

# EXPERIENCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO (ELP) WITH SLOVENIAN ADULT LEARNERS

Janez Skela  
PhD, Associate  
Professor  
Faculty of Arts,  
University of  
Ljubljana

## ABSTRACT

*The article sets out to highlight the principles and goals of the European Language Portfolio (ELP), which is designed to promote life-long foreign language learning and to strengthen intercultural experiences at all levels of education. The ELP's origins are discussed and its relationship to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), another basic Council of Europe tool with which it is sometimes confused, is clarified. The ELP's two main functions are presented and its three obligatory components are described in detail – i.e. the Language Passport, the Language Biography and the Dossier. The impact of the ELP on foreign language learning and teaching across Europe and beyond is also discussed, as well as the Slovenian ELP models and their implementation. Finally, the principal design features of the adult ELP are described.*

**Keywords:** European Language Portfolio (ELP), life-long foreign language learning, intercultural competence, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), adult ELP

## IZKUŠNJE Z UPORABO EVROPSKEGA JEZIKOVNEGA LISTOVNIKA (EJL) PRI ODRASLIH UČENCIH V SLOVENIJI – POVZETEK

*Prispevek najprej osvetli načela in cilje Evropskega jezikovnega listovnika (EJL), ki s svojo zasnovi spodbuja vseživljenjsko učenje tujih jezikov in krepi medkulturne izkušnje na vseh stopnjah učenja. Zatem je pojasnjen nastanek EJL in njegov odnos do Skupnega evropskega jezikovnega okvira (SEJO) – še enega temeljenega instrumenta Sveta Evrope – ker se ju pogosto zamenjuje. V nadaljevanju sta predstavljeni dve osnovni funkciji EJL in njegova zgradba, pri čemer so podrobno opisani njegovi trije obvezni sestavni deli: jezikovna izkaznica, jezikovni življenjepis in zbirnik. Po tej predstavitvi je prikazan vpliv, ki ga je doslej imel EJL na učenje in poučevanje tujih jezikov v Evropi in širše. Temu sledi predstavitev slovenskih modelov EJL in izkušenj z njihovim uvajanjem v naš šolski prostor. Prispevek se izteče z obravnavo glavnih značilnosti slovenskega modela EJL za odrasle.*

**Ključne besede:** Evropski jezikovni listovnik (EJL), vseživljenjsko učenje tujih jezikov, medkulturna zmožnost, Skupni evropski jezikovni okvir (SEJO), EJL za odrasle

UDK: 374.7:37.091.3

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4312/as.19.4.25-46>

## INTRODUCTION: THE ELP AND ITS OBJECTIVES

Europe's more than "80 languages are one of its richest and most important cultural assets, and a vital part of its unique social model" (Rehm and Uszkoreit 2013: 12). A recent UNESCO report on multilingualism states that languages are an essential medium for the

enjoyment of fundamental rights, such as political expression, education and participation in society (*ibid.*). From the very beginning, Europe had decided to keep its cultural and linguistic richness and diversity alive during the process of becoming an economic and political union. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty, for example, identified some of the most important objectives for the development of

education policy within the EU such as the promotion of a ‘multicultural and mobile Europe’ (The Maastricht Treaty, 1992). This was to affect education policy within the EU. For maintaining the policy of multilingualism and of a ‘European dimension’ in education, foreign language education came to the fore since it was seen as a vehicle for the promotion of a range of positive social values including tolerance, democracy, human rights, and antiracism, as well the capacity to communicate effectively across cultural and linguistic boundaries (McCann and Finn, 2006; Mitchell, 2009: 89).

In order to refine the Maastricht objectives, there have been repeated policy attempts by the Council of Europe to promote both individual multilingualism, and societal plurilingualism, and to encourage member states to support these goals through their education systems (Mitchell, 2009: 90). For example, in 1995 the European Commission published a White Paper arguing for the need for communicative ability in at least two foreign languages in addition to the mother tongue – the so-called *M + 2 policy* (European Commission, 1995: 47). And this is the context from which two major Council of Europe tools have sprung – the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001), and its ‘companion piece’, the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP).

There is an impression that the CEFR and the ELP are sometimes confused; this is understandable insofar as both were conceived at the same time and as closely interrelated. The CEFR is a very substantial and complex document that provides tools for the development of language curricula, programmes of teaching and learning, textbooks, and assessment instruments. The ELP, however, “is designed to mediate to learners, teachers and schools,

and other stakeholders the ethos that underpins the CEFR: respect for linguistic and cultural diversity, mutual understanding beyond national, institutional and social boundaries, the promotion of plurilingual and intercultural education, and the development of the autonomy of the individual citizen” (Little *et al.*, 2011: 5). The ELP, through its emphasis on learner autonomy, self-assessment and life-long learning, has thus reinforced some of the basic implications of the CEFR approach. In this sense, the ELP is the CEFR’s ‘companion piece’ (Little, 2009: 2), acting as “the implementation tool of many of the threads running through the CEFR” (Stoicheva *et al.*, 2009: 4).

The ELP is, in short, an instrument by means of which those who are learning or have learned a language – whether at school, outside school or any other educational institution or language learning provider – can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. It is conceived in such a way that its users can record information about their formal and informal language learning achievements and experience in an internationally comprehensible and recognisable way. The ELP is a personal document devised to promote lifelong language learning, plurilingualism, and work and study mobility among European citizens. It embodies and supports the development of a set of principles – learner autonomy, reflective learning, self-assessment and intercultural awareness.

## THE ELP AND ITS ORIGINS

Although its essential shape was determined by the Council of Europe’s modern languages project *Language Learning for European citizenship* (1989–1996), “the ELP bears the unmistakable mark of earlier Council of Europe

projects” (Little *et al.*, 2011: 7). As Little *et al.* (*ibid.*) note, the ELP was first proposed at the Rüschtikon Symposium of 1991 (‘Transparency and coherence in language learning in Europe’). In its conclusions the symposium recommended that the Council for Cultural Cooperation should promote the development of a Common European Framework of reference for language learning (CEFR) and set up a working party to consider possible forms and functions of a European Language Portfolio (ELP). The purpose of what was to become the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001) would be to “promote and facilitate cooperation among educational institutions in different countries; provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications; [and] assist learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educational administrators to situate and coordinate their efforts” (Council for Cultural Cooperation, 1992; quoted in Little *et al.*, 2011: 7-8).

From 1998 to 2000 different versions of the ELP were developed and piloted in 15 Council of Europe member states, including Slovenia. Between them the pilot projects covered all educational sectors: primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, vocational, university, adult. The pilot projects involved approximately 30,000 learners and 2,000 teachers (for further information, see Schärer, 2000). The great variety of ELP designs produced during the two and a half years of the pilot phase threatened to reduce the ELP to a collection of local variations on a European theme. This prompted the development of a standard *Language Passport* for adults (for use with all learners of 15 years and over) in order to facilitate pan-European recognition and mobility (for a rationale and description, see Flügel, 2000).

The final project report (Schärer, 2000) summarised the main findings of the pilot work and made a number of recommendations for further action. A central finding was that the ELPs were generally well-received and worked satisfactorily in the different pilot settings. There was agreement that the ELP should consist of basically three parts: the language passport, the language biography and the dossier. Such a core was considered a pre-requisite for the international reporting function of the ELP to become feasible. The report noted the necessity to adapt the ELPs to the needs of the different age groups (ranging from young learners to secondary schools and higher education and adult language students). It was also clear from the findings that there was a need to link the ELPs to the national curricula and to provide information and instructions in the learner’s language. At the same time, the concept and practice of self-assessment prompted considerable discussion and in some cases controversy. The report further emphasised the vital importance of training both learners and teachers to ensure an effective use of the ELP and the development of self-assessment skills and learner autonomy (Schärer, 2000: 10–13). On the basis of the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the different pilot projects, the report drew the following general conclusions: (1) the ELP as a learning tool is feasible from a pedagogic point of view; (2) it addresses key educational issues in Europe, and (3) it fosters the declared aims of the Council of Europe. The report consequently suggested a wide implementation of the ELP throughout Europe to maintain and promote linguistic and cultural diversity (Schärer, 2000: 14–15).

