1 million teachers across Europe and administered by Léargas in Ireland. It supports primary and post-primary schools to find partner schools and work on joint projects in any curricular area, using Information and Communication Technology. A significant number of projects involving Irish partners focus on foreign languages (131) with an additional 11 focusing on language and literature. 95 new teachers registered on the platform in 2022 and 110 so far in 2023.

Léargas have facilitated more than 2,000 mobilities under Erasmus +. Although the place of languages cannot currently be tracked in the reporting mechanism, according to an impact

report - [Léargas School Education Report 2022 - Léargas](#) which reviewed themes and trends in School Education for Erasmus+ during the previous programme period (2014-2020), 'languages' was amongst the top four for projects. The report states that language teaching and learning was a key feature of projects particularly in primary schools filling the gap left by the completion of the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative (MLPSI). This capacity should go some way to supporting the implementation of foreign languages as part of the new Primary Curriculum Framework in 2025 and demonstrates an important avenue for developing additional foreign languages capacity among primary school teachers.

EU statistics indicate that 1,700 staff and 7,844 learners from Ireland participated in Erasmus+ in 2022. [Erasmus+ Ireland in 2022 | Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](#)

## **1.E Content and Language Integrated Learning**

PPLI, in collaboration with Maynooth University, has been leading on the introduction of the Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach to teaching and learning of both foreign languages and subject content in post-primary schools as part of the Transition Year (TY) programme. A pilot CLIL project has been developed and delivered to 60 MFL teachers thus far. The focus has been on upskilling in-service MFL teachers on CLIL methodology and CLIL resource design and a six-week module with seventy-two accompanying resources was developed in French, German, Spanish, and Italian.

Findings from an [Independent Evaluation on the Potential of CLIL for Ireland](#), commissioned by PPLI, are in line with research findings which conclude that CLIL students can reach significantly higher levels of competence in a foreign language than through participation in conventional foreign language classes (Dalton-Puffer 2007). Students and teachers are very positive about learning through CLIL approaches with some students preferring the CLIL approach – perceiving it to be 'easier' and more enjoyable than traditional language class.

CLIL needs to be expanded and introduced in earlier years in post-primary schools, and as part of the introduction of foreign languages in the primary curriculum. This would allow students to engage with the target language in meaningful and content-rich contexts, accelerating language learning and leading to improved language proficiency and fluency without negatively impacting on content learning. Such exposure fosters cultural awareness and sensitivity, enriching students' global competence for an interconnected society (Lagou and Zorbas, 2020). CLIL methodology will also support EAL learners in accessing the curriculum which ensures a quality education for them and reduces inequalities

## Goal 2 – Diversify and Increase the uptake of Languages Learned and Cultivate the Languages of the New Irish

### Measurables for delivery

	Baseline (2016)	Target (2022)	Actual (2022)	Target (2026)
Percentage of Candidates Presenting for a Foreign Language for Junior Certificate/ Cycle Examination	87%	92%	83.8%	100%
Percentage of Junior Certificate/ Cycle Candidates Sitting German, Spanish and Italian as a Proportion of Total Curricular Foreign Language Sits	40%	45%	48%	50%
Percentage of Schools offering Two or more Foreign Languages as Part of Transition Year	53%	75%	58.4%	100%
Percentage of Candidates Presenting for a Foreign Language for Leaving Certificate Examination	69%	74%	73.6%	79%
Percentage of Leaving Certificate Candidates sitting German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese and Arabic as a Proportion of Total Curricular Foreign Language Sits  *Including 4 new curricular languages	38%	41%	46.7% *50%	45%
Percentage of Students Studying Courses with a Language Component in Higher Education	4% (2012/13)	10%	*N/A	20%

\*While it is not currently possible, it will be important going forward to investigate a mechanism for tracking participation in language courses in Higher Education in order to measure outcomes of the awareness raising campaign. A feasibility study should be done to see how these figures could be ascertained.

## 2A Initial Teacher Education and Registration

In tandem with the publication of Céim, and after extensive consultation, the Council published revised Curricular Subject Registration Requirements (Post-Primary) in November 2020. The review focussed on increasing flexibility in the requirements, to allow suitably qualified applicants, including in modern foreign languages to access the register more easily. The revised registration requirements for curricular languages introduced an enhanced four-week immersive educational experience with four different options, providing for different levels of language ability, in addition to B2.2 standard of language competency. The revised registration requirements became open for applicants for registration on 1 January 2023 and included the addition of Lithuanian, Portuguese, Polish and Mandarin Chinese as registerable curricular subjects.

An [audit of foreign languages provision in post-primary schools](#) carried out in 2017 by PPLI identified the range of languages schools offer, the languages schools wish to offer, and the range of language teachers employed in schools. It identified teachers who are qualified to teach a foreign language but who do not currently have the opportunity to teach that language in their schools, resulting in the development of opportunities and incentives for these teachers to upskill by means of CPD or post-graduate courses. The audit also identified locations where there is a level of interest and demand for heritage language support, which informed provision.

The audit was also able to identify the dominance of French and the wider range of languages provided in larger schools, fee-charging schools, Dublin schools, and girls' schools. As a result of other information gleaned the Department of Education introduced a framework for additional allocation as an incentive to diversification of languages on the school curriculum (Circular letter 0006/2020) in which schools are offered additional hours to introduce new languages. Currently, additional allocation is being provided to five schools for Japanese, one school for Russian, five schools for Italian, two schools for Polish, and one school for Chinese.

The audit also informed the work of PPLI on diversification and the introduction and implementation of new models of provision as well as support for the needs of heritage language speakers.

## 2B Junior Cycle Reform

The Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) specification was introduced to schools in September 2017, under a redesigned Framework for Junior Cycle. Under the new

framework, the number of subjects a student can take at Junior Cycle is ten whereas previously there was no limit. It also introduced a mandatory classroom-based assessment (CBA). Currently the languages available for Junior Cycle examination are French, German, Spanish and Italian. The number of students studying a foreign language in Junior Cycle has fallen from 87% in 2016 to just under 84% in 2022. School management teams in some schools have made efforts to ensure that the study of at least one foreign language is mandatory for all students in junior cycle but in more and more schools, foreign languages are being offered as options.

The national curriculum continues to expand, and this increases the challenges in relation to securing the place of MFL within individual school timetables. The availability of ab initio languages (e.g., Chinese, Japanese) in Senior Cycle is often seen as a reason not to introduce it in Junior Cycle as it is perceived that it would lead to a repetition of introductory level of the language.

What has been identified as crucial by management body representatives is that in schools where a foreign language is not mandatory at Junior Cycle, this can result in lower uptake at senior cycle. Management body representatives also identified the two-hundred-hour minimum teaching requirement outlined in the MFL Junior Cycle specification as a challenge to delivering an appropriate curriculum.

The consultation process suggested that further efforts should be made to enable more students to present for at least one foreign language at Junior Cycle and to create greater diversity of uptake across the four curricular languages currently offered. Short courses were implemented in Chinese, Polish and Lithuanian in a few schools but feedback from schools has indicated that the timetabling of short courses can be difficult, and they have not been widely implemented. Teachers have also pointed out challenges in identifying short courses which could be aligned with new languages. 329 students took the Junior Cycle Short Course on Chinese Language and Culture in 2022-23. Consideration could be given to expanding the range of languages examinable as full courses for Junior Cycle.

