

Slovenia - national priorities in language education

In July 2013 **Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2014-2018** was adopted (http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r01/predpis_RESO91.html. (hopefully a translation into English will follow soon). In Slovenia, the Ministry of culture is responsible for the national language policy. Here is a brief summary of the Resolution mentioned:

As one of the priority directions of the Slovenian language policy, the programme brings forward the support of language diversity and functional multilingualism. **Therefore, the aim of the Slovenian language policy is to form a community of independent language users with highly developed language competence in Slovenian language, with sufficient language competence in other languages, with high degree of language confidence and appropriate degree of readiness to accept linguistic and cultural diversity.** The main focus of the document goes to the Slovenian language (as the first language of the majority of Slovenian population) within Slovenia and outside its borders. Follow the chapters of the Slovenian as the second or foreign language, languages of minorities and immigrants, foreign languages, speakers with special needs, languages in higher education. In the chapter "Foreign languages" two main objectives are stated:

1. **ensuring quality and optimisation of the foreign language teaching and learning,**
2. **providing better information to language providers and language learners together with efficient in-service and pre-service teacher training** (including head teachers and directors of education institutions).

The second part of the Resolution is dealing with language equipment (language sources, dictionaries, manuals, tools, counselling services...).

The Resolution anticipates the preparation of two sub – programmes, i.e. **action plans for language instruction and language equipment.** Both action plans have been just put into public consultation and are open till the end of July 2014. It is expected that both action plans are adopted by the end of this year.

In line with the national language policy and the two action plans, Slovene ministry of education has already started a big national reform of **lowering the start age for learning foreign languages:**

- for FL1 from age 9 to age 6 as a non-compulsory elective subject (2015/16)
- for FL1 from age 9 to age 7 as a compulsory subject (2014/15)
- for FL2 from age 12 to age 9 as a non-compulsory elective subject (2014/15)

The most important issue for the reform is organising **in- service teacher training for early language learning** (top priority).

Other top and high priorities:

- relating the existing German, French, Italian and Spanish examinations to the CEFR (those for English language have already been done) (top priority)
- using ICT in language learning (high priority)
- introducing intercultural approach to language learning (high priority)