



## European Day of Languages: 26 September 2002

### « Lifelong language learning »

#### A Council of Europe initiative

The highlight of European Year of Languages was European Day of Languages, which was celebrated on 26 September 2001 in all 45 states taking part in the campaign.

At its 776th meeting on 6 December 2001 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe decided to declare a European Day of Languages to be celebrated on 26th September each year. This decision was taken in response to a recommendation by the Parliamentary Assembly, which had been actively involved throughout the campaign, particularly on European Day of Languages.

The Committee of Ministers recommended that “the Day be organised in a decentralised and flexible manner according to the wishes and resources of member states, which would thus enable them to better define their own approaches”.

#### Why a « European Day of Languages » ?

The Day was annualised in order to: i) continue the dynamics of European Year of Languages, particularly the new networks and partnerships set up in more than 80% of the countries involved ii) build on the successful initiatives and launch fresh ones by broadening their audience or targeting specific groups iii) provide a favourable framework for continuing with the activities launched in 2001 to promote linguistic diversity and language learning.

2002 is to be a transitional year helping to prolong the impetus of the campaign.

#### Aims of European Day of Languages

The Day will have a wide variety of aims following on from European Year of Languages, in line with various economic, social and cultural developments in Europe:

- Alerting the public to the importance of language learning and diversifying the range of languages learnt in order to increase plurilingualism and intercultural understanding;
- Promoting the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe, which must be preserved and fostered;
- Encouraging lifelong language learning in and out of school, whether for study purposes, for professional needs, for the purposes of mobility or just for pleasure and exchanges.

## Who is « European Day of Languages » for?

The Council of Europe is hoping that this Day will be celebrated by both authorities in its member states and potential partners at the following levels:

- among policy-makers (specific measures or discussions on language policy issues, for instance)
- among the general public (awareness-raising on the overall objectives of the Day, including the importance of lifelong language learning, starting at any age, in educational establishments, at work, etc);
- in the voluntary sector (specific actions by and/or for NGOs, associations, companies, etc).

## An annual theme

In accordance with the Committee of Ministers' decision, a common theme is proposed each year to serve as a guideline. The theme for 2002 is "**lifelong language learning**", which is in line with the objectives of European Year of Languages. This theme can have an accompanying sub-theme, and the organisers can freely interpret it in line with any general aims they may have set at national, regional or local levels.

## Logo

The logo for the Day will be the same as that used for European Year of Languages (the image alone), in order to highlight the link with the campaign and take advantage of the associated high-profile media coverage. Organisers can use the logo as they choose, subject to the conditions laid down for European Year of Languages. Users may add the words "European Day of Languages" in a flexible design format.

## Organisation of European Day of Languages

The Council of Europe will not be issuing organisational directives: member states and potential partners are given a free hand to organise activities as they wish, with a view to maximum flexibility in implementing the Day.

- "*National relays*" (*individuals, structures, groups, etc*)

A contact might be secured in each country or in respect of the main partners to serve as a "relay" with the Council of Europe, notably for the purposes of information transmission. The main task of such a person or body should therefore be to produce a knock-on effect.

- *Role of the Council of Europe*

The Council of Europe will be producing a generic poster (reusable annually). The poster will be produced in limited numbers, but can be forwarded in electronic form to authorities, the "relays" or individual activity organisers upon request. The relevant national or regional languages may then be added, if necessary.

A European Day of Languages website will be gradually developed on the Council of Europe's general website, with a data base comprising examples of good practice which may be used as catalysts.