

Lion's Voice

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> Re-evaluation of language certificates in Greece: a welcome development

Language certification in Greece has been largely an unregulated field for quite a few years. According to a 2007 presidential decree, which actually clarified the terms of another decree issued in 2000, State recognition has been granted to all and any certificates that happen to be recognised by the authorities in the country of their provenance. The terms of this decree, which were intended to be transitional right from the start, basically delegate the responsibility for recognition in Greece to authorities of countries other than Greece. Thus, the recognition criteria can (and do) vary depending on the country of provenance of each qualification and there is, as a result, no transparency and no explicitness in the language certification recognition field.

More worrying, though, is the fact that although the intention was to regulate the recognition of language examinations for a transitional period, there has, in practice, been no other regulatory attempt for the last ten years.

Recently, the Ministry of Education has announced that it has formed a committee which will look into the matter of examination recognition in language certification and suggest criteria and procedures to evaluate the validity and credibility of all these certificates. This is, in principle, very good news. It is clearly the Ministry of Education's responsibility to make sure that the assessments the state recognizes in this sector do what they claim to do while adhering to the strictest quality standards. The promotion of plurilingualism has, after all, been the main aim of the Council of Europe's language policy for at least the last ten years and for plurilingualism to be promoted it is essential that both the language education policies and procedures and the assessment policies and procedures are transparent, valid and reliable.

According to the announcement, the Ministry of Education's Committee will be looking at the practices followed within the European Union with regard to language certification. This obviously means that the European Union and the Council of



Europe's relevant documents will be studied and the recommendations therein will be implemented. The very least we can expect is that recognized language certificates in Greece

- & are linked to the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages**
- & **assess all four communication skills** (*listening, speaking, reading, writing*)
- & **are assessed fairly and reliably according to criteria that are subject to public scrutiny**
- & **are offered by accredited organizations with appropriate expertise and quality assurance arrangements**

In a sector which has remained unregulated for a long time, this is a very welcome change, which will help foreign language teachers, learners and their parents make informed decisions about the courses of study they take and the examinations they register for.



City & Guilds Teachers' Club
wishes you all the best for the Seasonal Holidays!