It is hoped that the introduction of foreign languages to the primary curriculum from September 2025 will lead to increased take up at post primary level.

## 2C Transition Year

While the number of schools offering more than one foreign language as part of their TY programme had increased from 53% in 2016 to 59.4% in 2021, further engagement is required to reach the 2022 target of 75%. Currently, PPLI facilitates language classes in Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, and Russian for 7,702 TY students in 104 schools. 54 language development officers provide language learning for 288 class groups. Dissemination of information to stakeholders by PPLI and an increasing awareness and recognition of the value of heritage language maintenance within our society is influencing the demand for access to new curricular languages.

[Language summer camps](#) were introduced with a total of sixteen camps funded through PPLI, providing language learning opportunities for circa 320 students. Camps have been facilitated in six languages in eight locations across Ireland. In 2023, there was a Chinese camp in Waterford, a Lithuanian camp in Monaghan, Italian in Galway, Japanese in University College Dublin (UCD), and Polish in Cavan. Students with heritage language backgrounds attending the camps comment that they are inspired to maintain their home and heritage languages and sit them for Leaving Certificate, and students of the lesser-taught languages are inspired to study these languages beyond school.

## 2D Leaving Certificate Established

A key achievement under Languages Connect has been the introduction of four new curricular languages at Leaving Certificate Established level from September 2020: Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish and Portuguese. These four languages were examined for the first time in 2022 with 1,451 students in total presenting for the examinations concerned. 191 students sat the Lithuanian paper, 291 sat the Mandarin Chinese paper, 824 sat the Polish paper and 145 students sat the Portuguese paper. Provisional statistics from the State Examinations Commission indicate an increase in examination sittings in 2023 to 1,693 (+16.7%): 210 students sitting the Lithuanian paper (+10%), 339 sitting the Mandarin Chinese paper (+16%), 956 sitting the Polish paper (+16%) and 188 sitting the Portuguese paper (+30%). Curricular Subject Requirements for the new curricular languages have also been published to meet the registration requirements set down in the Teaching Council registration regulations.

This development brings to 11 the number of curricular languages available for study at Senior Cycle together with French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese and Arabic.



A variety of different models of provision for introducing lesser-taught and new languages have been piloted by PPLI and have provided access to the new and lesser-taught languages through the development of 'a model of peripatetic employment of teachers for Japanese, Russian, and for new and immigrant languages including Chinese and Polish' as outlined in the strategy. The work of PPLI highlights that the variety of models piloted support students with diverse needs from different contexts.

Classes scheduled within the regular timetable in schools have worked well where a qualified and registered teacher is available, where the Senior Management Team is open and supportive to the introduction of a new language subject, and where the teacher is particularly well-integrated into the school and has another subject to offer. In these cases, ex-quota teachers previously provided by PPLI have become direct employees of the school under the Additional Allocation scheme..

The Additional Allocations Scheme, as set out in [Circular 0031/2019](#) provides an additional allocation to schools on a sliding scale over six years to introduce Italian, Japanese or Russian at Junior or Senior Cycle level or Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese or Polish at Senior Cycle level. The rationale for this scheme is to incentivise the diversification of language provision.

Many internationally qualified teachers are qualified to teach one subject which means that working across a number of schools is necessary in order to achieve a full timetable.

The use of ex-quota peripatetic teachers to deliver the curriculum has worked well in the context of maximising the use of one teacher by providing students from two or more schools with an opportunity to access classes otherwise unavailable. Some PPLI language development officers are timetabled across up to eight schools which creates significant opportunity for students across diverse schools. Schools benefit from the use of peripatetic ex-quota teachers as they can provide additional language subjects and support diversification of offering. (the teachers are recruited, trained, supported, and paid by PPLI). With this experience schools discover, sometimes unexpectedly, that students become enthusiastic about new languages and the languages become embedded in the curriculum.

In instances where the new languages are not available in schools because the number of students does not constitute a critical mass, PPLI provided 638 students from 332 schools the opportunity to access an additional language for Leaving Certificate through Saturday and online classes in 2022/23, increasing equity of provision. Students who are particularly motivated by a particular language can engage with it and the classes provide the opportunity



for students with heritage languages to access opportunities to progress to third level as a result of being able to access subjects which allow them to do well in the Leaving Certificate examinations. This can make a significant difference to progression pathways available to heritage language speakers. In the 2022-23 academic year, the number of Saturday classes increased from nineteen to twenty-nine, and there are 31 classes being provided in the current academic year demonstrating significant interest in the new curricular languages such as Mandarin Chinese where Saturday classes have been a key mode of implementation, supporting five times as many students when compared to numbers undertaking the subject within their school.

PPLI is currently involved in several pilot projects for [blended models of language teaching and learning](#). Together with H2 Learning, PPLI and Cavan, Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) introduced a taster blended learning project in March 2021 for TY students wishing to study Polish at Leaving Certificate Established level as a community response to the Programme for Government commitment to embrace diversity in CMETB. The course was implemented in full in September 2021. In 2022, PPLI recruited an additional Polish teacher due to the growth in interest. There are now six schools and 46 students involved in the project, which is an increase from the initial numbers of four schools and 17 students in 2021. Blended learning works well in CMETB where a cluster of schools can collaborate. Education and Training Boards (ETBs) are well placed to schedule classes at the same time and facilitate the sharing of teachers. They share IT systems which support the delivery of the online aspect of the course. The hope is that this model of provision will become available to students in more schools and that this would enable significant numbers of migrant Polish speakers to maintain literacy in their home language.

PPLI is also piloting Saturday blended learning courses for Leaving Cert Mandarin Chinese and Portuguese. These pilot courses aim to develop an alternative blended model of provision for students who do not have access to those curricular subjects in schools. Online courses are being piloted in Chinese, Japanese, Polish and Portuguese. The move towards more virtual communication and online learning has been particularly effective in facilitating access to the provision of lesser taught languages and for the new Leaving Certificate curricular languages, where a critical mass does not exist in any one school.

All teachers participating in these pilot projects have received training tailored to their particular teaching and learning context. This includes training on different aspects of blended language classes related to teaching (e.g., planning and building blocks in a blended model), cognition

(e.g., task-based learning, assessment and reflection in blended learning classes) and social well-being (e.g., facilitating discussion and student participation, communicating with schools). Teachers are supported by teaching and learning experts in PPLI (education officers and associates), technological experts in cooperating partner organisations (e.g., H2 Learning and eSchool) and supporting staff in cooperating schools (e.g., eMentors).

This work will inform the future development of courses and modules as additional or alternative means of implementing language education at post-primary level and beyond. Innovative and alternative provision models such as blended learning and online classes are not appropriate for every context and significant time is required to train the teachers in the pedagogy required.

The provision of shared foreign language classes in a physical setting with students from a number of schools joining a single physical class have been less successful for a variety of reasons. School timetables tend to vary, which results in shared classes as a possibility only for after school hours, when students are often tired after a long day in school. In rural areas many students are tied to leaving to meet the requirements of the school bus timetable. Distance is a factor with time to travel between schools also impacting on the starting time. Students sign up to an after-school class at the beginning of fifth year with great enthusiasm, but with long school days and the pressure of exams the attrition rate can be significant.