After the pilot phase had ended, large-scale implementation of the ELP began. At the same time, in 2000, the then Education Committee of the Council of Europe established

the ELP Validation Committee with a mandate to receive draft ELPs and determine whether or not they were in conformity with the ELP Principles and Guidelines, also established by the Education Committee. Only accredited ELPs could be designated as European Language Portfolio and use the Council of Europe's ELP logo. And although validation required conformity with the ELP Principles and Guidelines, developers nevertheless had plenty of scope to tailor their models to the needs and traditions of specific contexts.

In 2001, the European Year of Languages, the ELP was launched at the first European ELP Seminar, held in Coimbra, Portugal. During this validation and implementation period (between 2001 and 2009) seven further European seminars were held, in Turin, Luxembourg, Istanbul, Madrid, Moscow, Vilnius and Graz. During the same period the Council of Europe published a number of supports for ELP developers (e.g. Schneider and Lenz, 2001), teachers and teacher trainers (Little and Perclová, 2001), and regular reports by Rolf Schärer, rapporteur general, on the progress of the ELP at European level (available at [www.coe.int/portfolio](http://www.coe.int/portfolio)). By December 2010, 118 ELPs had been validated from 32 Council of Europe member states. ELPs have been designed and implemented for all educational domains: primary, lower and upper secondary, vocational, adult, further and tertiary. In his report for 2007, Rolf Schärer, the rapporteur general, estimated that 2.5 million individual ELPs had been produced and/or distributed. Little *et al.* (2011: 5) argue that “although 584,000 learners were estimated to be using an ELP, however, the average number of copies in use per validated ELP model was only 6,600: evidence that sustained use of the ELP on a large scale in individual member states remained elusive.”

## THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE (CEFR) AND THE ELP

The CEFR sets out to describe “in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively” (Council of Europe, 2001: 1). As these words imply, “the primary orientation of the description is behavioural: communicative proficiency is defined in terms of the activities learners can engage in and the tasks they can perform when they listen, speak, read and write in a second or foreign language” (Little, 2009: 1). This behavioural orientation is perhaps the CEFR's most important innovation. The same ‘can do’ descriptors can be used to define a curriculum, plan a programme of teaching and learning, and guide the assessment of learning outcomes; and in this way “the CEFR offers to bring curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into a closer relation to one another than has traditionally been the case, challenging us to rethink each from the perspective of the other two” (*ibid.*). In sum, the CEFR defines second/foreign language communicative competence at six ‘common reference levels’ – A1 and A2 (Basic User), B1 and B2 (Independent User), C1 and C2 (Proficient User) – using ‘can do’ statements to indicate the learner's proficiency at each level in relation to five communicative skills/activities: LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION and WRITING.

Using the ELP necessarily engages the owner in self-assessment. The ELP's *Language Passport* requires learners to assess their own proficiency using the scales and descriptors derived from the CEFR; the *Language Biography* provides for the regular setting of

learning goals, which learners can do only if they regularly assess their own progress; and the selection of material for inclusion in (and exclusion from) the *Dossier* likewise requires self-assessment. This emphasis on self-assessment coincides with the Council of Europe's concern to promote autonomous life-long learning. The basis for self-assessment is thus provided by the common reference levels of the CEFR which are summarized in the so-called *self-assessment grid* (Council of Europe 2001: 26-27) and elaborated in fifty-three illustrative scales. For example, under the global skill of LISTENING, separate illustrative scales of 'can do' statements are provided for the target skills of listening to announcements and instructions, understanding interaction between native speakers, listening as a member of a live audience, and listening to audio media and recordings.

But the CEFR offers the self-assessment grid only as "a draft for a self-assessment orientation tool based on the six levels" (Council of Europe, 2001: 25). The CEFR thus recognizes that self-assessment cannot be undertaken on the basis of the self-assessment grid alone, as the grid is only an extremely condensed summary of the CEFR's fifty-three illustrative scales. This means that, despite its name, the self-assessment grid was never intended to be used as the ELP's primary tool of self-assessment. This function falls to the 'can do' checklists (Little, 2005: 8), in which each of the general descriptors must be expanded in a way appropriate to the age, needs and interests of the learners in question. The expansion should produce lists of "precise communicative goals that can be used to generate learning tasks" (Little and Perclová, 2001: 35). For example, in the self-assessment grid the skill of SPOKEN INTERACTION at A1 level is summarized like this: "*I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared*

*to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics"* (Council of Europe, 2001: 26). This descriptor summarizes the most basic communicative use that it is possible to make of the speaking skill. But the communicative behaviour in which such use is embedded will vary from one learner group to another (e.g. primary-school learners vs. adult learners). Therefore, for example, in the ELP designed for use in Slovenia at lower primary level (ages 6-10) the expanded and detailed A1 checklist for SPOKEN INTERACTION looks like this (Čok *et al.*, 2011: 8-9):

- I can greet and respond to a greeting.
- I can say what I like or don't like.
- I can ask someone what they like or don't like.
- I can ask for something.
- I can ask someone if they have brothers or sisters.
- I can ask how someone is, and say how I am.
- I can say that I don't understand.
- I can ask where someone lives, and say where I live.
- I can apologize. I can say thank you.
- I can ask someone's name, and I can say my name.
- I can introduce myself and other people.
- I can order something to eat and drink.
- I can say what I want and ask about the price in places like shops.
- I can take part in a simple conversation on a familiar topic (e.g. school, family, free time).

Such expansion of general descriptors in the self-assessment grid needs to be metacognitively and metalinguistically age-appropriate to make it easier especially for younger learners to recognize and report their progress.

The empirically validated ‘can do’ descriptors in the CEFR’s fifty-three illustrative scales, and summarized in the self-assessment grid, were arrived at on the basis of empirical research funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (see North and Schneider, 1998; North, 2000, Schneider and Lenz, 2001: 41ff).<sup>1</sup> As a result the Swiss pilot project was based on a fully elaborated ELP that was very explicitly related to the CEFR and included detailed self-assessment checklists for the five communicative skills at all six common reference levels. During the pilot phase this model served as an indispensable reference for all the pilot projects.

The ELP Language Passport covers the whole range of possible foreign language proficiency, from beginner to near-native speaker. Only very few learners achieve levels C1 and C2, and they do so only after many years of learning. It is thus hardly surprising that learners remain at the same ‘reference level’ for months, or in some cases years, even though there may be plenty of evidence that they are making progress (Little and Perclová, 2001: 36). This is due to the fact that “the levels and scales that underpin the ELP are not a linear measurement scale like a ruler” (*ibid.*). A1 and A2 checklist descriptors refer to discrete tasks, but as we move upwards through the CEFR levels, the descriptors necessarily refer to increasingly complex communicative activities. This can be illustrated by the fol-

lowing selection of descriptors for spoken interaction, taken from the Swiss ELP for adolescent and adult learners (Little, 2009: 9-10):

#### SPOKEN INTERACTION

A1	I can introduce somebody and use basic greeting and leave-taking expressions.
A2	I can make simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks.
B1	I can start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.
B2	I can initiate, maintain and end discourse naturally with effective turn-taking.
C1	I can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, professional or academic topics.
C2	I can take part effortlessly in all conversations and discussions with native speakers.