Currently the provision of Mandarin Chinese relies mostly on peripatetic teachers. Additional time involved in addressing challenges related to the introduction of new curricular language subjects, in particular Chinese, need to be factored into implementation of related actions. These include additional time investment in scheduling timetables for peripatetic teachers that also take account of available public transport, the necessity of having work permits as non-EU citizens where relevant, and the additional training and CPD needs for those trained in other jurisdictions. Such challenges are even more significant for short-term visiting teaching staff at the Confucius institutes, and it is therefore recommended that there should be more collaboration between the institutes and relevant agencies (e.g., PPLI) to ensure quality of provision.

## **Primary**

The introduction of foreign language learning in the new Primary Curriculum Framework (PCF) from September 2025 has been widely welcomed by stakeholders across all sectors as a

significant opportunity to raise awareness, embed, enhance and expand language learning in Ireland. In preparation for this, primary schools were invited to participate in the “[Say Yes to Languages](#)” (SYTL) programme in 2021/22. 430 schools took part in this six-week module, and a total of thirteen languages were taught across these schools. The programme was expanded in 2022/23 to 685 schools, and the length of the module was extended to eight weeks, with schools selecting from 15 different languages based on their own school context. Circa 1,200 schools are participating in the 23/24 school year in 13 languages.

A combination of both internal and independent unpublished research indicates that the module content is fun, interactive, and interesting, that it builds excitement about languages, providing a positive reference for pupils as they transition to post-primary. Areas that will require work include ensuring consistent delivery of the module, encouraging classroom-based teachers to work closely with external tutors so that a cross-curricular approach can be implemented as well as differentiation for diverse pupils.

## **2E Support for Immigrant Languages**

[New specifications](#) were developed by the NCCA in the languages of immigrant communities and implementation in the school curriculum was supported by PPLI. In addition, since 2021, PPLI has delivered [25 information sessions](#) regarding the four new Leaving Certificate Established curricular languages to over two thousand students and parents. These sessions provided timely support for 5<sup>th</sup> year and 6<sup>th</sup> year students with important guidance on learning and assessment, especially for those who do not have access to the subjects in their own schools. The sessions also helped younger students and their parents to plan for their future language learning journey. The sessions attracted educators, researchers, and stakeholders at all levels to facilitate communication and increase collaboration. The information sessions are also valuable in the context of understanding the support needs of community language groups and one of the outcomes is a set of ‘[Say Yes to Languages](#)’ mats which work as resources for maintaining the home language. The home language mats provide guidance for parents on ways of teaching and using the home language and a list of language components to begin with.

A toolkit for acquiring foreign language books was developed as a collaboration between PPLI, Dublin City Libraries and Cabra Library and is now available to library branches nationwide. A foreign language category was introduced in the MS Readathon. [A School Library Home Languages Funding Scheme](#) facilitated by PPLI has provided 1,385 schools (937 primary and 448 post-primary) with reimbursement for acquired materials in 80 different languages. Over

800 book titles in 27 languages have been provided to the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) Digital Library and in 2022 there were 2,691 loans.

Much was done in the context of welcoming Ukrainians to Ireland. DoE agencies and stakeholders provided a range of supports including language classes in Ukrainian, supports in Ukrainian to assist families with understanding and accessing the curriculum, and the provision of books in Ukrainian via the school library scheme. Ukrainian was introduced as one of the languages being provided as part of the 'Say Yes to Languages' programme and the DoE announced that Ukrainian would be examined as a non-curricular Leaving Certificate language from 2025.

## **2F Learning Beyond School**

Beyond regular degree offerings in foreign languages, HEIs can offer institution-wide language courses as credit-bearing modules that count towards the completion of a student's degree and reports on this model are positive. For example, approximately 12% of students in DCU are taking a language outside of their regular course for extra credit in the evening as part of the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) funded "DCU Futures" initiative. At one point in UCD as much as 20% of the student cohort were taking a language as credit bearing modules. It would be useful to develop a centralised mechanism for measuring participation in language courses outside of degree courses that mention languages in the title and in the meantime, it may be useful to consider a feasibility study to measure participation in all language courses in the HEIs.

Data and evidence are required from the enterprise sector in relation to the rationale and needs among employees for language skills which can be used to incentivise students to take up language courses. National-level research is required to determine the language skills requirements of employers and in relation to determining a new value proposition for employers around the value of language skills, and language learning for the development of transversal skills. This would help to identify a future focus for awareness raising in the enterprise sector as well as ensure that language courses are aligned with the needs of the job market and that graduates are better equipped to meet the demands of their future employers.

A clear pathway for high proficiency achievement in Asian languages should be considered in the context of the strategic importance of Asian languages and a need for pathways to qualify

teachers. Students, of both heritage and non-heritage backgrounds, need to have access to resources and opportunities to advance their language proficiency to a high level, which should include Asian language majors and intensive courses, study abroad programmes, scholarships, internships, and participation in research projects. Consideration should also be given to pathways which generate teacher supply to address the shortage of qualified teachers.

When incorporating languages into programme design, HEIs should engage with enterprise as part of course design, to recognise the importance of language skills with specific accents and variations and to train students in a specific language domain or for special purposes to meet industry needs. Collaboration within HEIs should be facilitated between the outreach units and the language department to maintain connections with graduates to keep up to date with industry needs and ensure that language courses are relevant.

### **Goal 3 – Increase awareness of the importance of language learning to encourage the wider use of foreign languages**

Qualitative research was carried out twice among students, first in 2018 and then in 2023. More time will be required to see a change in attitudes. The research showed that many students choose a foreign language because it is a mandatory school requirement. Those who opt not to study a foreign language often do not believe it will put them at a disadvantage in their future and in this context, they mention the prevalence of English as an international language and they talk about other adults around them 'doing fine without a foreign language'.

When discussing their language learning experiences, students frequently mention the impact of teachers. Some teachers demonstrate practical applications of the language, showcasing its usefulness and providing motivation for students. Conversely, other teachers emphasise the importance of achieving good results and passing exams, which can be demotivating for students. Students who opt out of language learning report struggles with the course content and with prevalent associations with rote learning and heavy, repetitive workload.

Traditionally a focus on matriculation entry requirements was the driving force for language uptake but with foreign languages no longer a requirement for many courses this is no longer the case although many students are still inclined to take a cautious approach opting to take a foreign language to keep their options open.

#### **3A Awareness Raising**

The '[Languages Connect](#)' awareness raising campaign which was launched in 2018 has leveraged partnerships with stakeholders including schools, teachers, embassies, cultural services, community groups, the HEIs, and bodies such as Ibec, Business in The Community (BITC), Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland to promote the benefits of languages to all areas of society. It seeks to highlight the more enjoyable aspects of learning a foreign language. It provides relatable and tangible examples of how learning a foreign language can be of benefit in relation to career paths and personal goals, something students struggle to envisage.

A key achievement under Languages Connect has been the [#ThinkLanguages event](#) for TY students. In 2018, the inaugural #ThinkLanguages event took place in Dublin Castle with 660 student participants with 3,500 participants the following year in the Convention Centre. In 2020, because of COVID 19 pandemic restrictions, it was re-imagined as a hybrid in-school and on-line event encouraging a focus on harnessing local capacity to focus on languages and the global context. Participation increased to 5,000 TY students in 2020, 12,000 in 2021,

and 15,000 in 2022 which is total participation of over 35,000 TY students in #ThinkLanguages over five years. TY students who previously disappeared on a bus away from the school have now become agents of change in this broadened awareness-raising activity whereby the event and the work involved are visible to all in the school community. TY coordinators and teachers of foreign languages are given a framework and the support they need to provide important messaging that is so much part of the Languages Connect strategy. They report that this is an excellent opportunity to promote languages within the school and a great opportunity to celebrate the languages and cultural diversity within the school community.

One of the benefits of operating more in the online context is that it has become possible to be more responsive to addressing schools' needs and concerns in relation to staging the event by offering the opportunity to attend virtual information meetings and communities of practice for involved teachers, something that would not be possible to provide face-to-face for teachers seeking to attend from every corner of the country. They have been able to log in without leaving their homes and have all their questions addressed in a timely manner.

Students are finding out what languages are spoken in their schools and teachers are surprised to discover just how diverse the languages spoken are. Students who speak other languages are given a voice for the day which adds to their well-being and gives them pride in their identity. Their languages are celebrated as a resource rather than seen as a hindrance and this supports greater inclusion and appreciation of diversity.

The HEIs have been harnessing the opportunity that is now #ThinkLanguages week to promote their course offerings with languages. Activities provided in the HEIs were a highlight in 2023 with more than 1000 students taking part in these – there were workshops and taster classes not just in the traditionally taught languages but also in Japanese, Chinese, Russian and Arabic. There were talks by student language ambassadors on why students should consider doing a language as part of their college course and talks on Erasmus+, and campus tours. In the region of 100 schools were also visited by the HEIs, which meant that thousands of students were given the opportunity to think more about the importance and the relevance of foreign languages as well as experience the fun of doing a language in college. Career talks included the power of languages, careers with languages, careers with the EU commission, and supports for accessing the study of languages and more than 6,000 students watched foreign language movies through the Irish Film Institute.

PPLI have provided highly visible and well-attended stands at a variety of events targeting senior management teams, guidance counsellors, foreign language teachers, and other fairs

and exhibitions across the country. [Specific information leaflets](#) have been produced, targeting a range of different groups including primary school parents, post-primary parents, post-primary students, teachers and guidance counsellors, and for school management teams, the aim of which is to ensure that the message is continually disseminated that languages matter both for personal and professional development, that supports are available for schools and students, and to raise awareness of the range of languages available for study.

Since 2019, HEIs have been using funding provided through the Languages Connect campaign to promote their foreign languages courses and increase participation in foreign language learning at third level. To date €276,000 has been provided to 12 HEIs which have funded a variety of projects, including the following: promotional videos to showcase the importance of choosing to do a language at third level; talks on Erasmus exchange, work placement and career opportunities for graduates with foreign languages; language taster workshops on interesting themes; language and dance classes; competitions that supported foreign language learning through art and encouraged creative thinking and attracted entrants from hundreds of schools; open days and campus tours for prospective students with opportunities to experience language and culture modules available and talk to HEI staff; information sessions for school guidance counsellors; summer camps, and deployment of language ambassadors to hundreds of schools.

A group of student language ambassadors was formed in 2019 to support peer-to-peer promotion of languages at student events such as Higher Options. Senior cycle students relate well to these ambassadors who are of a similar age. As these students tend to be more focused on next steps after school rather than on future careers, the events are a good opportunity to hear from peers about the positives of language learning in college.

Research commissioned by PPLI and conducted by Red C highlights the relevance of targeting schools with awareness raising content, information and support. Parents believe that schools and teachers have a central role in promoting the importance of learning foreign languages and influencing their children's language learning journey, and that the experiences of language learning by friends and siblings also has a significant impact. Parents are also in favour of supporting their children's autonomy in choosing their own subjects, including foreign languages, and that choice of subjects should align with their interests and passions. They recognise that allowing children to make their own decisions can enhance their sense of ownership and commitment to the learning process and most students agree that they want to choose a foreign language because they want to, not because they must.



More work will need to be done in the context of getting information to parents of the broader advantages and opportunities that language proficiency can provide, particularly as parents tend to believe that achieving a good grade in a foreign language is more challenging compared to, for example, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), and that their children can thrive in various fields and careers without extensive language skills.

Guidance counsellors highlighted the strong job prospects in particular in areas such as business and IT with a language and note the value of the associated cultural experience, as well as wellbeing benefits. They have also commented that different levels of papers at Leaving Certificate facilitate the needs of diverse students, but students frequently query the necessity of studying a foreign language for future opportunities to study and work.

Students are focused and strategic in subject selection and tend to choose achievement. Those with Special Educational Needs can be hesitant in pursuing a third language and sometimes ask if it is necessary for third level entry. They note that other subjects they learn are more interactive and engaging, using more interactive methodologies to help them learn and take a welcome break away from the textbook or whiteboard. There is more scope to bring languages to life in the classroom via more cultural learning as well as more focus on communication and for teachers to communicate both the short and long-term benefits of studying a foreign language. Resources such as the Languages Connect videos that are considered relatable by students and accompanying lesson plans present real life, tangible examples of careers that benefit from knowing a foreign language and need to be disseminated further. Research indicates that currently students do not feel that the same level of emphasis is given to foreign languages as is given to other subjects by either parents or schools. When deciding on subjects in first year, it is important that both teachers and guidance counsellors demonstrate an enthusiasm for studying a foreign language to encourage students to choose to pursue a language subject. Students currently see foreign languages as yet another subject to learn in school that can be easily dropped and forgotten about when no longer needed. It will be important for schools and teachers to instill a love of the language in students going forward and dialing up the sense of personal pride that can be achieved from mastering a foreign language, even if they are not yet fully fluent.

The consultation process indicated that choice of language can sometimes be a challenge. In some schools, students are not offered a choice of languages as the curriculum is not yet diversified enough due in part to small student numbers to support multiple languages. For the student, this can be off-putting if they have a preference for another language or feel they

might get more use from it. On the other hand, in larger schools with multiple languages on offer, language subject areas are competing amongst themselves for student numbers.

The inaugural Languages Connect Summit, which took place in October 2023, was an opportunity to empower and equip language teachers with the relevant resources and inspiration they need to become partners in the awareness raising campaign and was hugely important and effective as a way of bringing language teachers together and giving them increased visibility in the education sector.

### **3B Guidance**

A key partnership between PPLI and Careers Portal has supported the dissemination of important information and resources to guidance counsellors and students. [A course finder](#) was developed in collaboration with the HEIs which allows students to search for the first time third-level courses that include a foreign language component at either major, minor or elective level.

Advisory sessions have been developed and implemented by PPLI to support a whole-school approach to MFL learning in schools, and to bring together MFL teachers, senior management teams and guidance counsellors to discuss and reflect on language provision. A set of bilingual leaflets have also been produced for parents to promote the new curricular Leaving Certificate Established language subjects. Online information sessions for parents, students and guidance counsellors have been held and are well attended with more than 2,000 participants to date.

The Languages Connect [Open Night Toolkit](#) was developed to support MFL teachers in encouraging parents and incoming first year students to choose languages. This could be extended to 6<sup>th</sup> class students following the introduction of MFL at primary from 2025 and could be piloted for the current SYTL cohort.