*Greeting and leave-taking expressions and making introductions (A1) can be mastered over the course of a few lessons, while learning how to make simple transactions (A2) takes quite a lot longer: it might provide one of the main focuses of classroom activity for a school year. Most learners will confidently start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversations (B1) only after several years of learning rooted in communicative use of the target language. And by the time we get to C1*

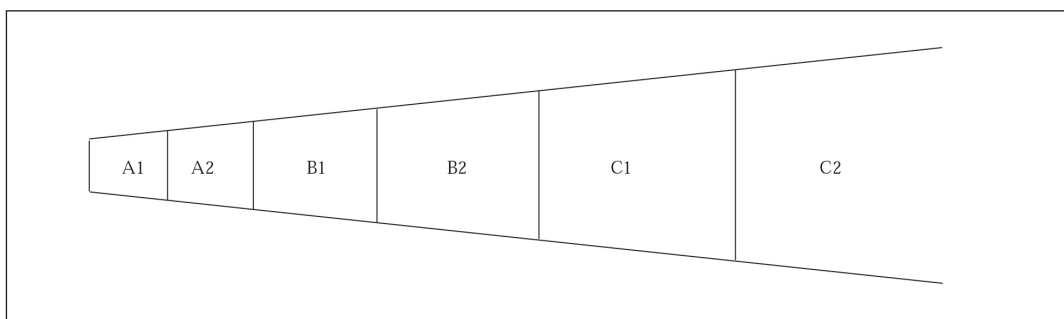


Figure 1: Non-linear nature of ‘can do’ descriptors (Little and Perclová, 2001: 37)



and C2 “we understand the full significance of the CEFR’s view of language learning as a form of language use” (Little, 2009: 10). These facts are encapsulated in *Figure 1*.

The Language Biography in the ELP can include checklists or descriptions of skills and competencies that are not directly related to the *common reference levels*, e.g.:

- learning how to learn techniques and strategies;
- language awareness;
- sociocultural and intercultural competence.

The inclusion of the above in the ELP is based on the idea that such skills and competencies are not any less important within a language learning curriculum than is language ability. For this reason, descriptions of such skills/competencies are increasingly becoming part of many ELP models that have been developed for use in schools.

## THE ELP AND ITS STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

The original analogy for portfolio (assessment) was the artist’s portfolio. Artists and designers carry their completed works in a portfolio that they show to prospective clients. Part of the ELP is similar to this, but it has two other components that do not usually form part of such a portfolio. The Council of Europe’s ELP has three obligatory components:

- a *Language Passport*, which summarises the owner’s linguistic identity by briefly recording second/foreign languages (L2s) learnt, formal language qualifications achieved, significant experiences of L2 use, and the owner’s assessment of his/her current proficiency in the L2s he/she knows;
- a *Language Biography*, which is used to set language learning targets, monitor

progress, and record and reflect on specially important language learning and intercultural experiences;

- a *Dossier*, which can serve both a process and a display function, being used to store work in progress but also to present a selection of work that in the owner’s judgement best represents his/her L2 proficiency.

The ELP has been developed to fulfil two related functions (Ushioda and Ridley, 2002: 2):

- **Reporting function** – the ELP presents information about the owner’s experience of learning and using L2s, and concrete evidence of his/her achievements. The reporting function is fulfilled by the Language Passport and the Dossier;
- **Pedagogical function** – the ELP makes the learning process more transparent to learners, promotes the development of their skills in planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning, and thus fosters the development of learner autonomy and responsibility. The pedagogical function is largely fulfilled by the Language Biography and the Dossier.

In its documentary and reporting function it supplements the certificates and diplomas that are awarded on the basis of formal examinations. In addition, it allows the owner to document language learning that has taken place outside as well as within formal education. The owner uses the self-assessment grid to evaluate his/her proficiency, and records this self-assessment in the Language Passport. In this way, the ELP enables the owner to report his/her language skills in a manner that is internationally transparent, that supplements formal language qualifications, and that gives relevant bodies (educational institutions, prospective employers) a meaningful basis for interpreting such qualifications. The

ELP's pedagogical function is to promote plurilingualism, raise cultural awareness, make the language learning process more transparent to the owner, and foster the development of learner autonomy. The process of compiling an ELP engages learners in thinking about their learning and regularly evaluating their skills. The reporting and pedagogical functions merge in the on-going process of self-assessment that is fundamental to effective ELP use.

The Language Biography is the specific part of the ELP in which *processes* rather than final results and products are the focus of interest. This part in particular builds upon the idea that conscious reflection on learning processes will eventually improve learning outcomes, as well as the language learners' ability and motivation to learn languages. However, the function of the Language Biography is not purely pedagogical. The documentation of an individual's language learning process and accounts of intercultural experiences can be used not only to plan and prepare for further learning but also to provide detailed information for all those who are interested in more detail and background information than the Language Passport provides.

## CHECKLISTS

As already noted, the CEFR classifies language proficiency according to six 'common reference levels' – A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2 – using 'can do' statements to indicate the learner's proficiency at each level in relation to five communicative skills/activities: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing. Although the self-assessment grid is included in the Language Passport section of all ELPs, the actual function of self-assessment falls to the expanded

and detailed 'can do' checklists in the Language Biography. For ELPs aimed at adolescent and adult learners, it is usual to provide checklists at all six proficiency levels of the CEFR, but it is also possible to include checklists only for the proficiency levels relevant to the learners for whom the ELP in question is intended (Little, n.d.: 3). When an ELP model includes more levels than needed, teachers may consider using only the levels that are relevant to a particular group of learners.

It is impossible to create a checklist that fully encompasses the range of communication attached to any CEFR level/activity. For this reason it is necessary to leave a few blank spaces at the end of each checklist so that learners can add the descriptors suggested by their teachers or that they think of themselves (Little, n.d.: 3). The ability to perform one checklist task/activity does not necessarily imply that the learner can perform other tasks/activities at the same level. It has been suggested that when learners can perform at least 80% of the tasks/activities specified for a particular level and activity, they can claim to have achieved that level for that activity (*ibid.*). Some ELPs arrange their checklists first by level and then by activity/skill, while others reverse that order. The checklists presented in the Slovenian adult ELP, for example, are ordered by level, while those in the upper primary ELP are ordered by activity/skill.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF ELP PROJECTS AND THEIR IMPACT

One of the most valued and widely acknowledged effects of the ELP project as a whole is its genuinely European character. Between 2000 and 2010, 118 models were developed and validated from 32 Council of Europe member states in language versions



representing almost all European languages with only a few exceptions (for a complete list, see the web page indicated below).<sup>2</sup> Between them they targeted all age groups, from pre-primary to adult. Some of them were specifically designed for learners with special needs – migrants, the blind and visually impaired, those learning languages for vocational purposes, and so on.

It can be generally stated that most of the ELP projects that led to the development and validation of ELP models for various age groups have been initiated and supported by Ministries of Education, “with a clear relation to the stated national priorities for education, language learning and teaching and the introduction of educational standards and innovation” (Stoicheva *et al.*, 2009: 7). Another type of project that led to the development and implementation of ELPs, as Stoicheva *et al.* (*ibid.*: 8) point out, was initiated by local institutions – groups of schools, individual schools or other educational institutions – to meet some clearly identified language learning and teaching need for specific target populations. Examples include trans-national ELPs such as the models from ALTE-EAQUALS, CercleS, ELC, etc. There have been numerous other ELP models developed and implemented. One such example is the *Professional European Language Portfolio* (Prof-ELP), a model designed for vocational purposes and envisaged to be used in the world of work.<sup>3</sup> Another interesting example is *CROMO: Medkulturni čezmejni modul – dopolnilo Evropskemu jezikovnemu listovniku 15+* (CROMO 2007), an inter-cultural trans-border module – a supplement to the ELP 15+, developed by educational authorities from Austria, Italy and Slovenia.<sup>4</sup> Mention should be made of the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Byram *et al.*, 2009), another tool of the Council of Europe, designed to help people think about and learn from intercultural

encounters. The portfolio philosophy has also shaded into pre- and in-service language teacher training, as shown by the *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages* (the EPOSTL) developed by an international team of teacher educators (Newby *et al.*, 2007). The main aim of the EPOSTL is, as Newby (2007) points out, “to make a contribution to the harmonisation of language teacher education in Europe”. Based on the CEFR, it contains a self-assessment section with nearly 200 ‘can-do’ descriptors of didactic competences which the language teacher needs to attain.

Besides these examples there are many more local, localized and in-house ELP models being developed in almost all European countries and outside Europe as well, which might or might not comply with the requirements that the Council of Europe has set for the ELP. There is clearly a need for further research to establish how many and what types of ELP models have been initiated and developed by individual actors, without the support of or with just formal approval from the national educational authorities. The impact of the CEFR and the ELP has also been felt at a pan-European level through the work of the European Commission, whose language education activities explicitly incorporate the CEFR/ELP idea. The European Commission has developed a unique European scheme called *Europass*, designed to help citizens make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe and thus to support mobility. The *Europass* consists of five documents, one of which is a Language Passport, and the ELP Language Passport has been adapted for use as part of *Europass*.<sup>5</sup>

The ELP has had a considerable impact on many aspects of foreign language learning and teaching across Europe and beyond. The 2009 impact study (Stoicheva *et al.*, 2009),

for example, focuses on the ELP's qualitative impact on the following key areas: the classroom, textbooks, assessment, the educational system and language policy in general. The report notes that in many countries the CEFR has directly influenced curriculum design, which in turn has had an impact on textbooks. But the ELP has also influenced textbook design, inspiring the inclusion of checklists, reflection on learning, the use of a dossier, and so on.

## THE ELP IN SLOVENIA

### The Slovenian ELP models

To date, five ELP models have been developed for the following age groups:

- lower primary level (ages 6-10), validated in April 2011 (validation number 118.2010) (Čok *et al.*, 2011); the first pilot version published in 1999 (Čok *et al.*, 1999);
- upper primary level (ages 11-15), validated in May 2004 (validation number 57.2004) (Skela and Holc, 2006); the first pilot version published in 2000 (Skela *et al.*, 2000);
- secondary level (ages 15-19), validated in June 2006 (validation number 82.2006) (Puklavec *et al.*, 2006);
- adult learners (16+), validated in September 2010 (validation number 109.2010) (Amič *et al.*, 2010);
- and an experimental ELP model for non-language specialist university students (developed on the initiative of a group of university students; never submitted for accreditation) (Troha *et al.*, 2000).

### The pilot phase (1998-2000)

As already noted, Slovenia was among the first countries to join the Council of Europe's

ELP project. We participated in the pilot phase (from 1998 to 2000) with two ELP models – a version for lower primary school level (age group 7-10; Čok *et al.*, 1999), and a version for upper primary school level (age group 11-15; Skela *et al.*, 2000). There were 634 students and 20 teachers participating in the pilot phase which was co-ordinated by Lucija Čok and Zdravka Godunc (Schärer, 2000: 63-64).

The main findings of the piloting work were basically very similar to the findings based on the reports from other European countries and summarised in the final report of the pilot project (Schärer, 2000). A central finding was that the ELP was generally well received; most learners felt that the time they spent keeping an ELP was time well spent. Most teachers found that the ELP was a useful tool for learners and themselves. Learner self-assessment was considered an important innovation, and learners found it motivating to assess their own language proficiency against the common reference levels of the CEFR. Most learners found that the ELP helped them to assess their own proficiency, and found it useful to compare their teacher's assessment with their own; most teachers thought their learners were capable of assessing their own language proficiency. As regards the ELP's reporting function, learners and teachers wanted the status of the ELP to be clarified. They wanted to know how self-assessment might be used in the final evaluation of language learning achievement, and how the ELP would relate to traditional exams. It was also clear from the findings that both learner and teacher training are essential if the ELP is to be used effectively in both its functions and learners are to become more autonomous and develop a capacity for accurate self-

assessment. Although no really negative opinions on the ELP were recorded during the pilot phase, there were concerns about some teacher opposition due to the need to substantially change existing teaching practices with the application of the ELP; and there was some criticism that although using the ELP was interesting, it took up too much time and effort that would otherwise be devoted to achieving formal curriculum goals (Schärer, 2000: 63-64). Among the most frequently asked questions, in Slovenia and at the European level, were these (Little and Perclová, 2001: 20):

- How should I integrate the ELP in my teaching?
- How exactly does the ELP relate to the curriculum and the textbook?
- How often should I use the ELP?
- How can I make time for the ELP in my already crowded schedule?
- Can I really make use of the CEFR common reference levels and descriptors in my classroom?
- How can I use the ELP to help my learners reflect on language and language learning?
- Why should I get my learners to assess themselves?
- Can learners really be trusted to assess themselves honestly?
- How can I help them to develop their capacity for self-assessment?

### From piloting to implementation (2001-2010)

At the European level, the years between 2001 and 2010 were a period of large-scale implementation of the ELP. In Slovenia, the implementation project was launched in the school year 2001/2002, with more schools joining in a year later (in the school year 2002/2003). As an ELP model for upper secondary level was still lacking, only primary-school learners and teachers participated in the initial implementation phase (Godunc, 2012: 61-63). The principal sources of data used in the evaluation of the project were standard questionnaires sent to the participating teachers, discussion and teacher reports on classroom experience during the teacher training seminars, samples of learner-produced ELP documents and other materials. The data collected provided insights into some of the problems and successes that teachers and learners encountered.

National reports on the use of the ELP would be sent to Rolf Schärer, rapporteur general, who issued regular reports on the progress of the implementation of the ELP project at European level. Again, feedback from individual teachers was generally positive and confirmed that the ELP can exert a strong positive influence on language learning. Taken together, national reports suggested that the ELP can improve learners'

Numbers of learners in Slovenia with an ELP					24 06 04
Educational sector	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2002-2003	2003-2004
<b>Primary</b>					
Pilot version 7-9		177	250	300	350
<b>Secondary I</b>					
57.2004 11-15		353	1050	1250	1400
<b>University</b>					
Pilot version		104	150	120	200
<b>Adult</b>					
Pilot version			200	150	200
<b>Total Slovenia</b>		<b>634</b>	<b>1650</b>	<b>1820</b>	<b>2150</b>

Figure 2: Quantitative results of implementing the ELP in Slovenia (Schärer, 2004: 48)

motivation, develop their reflective capacities, and encourage them to take their own learning initiatives. Of course, the implementation project was not all plain sailing and not all teachers and learners responded positively to the ELP. Most negative feedback was to do with the complexity of the ELP. The three components (Biography, Dossier, Passport) were said to be confusing and many students felt that filling in the different sections was too time-consuming and not worth their while.

Many seminars were conducted by the Ministry of Education during this period to support the project teachers experimenting with the ELP. Additionally, in 2005, a series of six one-day seminars was organized over a period of four months to train eight practising teachers to become ELP trainers (or ‘multipliers’) and thus help out with the growing need for the ELP workshops and seminars.