Resources to accompany the [Languages Connect videos](#) include ready-made lesson plans for use by guidance counsellors and MFL teachers to support students with developing an appreciation of the importance of languages in the workplace and to encourage them to learn languages. Self-access materials for students which reflect on the importance of foreign language skills in their lives and future careers were also created.

Guidance counsellors have reported that key statistics and information on improved employment prospects for those with foreign language skills would also be useful. Moving

forward, more research will be conducted, and existing research highlighted to include additional hard data on why foreign language learning is important. In the context of the whole school guidance approach, messaging will include a focus on the relevance of languages for personal and social development and is also now targeting teachers of foreign languages.

## **Goal 4 – Employer Engagement and Language Use:**

### **4A – Enhance employer engagement in the development and use of trade languages**

Enhancing employer engagement in the development and use of trade languages is also a goal, calling on employers to get involved with schools and collaborate with HEIs, on the Regional Skills Fora to consider language needs and conduct skills audits, on Enterprise Ireland to engage in an awareness-raising campaign and to encourage businesses to invest in the development of linguistic skills in their organisations.

Enterprise Ireland is promoting their [GradStart](#) language offer to client companies, to attract Graduate Language talent for a 2-year company placement, this support is also available to Local Enterprise Office clients and Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies. For client placement of graduates with language proficiency, EI provides financial support of €42k (€21k per year on a maximum allowable salary of €30k per year) or 70% of individual graduate salary costs, whichever is the lesser. EI's [Enter the Eurozone programme](#) supports client companies to prepare for market entry success in a new Eurozone market, building client language capability is encouraged during this programme.

It has not proved possible to ascertain measurable data under this Goal on the % of employers using the CEFR or Language Management Strategies or on the number of Education and Training providers incorporating Language Management Strategies into Master of Business Administration (M.BA) and other Executive Education programmes.

Some progress has been made with Ireland now ranked 37<sup>th</sup> in the IMD World Talent ranking for language skills that meet the needs of enterprise, up from 44<sup>th</sup> in 2017.

Engagement with employers has taken place to support their involvement with post-primary schools within the TY programme, and in the LCVP and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). A ['Working with languages' TY and LCA/ LCVP work experience resource](#) was made available by PPLI to all post-primary schools to bring language skills and language awareness into work experience and employer engagement. A 'Creating Partnerships with Employers' resource was also made available with ideas for employer engagement. Engagement with employers, in collaboration with Business in the Community (BITC), delivering student webinars (TY and 6th year) with employers, have all been successful and will be further developed.

'Languages in My Life', a resource for TY, was provided to schools as an opportunity to encourage the continuation of foreign languages study in senior cycle. In its work with Careers

Portal, PPLI have endeavored to encourage the involvement of employers with post-primary schools as part of their work-experience/ career choices in the TY, LCVP and LCA programmes. The new award arising out of the Career skills competition has demonstrated that it can be difficult for students to access work experience scenarios where they can use a foreign language and this area needs further attention.

At the focus group with representatives from the enterprise sector, they described how language needs had evolved in society over the last fifteen years. Skills shortages in certain foreign languages have been plugged by sourcing native speakers in the language, rather than relying on local candidates. The increase in trade with the European Union since Brexit, as well as Ireland's attempts to enter previously unfamiliar global markets in Asia, for example, has led to the greater need for employees who have capacity not only in language skills, but also in intercultural skills, and this too is an area that requires further emphasis.

Leaders recognised the value of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) but queried the practicality around the expectation for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) to engage with it in their work.

## **Conclusion**

Significant progress has been made under the 1<sup>st</sup> Languages Connect Implementation plan as set out in this interim report. The second implementation plan to 2026 sets out the roadmap for making further progress towards delivering on the vision of Ireland's National Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education.

Multilingualism supports mobility and cooperation within the European Union. Multilingual individuals provide a better understanding of other cultures encouraging social inclusion, enabling full participation in society and the labour market and fostering personal fulfillment. Limited multilingual competence remains an obstacle to benefiting from the opportunities offered by virtue of being a European citizen. Conversely, enhanced multilingual competence will enable persons to benefit more from the opportunities the internal market offers, such as free movement of workers, as well as take a more informed decision about opportunities in other EU countries.

Despite the European policy context, evidence on the ground suggests that participation in foreign language learning at post-primary level in Ireland is decreasing. Languages Connect aims to ensure that every effort is made to prioritise actions which support the development of a society in which plurilingualism and multilingualism are celebrated and in which participation in language learning is encouraged. The introduction of foreign languages in the primary curriculum from 2025 will be key in harnessing existing linguistic capital and increasing participation in foreign language learning. Skilled and motivated language teachers who have been provided with quality support and training will make a significant difference in students' language learning experiences. Effective implementation will inspire interest and motivation among students to explore languages further. The need to adequately prepare for this, arguably the most significant milestone in foreign languages education policy in Ireland to date with the potential to impact most on Ireland's future position in the global context is a key priority for Languages Connect to 2026.

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## **Languages Connect – Implementation Plan to 2026**

### **Goal 1 - Improve Language Proficiency by Creating a more Engaging Learning Environment**

**Objective:** To provide educators with the necessary support, resources, and professional development opportunities to enhance their language teaching skills and to harness digital tools and resources to enhance the quality of language education in Ireland.

No.	Action	Lead	Partners	Timescale
<b>ITE/Registration</b>				
<b>1.A.1</b>	Engage with providers of ITE to plan for the introduction of MFL in the primary curriculum.	DoE (TEP-ITE, CAP)	T.Council, Primary ITE providers	Q4 2025
<b>1.A.2</b>	The Teaching Council will consider how new Primary Curriculum Specifications for Modern Foreign Languages will impact on the standards for and accreditation of initial teacher education programmes, in the context of the introduction of the Primary Curriculum Framework 2023.	T.Council		Q4 2025
<b>1.A.3</b>	ITE providers shall ensure entry selection processes for the Professional Master of Education (PME) at post-primary are aligned with the Teaching Council's curricular subject specific registration requirements. In relation to languages, the curricular subject requirements specify a minimum on the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages (CEFR) of B2.2 level of proficiency.	ITE providers	T.Council	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.A.4</b>	Consider possibilities for school placements or enterprise-based work placements abroad as part of concurrent teacher education programmes, in addition to fulfilling school placement requirements in recognised schools, in Ireland, as outlined in Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education	DoE (TEP-ITE)	T.Council, ITE providers	Q2 2025