In 2006, after seven years of experimental implementation of the ELP, a three-year ELP project was launched by the Ministry of Education to conduct an empirical evaluation of the ELP in Slovenian primary and secondary schools (Holc, 2012b: 69-70). The idea was to carry out a more thorough and objective evaluation of the ELP on a larger sample size (to yield more reliable data) and over a longer period of time (3 years). The main data on the evaluation project are as follows (*ibid.*: 71):

- Project title: *Uvajanje in spremljava Evropskega jezikovnega listovnika v OŠ in SŠ*;
- Duration: 3 years (primary school: 2006-2009; secondary school: 2007-2010);
- Educational sector: lower primary, upper primary, secondary;
- Sample size: 72 primary schools, 42 secondary schools, about 200 teachers, about 3,000 learners;
- ELP models used during the pilot project: 3 ELP models were used (for lower and

upper primary levels, and for secondary level).

The purpose of the project was to find out what was happening in classrooms where the ELP was introduced, how it was received by learners, how it was mediated to them by teachers, what kinds of practical constraints and issues arose in its implementation, whether it was in line with the Slovenian curriculum renewal, and above all, what kinds of sustained impact the use of the ELP was perceived to have on teachers and learners (Holc, 2012b: 70).

The overall qualitative evaluation is provided by Holc (2012b: 82-95) and is based on two thorough empirical analyses, which are yet to be published (Deutsch, 2009; Kašnik, 2010). The data gathered during the project through questionnaires clearly indicate that the project teachers and their learners accepted the ELP, liked using it, and successfully integrated it into their teaching and learning agendas. Teachers were in the main positive about the usefulness of the ELP, particularly in helping to develop learning skills, and as an aid to planning and reflection. It was also seen as a useful tool in helping learners to think about their language learning history. However, it was also felt that the use of the ELP added a considerable additional workload to both teachers and students. Moreover, there were some complaints from students that the use of the ELP did not count for assessment purposes. It remains to be seen whether the results of the evaluation project will lead to a decision at national level about whether to include the ELP in the school system (e.g. as an alternative instrument of assessment).

It seems that the ELP in Slovenia, and elsewhere in Europe, has come to a crossroads. The most frequently asked question at the moment is ‘*Where do we go from here?*’. There

are probably several factors that have contributed to a loss of momentum and direction in the ELP project. The 2009 impact study (Stoicheva *et al.*, 2009) clearly indicates that “after this initial Europe-wide initiation period or after the piloting of newly developed ELP models there was some decline of interest and downturn in the activities” (*ibid.*: 7). In addition, most ELPs were developed on a one-off project basis by national authorities, training institutions and educators and researchers, while the implementation of the validated ELPs required different types of work organisation and the involvement on a regular basis of a number of stakeholders (*ibid.*: 8). Another possible reason that might help to explain why the adoption and implementation of the ELP has still not reached the levels hoped for when it was first launched is the very principles of the ELP, which challenge traditional beliefs and practices (Little *et al.*, 2011: 5). Foreign language classrooms are generally still teacher-led, textbook-driven and bound by a prescribed syllabus; and, though ostensibly espousing a ‘communicative’ pedagogy, they seem to do little to engage learners in active use of the target language (Ushioda and Ridley, 2002: 4).

In order to promote the use of the ELP in Slovenia and further expand its take-up, we will need to do the following (Holc, 2012b: 94):

- clarify the status of the ELP within the school system;
- consider the possibility of introducing the ELP as an alternative instrument of assessment;
- maintain continuity of the ELP’s use, i.e. from young to adult learners;
- solve the problem of availability and introduce more effective ELP distribution systems for wider use (so far, free of charge for students and schools in the national ELP project – financed by the

Ministry of Education), e.g. publishing houses taking over the printing of ELP copies and selling them;

- offer validated ELP models for downloading (at the moment, pdf files of ELP paper models can be downloaded from institutional websites or from publishers);
- make up for the general lack of printed ELPs (Interested teachers cannot obtain copies of the ELP.);
- develop the e-portfolio and encourage the use of virtual learning environments;
- revise and update the already validated ELPs, especially the secondary level ELP and the adult ELP;
- recover and allocate resources for a follow-up for schools and teachers and the provision of on-going support.

In pursuing these goals, we can draw inspiration from experience over the past fifteen years. We should not forget that during the initial Europe-wide initiation period, a genuine ELP spirit could be felt in Slovenia, and many domestic examples and events bear witness to the ELP boom at that time. We were among the countries that pioneered the implementation of the ELP; the Slovenian upper primary pilot version of the ELP was probably the first model which contained a collection of 27 ‘learning-how-to-learn’ and reflection pages to foster learner autonomy and reflective skills; a group of university students developed a unique experimental ELP model for non-language specialist university students (Troha *et al.*, 2000), which was the first and only ‘students-for-students’ ELP; there were several BA and MA theses completed on the topic of the ELP (e.g. Yazbeck, 1999; Dragar Gorjup *et al.*, 2000; Fidler, 2000); in 2000, we hosted an international ELP seminar (Radovljica), and so on.



Currently, besides the four validated ELP models, whose use has mostly come to a standstill, there are other instances of use of the ELP. In some cases the format of the ELP has been adapted or simplified for local use. Two such examples are the *European Language Portfolio for Students of Economics and Business* (Jezikovni listovnik za študente ekonomije in poslovnih ved), developed by Nada Puklavac (Puklavac *et al.*, 2006) for use at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Maribor, where it is being used as an optional component of the course; and *Europäisches Sprachenportfolio für Erwachsene / ... für den Hochschulbereich / ... für Studierende*, developed for compulsory use in the Department of German Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor.<sup>6</sup> Although these two variants are not recognised as the Council of Europe accredited version, their use goes a long way to promoting learner autonomy and to developing good language and lifelong learning strategies.

There are also versions that use, for example, only one component of the ELP, such as the Biography or the Dossier, and versions that are neither a *European* nor a *Language* portfolio, but simply a *portfolio* in its most basic sense – an instrument for on-going reflection on the learning process and documentation of significant student outcomes. Two such examples are *Mapa učnih dosežkov* (i.e. Learner Achievement Portfolio),<sup>7</sup> developed by *Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje* for use in the secondary vocational sector, and *Strokovni portfolio* (i.e. Student Teacher Professional Portfolio), developed for student teachers at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, to record and reflect on their school-based teaching experience (Juriševič, 2007), and which can also be used by teachers of English to young learners, i.e. at class level of primary school (Juriševič, 2010).

## THE SLOVENIAN ELP MODEL FOR ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The Slovenian adult/vocational ELP (Amič *et al.*, 2010) has been developed for use by adults who are learning languages for work or social purposes. First published as *Evropska jezikovna mapa za odrasle* in 2002, it was designed in cooperation with the Adult-Education Centre of Slovenia (*Andragoški center Slovenije*), the Institute for Adult Education Koper (*Ljudska univerza Koper*), and the *Cene Štupar* Centre for Continuing Education (*Center za permanentno izobraževanje Cene Štupar*). The pilot study provided valuable feedback for the development of a revised version, which was approved by the Council of Europe in September 2010.

### Principal design features of the adult ELP

Like other ELPs, the adult ELP is not designed to replace existing courses or qualifications, but to complement them by enhancing the learning process and providing a single collection point for evidence of all an individual's linguistic and intercultural skills. Although there are crossover points and elements in common with ELPs for all age groups, there are still certain functions that may vary depending on the learning context. A portfolio for adults will certainly include a more detailed presentation of skills and information about achievements, as well as a job-oriented evaluation (Sheils, 1999: 3).