<b>1.A.5</b>	Encourage ITE students to spend time outside of term time in immersion activities or work opportunities abroad and highlight successful case studies of students who have availed of such opportunities.	ITE providers	DoE (TES)	Q4 2026
<b>CPD</b>				
<b>1.B.1</b>	Increase the number of teachers participating in language upskilling programmes such as the DoE funded UCC programme and PPLI funded upskilling programmes.	DoE (Teacher Supply), PPLI	TPNs	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.B.2</b>	Extend the DoE funded Higher Diploma in Spanish for teachers' course to support diversification and teacher shortages in other language areas e.g. use a similar scheme to introduce a bridging programme for internationally qualified Chinese teachers.	DoE (Teacher Supply), PPLI		
<b>1.B.3</b>	Work with Embassies to increase-language upskilling / CPD programmes for teachers	DoE (CAP), PPLI/ Embassies	TPNs	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.B.4</b>	In collaboration with the French Embassy, we agree to intensify mobility scholarships and continue to provide training workshops throughout the year to teachers in all regions of Ireland including the co-financed scholarship programme in partnership with the Department of Education in accordance with the Ireland France Joint Plan of Action 2021 – 2025	DoE (Intl)/ French Embassy		Q4 2025
<b>1.B.5</b>	Continue to make available language upskilling to teachers who are qualified in a language but are not currently teaching it and the language teacher registration shortfall funding scheme for teachers missing credits to register with the TC.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.B.6</b>	Spread awareness of Erasmus+ funding to both primary and post-primary schools. Encourage schools to use teacher mobility programmes as a means of CPD	Léargas	DoE ( CAP), PPLI	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.B.7</b>	Encourage and support both primary and post-primary schools to apply for Erasmus+ funding and to use teacher mobility programmes as a means of CPD.	Léargas		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.B.8</b>	Explore additional mechanisms to provide for teacher language upskilling.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>Supports for Teaching &amp; Learning</b>				
<b>1.C.1</b>	Enhance foreign languages expertise within the DoE Inspectorate by restoring the numbers of inspectors lost over the period of initial implementation of Languages Connect and add additional post primary inspectors with MFL and CLIL expertise as originally planned.	DoE (Inspectorate)		Ongoing to 2026

<b>1.C.2</b>	Continue to increase the numbers of FLAs in line with the strategy, and provide resources and support to ensure the continued success and improvement in the scheme. In expanding applications for the FLA scheme, prioritise lesser taught languages	DoE (Terms and Conditions)	DoE (CAP), PPLI	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.C.3</b>	Increase the stipend for FLAs in order to incentivise continued participation and to take account of cost of living and cost of accommodation increases in Ireland	DoE (Terms and Conditions)		Q1 2024
<b>1.C.4</b>	Increase visibility of the FLA and ELA schemes as a means of developing language capacity and intercultural awareness within society.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.C.5</b>	Explore innovative approaches to assist schools in remote areas of the country, or with lower numbers of teaching hours, to secure the services of an FLA for their students. Such pathways could involve the addition of CLIL teaching approaches, professional development for teachers and co-curricular or extra-curricular duties for the FLA.	DoE (Terms and Conditions)	DoE (Inspectorate), PPLI	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.C.6</b>	Explore the possibility of new cultural agreements with countries where the lesser taught languages are spoken, in order to diversify the FLA scheme e.g. with the Lusophone countries, China, Poland and Lithuania	DoE (International)	DoE (CAP), PPLI	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.C.7</b>	Consider using the FLA scheme to support the introduction of foreign languages at primary level (Stage 4) and provide support and training for same.	DoE (CAP)		Q3 2025
<b>1.C.8</b>	Continue to collaborate with ECML, exploring avenues for dissemination with stakeholders both in terms of policy and teaching and learning	DoE (Insp), Léargas	PPLI	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.C.9</b>	Explore the potential use of artificial intelligence (AI) as a resource to support MFL teaching and learning	PPLI, Oide Tech in Ed		Q4 2025
<b>1.C.10</b>	Develop a TY module which develops plurilingual and intercultural competences supporting inclusion, educational success and participation in democratic culture.	PPLI		Q2 2025
<b>1.C.11</b>	Build upon existing work in showcasing exemplars of good practice in all target languages and provide relevant resources and tutorials on digital technologies to enhance quality in teaching and learning in accordance with their individual remit.	PPLI	OIDE Tech in Ed, TPNs	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.C.12</b>	Build upon existing work in showcasing exemplars of good practice in all target languages through examples of children's language learning as published in the online	NCCA		Ongoing to 2026

	toolkit for primary and examples of students work to support teachers at post primary.			
<b>1.C.13</b>	Further enhance and facilitate and encourage participation of teachers in Communities of Practice	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.C.14</b>	Continue to carry out periodic surveys of student attitudes and experiences of foreign language learning	DoE Insp	PPLI	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.C.15</b>	Explore a means for accrediting competence in diverse/ heritage languages to support people who need to prove their language competency for study or career purposes.	DoE (TES, CAP)	PPLI	
<b>1.C.16</b>	Ensure that students studying disciplines other than languages have the opportunity to take language modules for additional credit outside of their regular degree programmes.	DFHERIS, HEA	HEIs	
<b>1.C.17</b>	Continue to promote the enhancement of teaching and learning languages across the HEI sector	HEA/Teaching and Learning Forum	DFHERIS	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.C.18</b>	Continue to seek to broadly align any new specifications and curricula with the CEFR and at Senior Cycle in line with the approved schedule for subject specification revision	NCCA		Ongoing to 2026
<b>Mobility</b>				
<b>1.D.1</b>	Work with Embassies to increase opportunities for teacher and student mobility both to and from Ireland	DoE (International), Embassies	PPLI	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.D.2</b>	Review the terms and conditions of the Visiting Spanish Teacher scheme to encourage greater uptake among schools	DoE (CAP)	Spanish Embassy	Q1 2024
<b>1.D.3</b>	Facilitate access to the VST scheme for schools, provide induction to VSTs and monitor ongoing delivery.	PPLI	DoE (CAP)	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.D.4</b>	Promote the French/ Irish Teacher Professional Visit Scheme and the German Teacher Exchange Scheme	DoE (Terms & Conditions)		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.D.5</b>	Consider the establishment of an exchange programme for Irish/ Spanish teachers	DoE (CAP, Terms & Conditions)	Spanish Embassy	
<b>1.D.6</b>	Promote eTwinning, virtual exchanges, and Erasmus+ opportunities for student exchange	Léargas	PPLI	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.D.7</b>	Encourage uptake of Erasmus+ mobility opportunities among higher education students and staff	HEA		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.D.8</b>	Promote and raise awareness of Erasmus+ mobility opportunities in non-programme countries for language learning and intercultural exchange	HEA	DFHERIS, HEIs	Ongoing to 2026

<b>1.D.9</b>	Further develop existing supports for Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs) to assist them with helping their school to set up an exchange.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.D.10</b>	Investigate how best to facilitate and encourage periods of study abroad at post-primary level, as is the case in other jurisdictions.	DoE (CAP)	PPLI	Ongoing to 2026
<b>Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)</b>				
<b>1.E.1</b>	Increase participation in the CLIL approach to teaching and learning of foreign languages at TY level	PPLI	DoE (CAP)	Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.E.2</b>	Continue to upskill teachers and develop networks of CLIL practitioners nationwide.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.E.3</b>	Create a bank of resources which can support the implementation of CLIL.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.E.4</b>	Consider how a language led CLIL approach can be utilised in the context of introducing foreign languages at primary level.	Oide/ PPLI		Q3 2025
<b>1.E.5</b>	Consider ways to share learning from the pilot CLIL programme with providers of ITE programmes at [primary/post-primary]	PPLI/ ITE providers		Ongoing to 2026
<b>1.E.6</b>	For upskilling in CLIL, include micro-credential or bridging courses	ITEs		

## Goal 2: Diversify and Increase the Uptake of Languages Learned and Cultivate the Languages of the New Irish

**Objective:** Greater diversification of languages typically on offer in schools and increased support for the new Irish in maintaining and growing their own capacity to speak their own language.

No.	Action	Lead	Partners	Timescale
<b>ITE/ Registration</b>				
<b>2.A.1</b>	Continue to collaborate with the Teaching Council to promote access to the register for teachers who qualify outside of the Republic of Ireland (ROI)	DoE (TEP Teaching Council), T.Council		Q4 2025
<b>2.A.2</b>	Engage with HEIs providing ITE to explore the potential to develop ITE and bridging programmes for users of Asian languages	DoE (TEP-ITE)	ITE Providers,	Q4 2026
<b>2.A.3</b>	As part of its review of the registration process for teachers who qualify outside of the ROI, consider how to best to facilitate and support Language teachers and all teachers who qualify outside of the ROI in completing qualification shortfalls.	T.Council		Ongoing to 2026
<b>2.A.4</b>	The Teaching Council will explore potential alternatives to the provision of B2.2 on the CEFR as evidence of linguistic competence for applicants who are applying for registration with a curricular language where that language subject is their first language.	T.Council		Ongoing to 2026
<b>2.A.5</b>	Conduct a further audit of foreign languages provision in post primary schools, part of which will determine if there are teachers qualified to teach foreign languages other than those being taught so as to diversify the language programmes available and part of which should establish KPIs for measuring the impact of MFL in primary on uptake of foreign languages at post-primary level.	PPLI, DoE (CAP)		Q2 2026
<b>Primary Languages</b>				
<b>2.B.1</b>	Increase participation in the "Say Yes to Languages" sampler module as a means of increasing interest in new and lesser-taught languages	PPLI		Q3 2024 and 2025
<b>2.B.2</b>	Introduce foreign languages in senior classes at primary level	DoE (CAP)		Q3 2025
<b>2.B.3</b>	Ensure that diversification of languages provision is encouraged in the context of the introduction of foreign languages at primary level, emphasising the importance and value of plurilingualism.	DoE (CAP)NCCA		Q3 2025
<b>2.B.4</b>	Provide opportunities for primary school teachers to upskill in foreign languages.	DoE (CAP), PPLI		Ongoing to 2026

Junior Cycle				
<b>2.C.1</b>	Conduct a review of Junior Cycle Short Courses in Lithuanian and Polish	PPLI		Q4 2024
<b>2.C.2</b>	Based on the review of Junior Cycle Short Courses, explore the potential to expand the foreign language options at JC level to include LC Curricular Languages: Russian, Japanese, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish and Portuguese as either short courses or examinable subjects for Junior Cycle	DoE (CAP)	NCCA, SEC	Q4 2024
<b>2.C.3</b>	Research and pilot potential language education strategies to increase the uptake of MFL by students in DEIS schools e.g. after-school language clubs.	PPLI		Q2 2025 onwards
<b>2.C.4</b>	Complete proposed revisions to the Junior Cycle MFL curriculum specification in response to the challenges identified in the Early Enactment Report.	NCCA		Q4 2024
<b>2.C.5</b>	Conduct a public consultation as part of the early insights review of the Junior Cycle Chinese Language and Culture short course specification.	NCCA		Q2 2024
<b>2.C.6</b>	Progress proposed revisions to the Junior Cycle Chinese Language and Culture short course specification in response to the findings set out in the Early Enactment Report.	NCCA		2025
Senior Cycle				
<b>2.D.1</b>	Complete the development of a new specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic	DoE (CAP),NCCA		Q2 2024
<b>2.D.2</b>	Introduce the new specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic	DoE (CAP)		Q3 2025
<b>2.D.3</b>	Support the introduction of the new specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic	PPLI		Q3 2025
<b>2.D.4</b>	Continue to implement innovative models of provision such as blended learning and expand the CMETB blended learning approach to other ETB clusters at post primary level.	PPLI, ETBI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>2.D.5</b>	Use TY to continue to promote the uptake of new and lesser taught curricular languages	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
Post Primary				
<b>2.E.1</b>	Continue to provide support for internationally qualified teachers implementing new curriculum language specifications in schools	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>2.E.2</b>	Explore the provision of online classes for new and lesser taught curricular languages in schools from a central satellite center	PPLI		Q1 2025 onwards
<b>2.E.3</b>	Continue to explore innovative models of provision to support home language maintenance and diversification of foreign languages capacity	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026

<b>2.E.4</b>	Review the effectiveness of the additional allocation scheme as a means of sustainably embedding *new languages in the school and supporting diversification of provision	DoE (CAP), PPLI		Q4 2024
<b>2.E.5</b>	Provide further training and CPD to support the integration of teachers of new and lesser-taught languages to ensure that teaching methodologies are fit for purpose.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>2.E.6</b>	Facilitate stronger links across levels and sectors, including between primary, secondary, and HEIs in order to facilitate the sharing of resources, curriculum development, and professional development opportunities for language teachers and researchers.	DoE (CAP), NCCA, PPLI,		Ongoing to 2026
<b>Support for Immigrant Languages</b>				
<b>2.F.1</b>	Further enhance collaboration with foreign embassies to support immigrant languages – e.g. funding for summer camps,	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>2.F.2</b>	Develop a resource for primary schools to encourage reading foreign books similar to the resource for post primary schools (JCSP Libraries)	PPLI, Oide		Q3 2025
<b>2.F.3</b>	Introduce a non-curricular Leaving Certificate examination in Ukrainian	SEC		Q2 2025
<b>2.F.4</b>	Provide support including exam preparation and lessons to Ukrainian students taking the non-curricular Leaving Certificate examination.	PPLI		Q2 2025
<b>2.F.5</b>	Continue to monitor demographic patterns aimed at identifying where future foreign/ heritage language supports may be required	PPLI	DoE (CAP)	Ongoing to 2026



### Goal 3: Increase Awareness of the Importance of Language Learning to Encourage the Wider Use of Foreign Languages

**Objective:** To increase awareness in society of the educational, cognitive, social, intercultural, professional and economic benefits of language learning. Awareness-raising measures need to focus on key stakeholders: school principals and management, teachers, students and their families, graduates and employers. To ensure a supply of graduates with foreign language competences for the business and the education sectors, there will need to be a greater uptake of foreign languages in higher education.

No.	Action	Lead	Partners	Timescale
<b>Awareness Raising</b>				
<b>3.A.1</b>	Widen the reach of #ThinkLanguages and integrate more partnerships with HEIs, Primary schools, embassies and other stakeholders in this annual event for TY students.	PPLI	HEIs, Schools, Embassies, other stakeholders	Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.2</b>	Further enhance and leverage the Languages Connect Awareness raising campaign with its strong branding online, on social media, in print and at the many events that the PPLI organise and attend.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.3</b>	Continue to promote the growing bank of resources and promotional materials and develop and produce material based on feedback and research into the various target audiences.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.4</b>	Increase the number of student ambassadors used to support promotion at school events, career talks.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.5</b>	Continue to meet regularly with relevant embassy and cultural institute representatives to discuss context and progress and develop further appropriate collaboration.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.6</b>	Host and attend relevant forums and events which equip teachers and stakeholders to implement strategy actions e.g. Languages Connect Summit 2023	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.7</b>	Build on existing engagement with the Department of Foreign Affairs on the EU Jobs programme	PPLI, DFA		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.8</b>	Promote the benefits of foreign language learning across all education sectors, for increased career opportunities, for the development of transversal skills and for social cohesion and integration.	PPLI, HEIs,		Ongoing to 2026