The Slovenian adult ELP follows the format specified by the Council of Europe for all ELPs, but has been tailored to be particularly relevant to adult or work-related language learning. Each of the three components – the Language Passport, the Language Biography, and Dossier – is prefaced with a 'learning-to-



learn' introduction that explains to learners how they can use the ELP to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning (see *Figure 3*). These introductory elements are presented bilingually in Slovenian and English (English is a remainder of the validation process, as the ELP models submitted for accreditation had to be translated into English or French). As to the Language Passport, this adult ELP uses the *Standard Adult Language Passport*.

The Language Biography focuses on past experience, present learning and future aspirations. It is designed to stimulate reflection and awareness-raising. It emphasizes 'learning how to learn' skills: planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning process. It includes the regular identification of learning targets, reflection on learning experiences, and self-assessment of learning progress and achievement. It comprises the following set of pages encouraging learners to think about and cumulatively record their reflections on various aspects of their language learning and language use:

- *My linguistic and cultural experiences.*
- *Learning foreign languages.*
- *How I organize my learning of \_\_\_\_\_ language.*
- *How I understand best and learn most efficiently.*
- *My intentions and goals in language learning.*
- *Why I learn \_\_\_\_\_ language.*
- *How I improved my proficiency in \_\_\_\_\_ language.*
- *Self-assessment grids.*

For example, *Figure 4* reproduces a section from the page on *My intentions and goals in language learning*.

The most visible part of the Language Biography is the self-assessment checklists. In or-

## Jezikovni življenjepis

Jezikovni življenjepis je del Jezikovnega listovnika, v katerem:

- razmišljate o tujem jeziku, o tem, kako, kje in zakaj ste se ga učili,
- opisujete in hranite podatke o tem, kar ste v tujih jezikih počeli, kako ste v različnih stikih in dejavnostih širili svoje jezikovno in medkulturno znanje,
- razmišljate o učenju tujega jezika, o načinih učenja, ki so vam bili pri srcu,
- s preglednicami za samoocenjevanje večkrat preverite, kakšno je vaše trenutno znanje tujega jezika,
- si postavljate cilje pri nadaljnjem učenju jezika, opisujete, kaj in kako se želite še naučiti, katero raven bi hoteli v kakem jeziku doseči. Ob tem načrtujete pot in način za doseganje ciljev.

Za vas bo ta del Jezikovne mape pomemben, ker boste v njem hranili podatke o svojem učenju in razvoju učenja jezikov. Pomagal vam bo presoditi uspešnost metod učenja jezikov. To vam bo omogočilo vpogled v načine, kako se najraje in najuspešneje učite. Samostojno ocenjevanje lastnega znanja tujega jezika po skupnih evropskih merilih za vrednotenje jezikovnega znanja in sposobnosti in preglednic za samoocenjevanje vam bo pomagalo ugotoviti, katere so vaše prednosti in slabosti pri učenju tujega jezika. Ko boste imeli vse te podatke, se boste tudi lažje odločili za nadaljnje jezikovno izobraževanje.

Figure 3: Extract from learning-to-learn introduction to the Language Biography (Amič et al. 2010: 7)

der to develop them, the authors examined the communicative objectives for adult learners, and rephrased them using the wording of the generic checklists developed by the Language Policy Division for use in ELPs. Some descriptors have been adjusted and others added or adapted from other ELP models and available banks of descriptors for self-assessment in the ELP.

In the Slovenian adult ELP, checklists are provided at all six proficiency levels of the CEFR. As teachers may consider using only the levels that are relevant to a particular group of learners, navigation through the language biography is facilitated by the fact that the checklists are ordered by level, not by skill. The ELP models providing descriptors for language proficiency across all six

MOJI NAMENI IN CILJI UČENJA JEZIKOV	MY INTENTIONS AND GOALS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING
Jezik Language	
Jezik potrebujem/bom potreboval(a):	I need/will need the language:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>v poklicu               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vedno</li> <li>večinoma</li> <li>občasno</li> </ul> </li> <li>pri študiju</li> <li>v zasebnem življenju               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>na potovanju</li> <li>v stiku s sorodniki</li> <li>v stiku s prijatelji</li> <li>v tujini</li> <li>želim brati tujo literaturo</li> <li>želim razumeti tuje TV-programe kot konjiček</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at work               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>always</li> <li>most of the time</li> <li>sometimes</li> </ul> </li> <li>in my studies</li> <li>in my private life               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when traveling</li> <li>with relatives</li> <li>with friends abroad</li> <li>reading foreign literature</li> <li>watching foreign TV-programmes</li> <li>as a hobby</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Moja zdajšnja raven znanja:	My present proficiency level:
<input type="checkbox"/> A1 <input type="checkbox"/> A2 <input type="checkbox"/> B1 <input type="checkbox"/> B2 <input type="checkbox"/> C1 <input type="checkbox"/> C2	<input type="checkbox"/> A1 <input type="checkbox"/> A2 <input type="checkbox"/> B1 <input type="checkbox"/> B2 <input type="checkbox"/> C1 <input type="checkbox"/> C2
Doseči želim raven znanja:	My desired proficiency level:
<input type="checkbox"/> A1 <input type="checkbox"/> A2 <input type="checkbox"/> B1 <input type="checkbox"/> B2 <input type="checkbox"/> C1 <input type="checkbox"/> C2	<input type="checkbox"/> A1 <input type="checkbox"/> A2 <input type="checkbox"/> B1 <input type="checkbox"/> B2 <input type="checkbox"/> C1 <input type="checkbox"/> C2

Figure 4: Extract from the page My intentions and goals in language learning (Amič et al. 2010: 15)

common reference levels (from A1 to C2) for each of the five communicative skills will thus contain 30 checklists itemizing target ‘can-do’ objectives for the skills in question. This usually results in the Language Biography looking very ‘bulky’, which is why many users’ first impression is that the ELP is nothing but a collection of tedious ‘can-do’ checklists. The Slovenian adult ELP covers not only the usual five communicative skills/activities but adds three more – the skill of WRITING has been broken down into WRITTEN PRODUCTION and WRITTEN INTERACTION, and the bands of STRATEGIES and LANGUAGE have been added to the checklist of target skills. Thus the adult ELP, thanks to these three additional skills, includes 48 itemized checklists sequenced in

terms of the successive common reference levels – from A1 to C2. But the impression of the greater bulkiness of the checklists is not the only problem of the adult ELP. The potential of the ELP to be of help is often hindered by the nature of the descriptors in the ‘can-do’ checklists. These often cover a very broad spectrum of activities in their wording (see *Figure 6*), using complex and academic language. In future editions, the authors could examine the possibility of dividing some of the ‘broad’ descriptors into two or three new descriptors, or adding bullet points with different themes to which a descriptor could be applied.

The Dossier is where learners collect evidence of their language learning. It is the



<b>Raven A2</b>	Datum Date	<input type="text"/>	<b>Level A2</b>	
		<b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b>		
<b>Govorno sporazumevanje</b>			<b>Spoken interaction</b>	
Sposoben(bna) sem se sporazumevati v kratkih pogovorih, če mi sogovornik pomaga, ko je to potrebno. Brez posebnega truda obvladam preproste, utečene menjave, znam postavljati vprašanja in odgovarjati, izmenjati ideje in informacije o vsakdanjih temah v predvidljivih vsakdanjih okoliščinah. Obvladam kratke pogovore, vendar redko razumem dovolj, da bi sam(a) usmerjal(a) pogovor.			I can interact with reasonable ease in short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. I can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; I can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations. I can handle very short social exchanges but I am rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going.	
Znam uporabljati vsakdanje vljudnostne izraze za pozdrave in naslavljanje.			I can use simple everyday polite forms of greetings and address.	
Znam povabiti in se na povabilo odzivati.			I can make and respond to invitations.	
Znam se opravičiti in se na opravičilo odzvati.			I can make and respond to apologies.	
Znam povedati, kaj mi je všeč in kaj ne.			I can say what I like and dislike.	
<b>Raven B2</b>	Datum Date	<input type="text"/>	<b>Level B2</b>	
		<b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b>		
<b>Govorno sporazumevanje</b>			<b>Spoken interaction</b>	
Jezik uporabljam tekoče, natančno in učinkovito v povezavi z mnogimi splošnimi, akademskimi, poklicnimi ali prostočasnimi temami. Misli izrazim natančno. Sporazumevam se spontano, slovnično pravilno in raven formalnosti prilagodim okoliščinam.			I can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational, or leisure topic, marking clearly the relationship between ideas. I can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.	

Figure 5: Extracts from checklists, SPOKEN INTERACTION, Levels A2 and B2 (Amič et al. 2010: 24, 34)

component of the ELP that most closely resembles the traditional concept of a “portfolio”, in the sense of an artist’s or a designer’s portfolio of work. Its primary function is to display the owner’s language skills at their best in a varied range of contexts. As the ‘learning-to-learn’ introduction to the Dossier explains (see *Figure 6*), each learner must decide what to put in the Dossier, how to structure its contents, how often to review the contents, and so on. Building one’s Dossier thus means engaging in regular self-evaluation and reflection on personal progress.

The adult ELP also contains an Appendix which includes photocopyable versions of each reflective page from the Language Biography to cater for the needs of learners studying more than one language, and continually adding to and updating their ELP through their school years.

### The adult ELP and its dissemination

Since its validation and publication in 2010, the adult ELP has practically not been in use and its dissemination remains minimal.

Zbirnik	Dossier
<p>Zbirnik je del Jezikovnega listovnika, v katerem boste po svoji presoji zbirali:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• svoje jezikovne izdelke (zapiske, osnutke, slike, kasete, članke, teste, rezultate skupinskega dela...),</li> <li>• uradne in neuradne dokumente (priznanja, diplome, potrdila o obiskovanju tečajev, rezultate testov, izpitov...),</li> <li>• druga potrdila ali izdelke, za katere menite, da so pomembni za prikaz različnih stopenj vašega učenja tujega jezika (morda potovanje v druge dežele, obisk poslovnega partnerja, s katerim ste se pogovarjali v jeziku, ki ga predstavljate, samostojno učenje tujega jezika...).</li> </ul> <p>Z natančnim označevanjem, kdaj in zakaj je izdelek (diploma, potrdilo) nastal in kdaj ste ga vložili v zbirnik, bodo izdelki pokazali vaše trenutno znanje in potek vašega učenja. Vam in učiteljem bodo vaši izdelki v pomoč pri spremljanju razvoja in vrednotenja znanja. Za delodajalca pa bodo pomembna predvsem potrdila o jezikovnih tečajih, rezultati izpitov in potrdila o delovnih in medkulturnih izkušnjah. Sami boste odločili, katere izdelke boste uvrstili v zbirnik, katere izločili in katere predstavili učitelju ali delodajalcu.</p>	<p>Dossier is a part of Language Portfolio where you collect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• things you produced in a foreign language (notes, drafts, pictures, cassettes, articles, tests, products of group work...),</li> <li>• official and non-official documents (awards, degrees, certificates of attendance, test results...),</li> <li>• other certificates or products which you consider an important illustration of different stages of your foreign language learning (possibly a travel abroad, visit of a business partner with whom you conversed in a foreign language, self-study...).</li> </ul> <p>With careful labeling of when and why a product was made or a certificate was issued and when you added it to your dossier, the documents will show your knowledge and the process of learning. Your products will help you and your teacher to follow your development. Certificates of attendance, test results and certificates of working and intercultural experiences will be important for your employer. You will decide which documents will be included or excluded from the dossier and which will be presented to your teacher or employer.</p>

Figure 6: Extract from learning-to-learn introduction to the Dossier (Amič et al. 2010: 49)

It seems that the main obstacles to its more general implementation have been the lack of information and interest. Branka Petek, one of the principal authors of the adult ELP, laments the fact that “so much energy was put into developing the ELP, only to find out that some dusty ELP copies are stored somewhere at the Ministry of Education” (personal correspondence, 2013). It has been offered to many language schools for implementation, but they all refused to use it, presumably because of the feeling of constant time pressure in order to ‘cover more’ – especially closer to exams (this effect is often described in the literature as ‘negative washback’).

There are probably many factors that seem to have contributed to a loss of interest in the adult ELP project. In my opinion, its implementation has not been assisted by sufficient

supportive actions like support networks, methodological support (i.e. ELP workshops and seminars), dedicated teacher’s handbooks, and examples of good teaching practice and ELP work, which are all prerequisites to successful ELP implementation and use. In short, its use was hindered by the insufficient degree of prior exposure to the ELP, which is why teachers could not establish their own teacher and learner routines of ELP use in their classes and, consequently, could not mediate these routines to the learners systematically and efficiently (Sisamakias, 2006: 348).

## CONCLUSION

It seems that the ELP, “with its internationally transparent standards offered in the form of CEFR levels, its ‘can-do’ descriptors of

communicative proficiency (which can be used equally well for learning, teaching, self-assessment, and summative formal assessment), and its explicit added focus on the development of intercultural competence, thinking and reflection skills” (Little, 2005; quoted in Sisamakias, 2006: 345), arguably constitutes an appropriate basis for a broader, more ‘ecological’ view of language teaching and learning and the development of ‘a new type of professionalism’ (Sisamakias, 2006: 349). Sisamakias (*ibid.*: 360) argues that “the subversive potential bundled into an ELP model, which is explicitly informed by principles of learner autonomy”, can and does promote a reversal of the currently prevailing and established practices of passivity in (almost all) other school subjects (*ibid.*: 337).

Currently, validated ELP models are available for all levels and types of foreign language provision in Slovenia. Admittedly, at least two of them will need to be further optimised in order to better accommodate the demands of the national foreign language curricula. When this is done, their widespread use would promote good practice and in the long run, a pedagogical tool such as the ELP has the potential to become the vehicle for a paradigm shift in foreign language education. This has significant implications for various Slovenian bodies involved in language education policy. The Ministry of Education and the National Education Institute have both already played an instrumental role in piloting and implementing the ELPs for the primary and secondary levels. Slovenian universities also have an important role to play: they could include the ELP in the pre-service teacher training courses they offer. Currently, the newly-qualified teachers’ exposure to the ELP is not sufficient to prepare them adequately for its use in class. To this end, intensive short in-service teacher training courses on ELP use

in class could be offered by universities to practising teachers if sufficient funding were available. As Sisamakias (2006: 355) puts it, “having a pedagogical tool which seems empowering enough to revolutionise language teaching means nothing if its dissemination remains minimal”. Slovenian bodies shaping language policy are presented with a rare chance to initiate internationally transparent and comparable foreign language education. The choice is in our hands.