<b>3.A.9</b>	Develop a communication plan around the introduction of MFL at primary level, targeting pupils and their parents, to raise awareness of the importance of language learning and ensure that all pupils are encouraged to continue their language learning journey into post-primary.	DoE (CAP)	Oide, PPLI, NCCA, NCSE	Q2 2025
<b>3.A.10</b>	Develop opportunities to increase awareness and understanding in Ireland of the Latin America region and its culture, society and commerce, and work to promote increased study of the Spanish and Portuguese languages in accordance with <a href="#">Ireland's Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean</a>	DoE (International), DFA		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.11</b>	Promote the learning of French at primary and secondary level in Ireland in accordance with <a href="#">Ireland France Joint Plan of Action 2021 – 2025</a>	DoE (International), DFA		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.12</b>	Promote the teaching of German in schools as well as the availability of enhanced learning opportunities and exchanges for students in accordance with <a href="#">Ireland in Germany, A Wider and Deeper Footprint</a>	DoE (International), DFA		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.13</b>	Further disseminate resources such as the Languages Connect videos that are considered relatable by students and accompanying lesson plans that present real life, tangible examples of careers that benefit from knowing a foreign language.	PPLI		Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.A.14</b>	Commission research to investigate how students can be encouraged to participate in foreign language learning in school	PPLI		Q1 2025
<b>Guidance</b>				
<b>3.B.1</b>	Further highlight available language courses and careers	PPLI	HEIs, Enterprise agencies	Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.B.2</b>	Continue to engage with Guidance Counsellors and teachers of foreign languages to ensure they have up to date information on languages and appropriate resources to share this information with their students	DoE (Guidance Unit), Oide, PPLI	ETBI, IGC, TPNs	Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.B.3</b>	Engage with relevant stakeholders to disseminate and encourage use of the Languages Connect Open Night Toolkit to support uptake of foreign languages at post-primary level.	PPLI	DoE (CAP, Inspectorate), TPNs	Ongoing to 2026
<b>3.B.4</b>	Design and deliver school support sessions in the context of School Self Evaluation	PPLI	DoE (CAP)	Ongoing to 2026

	(SSE) in order to support school development plans for foreign languages.			
<b>3.B.5</b>	Provide a toolkit for use with 6 <sup>th</sup> class pupils in primary schools to encourage uptake of foreign languages in first year.	PPLI	TPNs	Q3 2024
<b>3.B.6</b>	Encourage language graduates to avail of international mobility opportunities which provide opportunity to learn a foreign language e.g. existing graduate scholarships, internships and work placements and thus create more foreign languages capacity	HEIs/ 3rd Level Career Guidance Officers		Ongoing to 2026

## Goal 4: Enhance Employer Engagement in the Development and Use of Trade Languages

**Objective:** Calling on employers to get involved with schools and collaborate with HEIs, on the Regional Skills Fora to consider language needs and conduct skills audits, on Enterprise Ireland to engage in an awareness-raising campaign and to encourage businesses to invest in the development of linguistic skills and intercultural competence in their organisations.

No.	Action	Lead	Partners	Timescale
4.A.1	Encourage collaboration between employers with identified language needs and HEIs in their region including in curriculum and programme design.	Regional Skills Fora Managers	HEIs, Enterprise	Ongoing to 2026
4.A.2	Support Irish HEIs to maximise opportunities for participation in the European Universities Initiative, which includes a target of 50% mobility among participating institutions.	DFHERIS		Ongoing to 2026
4.A.3	Work with the Enterprise agencies to coordinate messaging around the importance of foreign languages to client companies	DoE (CAP), PPLI, DETE	Enterprise agencies	Q4 2024
4.A.4	Facilitate engagement with companies in the enterprise sector for the purpose of research, in order to determine the value of language skills and language learning for employers.	PPLI	DETE, EI, IBEC, IDA	Q3 2025
4.A.5	Run an awareness raising campaign on the importance of foreign languages for enterprise	Enterprise Ireland		Q2 2025
4.A.6	Seek to increase opportunities for post-primary students to engage in work experience where they can use languages	PPLI, Enterprise		Ongoing to 2026
4.A.7	Continue to promote Partnerships with Employers Resource, World of Work Resource, and Working with Languages Activity Pack in Schools	PPLI, Enterprise		Ongoing to 2026
4.A.8	Increase opportunities for the enterprise sector to raise awareness of the value of languages for jobs e.g. through video content, school visits, and seminars	PPLI, Enterprise		Ongoing to 2026

## Additional Key Performance Measures to 2026

Measure	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of primary schools participating in the Say Yes to Languages sampler module	700	1,200	TBD	TBD
Number of TY Students participating in #ThinkLanguages		15,000		20,000
Number of students taking a LC examination in one of the four new LC Languages (Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese)	1,693			

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AEN	Additional Educational Needs
BITC	Business in the Community
CBA	Classroom Based Assessment
CEFR	Common European Framework for Reference for Languages
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CMETB	Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DoE	Department of Education
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ECML	European Centre for Modern Languages
EGFSN	Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
ELA	English Language Assistant
ETB	Education and Training Board
EU	European Union
FLA	Foreign Language Assistant
HCI	Human Capital Initiative

HEI	Higher Education Institution
ILAOS	An Intercultural Look at Our Schools
IMD	International Institute for Management Development
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LCE	Leaving Certificate Established
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LOTE	Languages Other Than English
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
PCF	Primary Curriculum Framework
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PME	Professional Master of Education
PPLI	Post Primary Languages Ireland
RELANG	Relating language curricula, tests and examinations to the CEFR
ROI	Republic of Ireland
SEC	State Examinations Commission
SLAR	Subject Learning and Assessment Review
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise

SMT	Senior Management Team
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SSE	School Self Evaluation
SOL	Statement of Learning
SYTL	Say Yes to Languages
TC	Teaching Council
TY	Transition Year
UCC	University College Cork
UCD	University College Dublin
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VST	Visiting Spanish Teacher

## Appendix 2 – Terminology

Heritage Languages	Heritage Languages are understood as being languages of origin of persons or groups that have moved to live in Ireland where the link with the language is being lost e.g. in the case of second or third generation speakers of Lithuanian, Polish, and Portuguese.
Home Languages	Home Languages are understood as being languages other than English, Irish and Irish Sign Language that are spoken in the home. They are also often referred to as community languages.
Immigrant Languages	Immigrant Languages are understood as being languages spoken in Ireland as a result of immigration, primarily but not exclusively from the new accession states'.
Lesser Taught Languages	Lesser Taught Languages are understood as being Italian, and Japanese and Russian at Senior Cycle
Mother Tongue	Mother Tongue is understood as being a person's first language or one of their first languages, a dominant language, a home language or a native tongue.
New Languages/ New Curricular Languages	New Languages/ New Curricular Languages are understood as being Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish and Portuguese at Senior Cycle. Going forward these will be referred to as the 'more recently added curricular languages'
Non-Curricular Languages	These are EU languages that are not part of the normal school curriculum but students may opt to take if they meet certain criteria: <a href="https://www.examinations.ie">Examination Information - State Examination Commission (examinations.ie)</a>
Target Languages	Language of instruction
Trade Languages	Trade Languages are understood as being languages required to trade internationally. In the Irish context these



	include languages identified by the EGFSN as important for future skills needs - German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Arabic and Japanese.
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