## REFERENCES

- Amič, I.; Jelenc, N. E.; Muster, A. M.; Petek, B.; Šorjanc Braico, D.; Žlindra, T. (2010). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za odrasle*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport RS in Založba Tangram.
- Byram, M.; Barrett, M.; Ipgrave, J.; Jackson, R.; Méndez García, M. (2009). *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters: Context, concepts and theories*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/source/aie\\_en/aie\\_context\\_concepts\\_and\\_theories\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/source/aie_en/aie_context_concepts_and_theories_en.pdf) (4.10.2013).
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: CUP.
- CROMO (2007). *CROMO: Medkulturni čezmejni modul – dopolnilo Evropskemu jezikovnemu listovniku 15+*. Gradec/Trst/Ljubljana: Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum; Agenzia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo dell’Autonomia Scolastica; Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo. Available at: [http://www.oesz.at/download/publikationen/cromo\\_29\\_08\\_2007\\_slowenisch.pdf](http://www.oesz.at/download/publikationen/cromo_29_08_2007_slowenisch.pdf) (4.11.2013).
- Čok, L.; Šečerov, N.; Jelušič Godina, S.; Kragelj, N.; Mlakar, A.; Šergon Omahen, N. (1999). *Moja prva jezikovna mapa*. Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta UL in Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport RS.
- Čok, L.; Zorman, A.; Šečerov, N. (2006). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za osnovnošolce v starosti od*



- 6 do 10 let. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport RS in Založba Tangram.
- Čok, L.; Šečerov, N.; Skela, J.; Zorman, A. (2011). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za osnovnošolce v starosti od 6 do 10 let*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport RS.
- Čok, L.; Skela, J.; Šečerov, N. (2011). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za osnovnošolce v starosti od 6 do 10 let. Priročnik za učitelja*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport RS.
- Deutsch, T. (2009). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v osnovni šoli: Poročilo*. [unpublished report] Ljubljana: Zavod RS za šolstvo.
- Dragar Gorjup, K.; Kosem, B.; Zaranšek, P. (2000). *The European language portfolio*. Neobjavljeno diplomsko delo [unpublished B.A. dissertation]. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta UL, Oddelek za anglistiko in amerikanistiko.
- European Commission (1995). *White paper on education and training: Teaching and learning, towards the learning society*. Brussels: European Commission. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/doc409\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/doc409_en.pdf) (15.10.2013).
- Fidler, S. (2000). *Jezikovni portfolio pri pouku angleščine*. Neobjavljeno magistrsko delo. [unpublished MA dissertation]. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta UL, Oddelek za anglistiko in amerikanistiko.
- Flügel, C. (2000). Der standardisierte paneuropäische Sprachenpass für Erwachsene. *Babylonia*, 4/00: 7-8.
- Godunc, Z. (2012). Evropski jezikovni listovnik v luči mednarodnih vrednot jezikovnega znanja. In: Holc, N. (Ed.). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v Sloveniji*. Ljubljana.
- Holc, N. (Ed.) (2012a). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v Sloveniji*. Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.
- Holc, N. (2012b). Evropski jezikovni listovnik v slovenski šolski praksi – Rezultati projekta uvajanja in spremljave EFL v osnovni in srednji šoli. In: Holc (Ed.). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v Sloveniji*. Ljubljana.
- Juriševič, M. (2007). *Praktično pedagoško usposabljanje: Vodenje portfolia*. Priročnik. Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta UL. Available at: [http://www2.pef.uni-lj.si/model1/Porocila/Prirocnik\\_01\\_Mojca%20Juri%C5%A1evi%C4%8D.pdf](http://www2.pef.uni-lj.si/model1/Porocila/Prirocnik_01_Mojca%20Juri%C5%A1evi%C4%8D.pdf) (18.10.2013).
- Juriševič, M. (2010). Vodenje strokovnega portfolia pri uvajanju tujega jezika v prvo vzgojno-izobraževalno obdobje osnovne šole – izsledki evalvacije učiteljev. In: Lipavac Oštir; Jazbec (Eds.). *Pot v večjezičnost – zgodnje učenje tujih jezikov v I. VIO osnovne šole*. Ljubljana. Available at: <http://www.zrss.si/pdf/vecjezicnost.pdf> (18.10.2013).
- Kašnik, S. (2010). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v srednji šoli: Poročilo*. [unpublished report] Ljubljana: Zavod RS za šolstvo.
- Kohonen, V. (2002). The European Language Portfolio: From Portfolio Assessment to Portfolio-oriented Language Learning. In: Kohonen and Kaikkonen (Eds.), *Quo vadis foreign language education?* Tampere. Available at: [http://www.script.men.lu/activinno/portfolio/kohonen\\_european\\_language\\_portfolio.pdf](http://www.script.men.lu/activinno/portfolio/kohonen_european_language_portfolio.pdf) (4.10.2013).
- Lazenby Simpson, B. (2012). *European Language Portfolio for adult migrant learning the language of the host country: A guide for teachers*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Unit. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/liam/Source/Tools/ILMA-PEL\\_Guide\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/liam/Source/Tools/ILMA-PEL_Guide_EN.pdf) (12.10.2013).
- Lipavac Oštir, A.; Jazbec, S.; Pevec Semec, K.; Pižorn, K.; Dagarin Fojkar, M.; Juriševič, M.; Vogrinc, J.; Nolimal, F. (2010). *Pot v večjezičnost – zgodnje učenje tujih jezikov v I. VIO osnovne šole*. Ljubljana: Zavod RS za šolstvo. Available at: <http://www.zrss.si/pdf/vecjezicnost.pdf> (25.10.2013).
- Little, D. (Ed.) (2003). *The European Language Portfolio in use: nine examples*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Publications/ELP\\_9examples\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Publications/ELP_9examples_EN.pdf) (17.10.2013).
- Little, D. (2004). *European Language Portfolio in the classroom: two examples from Ireland. Presentation by D. Little at a colloquium entitled 'De-mystifying the European Language Portfolio'*.



- Available at: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/brussels-elp-colloquium-david-little.pdf> (20.10.2013).
- Little, D. (n.d.). *The linguistic integration of adult migrants and the European Language Portfolio: goal-setting and self-assessment checklists*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/liam/Source/Tools/LIAM-ELP-checklists\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/liam/Source/Tools/LIAM-ELP-checklists_EN.pdf) (4.10.2013).
- Little, D. (2005). *European Language Portfolio: Age appropriate self-assessment grids and descriptors/checklists*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division.
- Little, D. (2009). *The European Language Portfolio: Where pedagogy and assessment meet*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Publications/ELP\\_pedagogy\\_assessment\\_Little\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Publications/ELP_pedagogy_assessment_Little_EN.pdf) (8.10.2013).
- Little, D.; Perclová, R. (2001). *European Language Portfolio: Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Modern Languages Division.
- Little, D.; Goullier, F.; Hughes, G. (2011). *The European Language Portfolio: The Story So Far (1991–2011)*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Publications/ELP\\_StorySoFar\\_July2011\\_Final\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Publications/ELP_StorySoFar_July2011_Final_EN.pdf) (10.10.2013).
- McCann, G.; Finn, P. (2006). Identifying the European dimension in citizenship education. *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, 2 (3): 52–63. Available at: <http://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue3-focus5?page=show> (12.10.2013).
- Mitchell, R. (2009). Foreign language teaching and educational policy. In: Knapp; Seidlhofer (Eds.). *Handbook of Foreign Language Communication and Learning. Volume 6*. Berlin.
- Newby, D.; Allan, R.; Fenner, A. B.; Jones, B.; Komorowska, H.; Soghikyan, K. (2007). *The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages*. Graz: Council of Europe. Available at: [http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/fte/pdf/C3\\_Epostl\\_E.pdf](http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/fte/pdf/C3_Epostl_E.pdf) (24.10.2013).
- Newby, D. (2007). The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages. *Babylonia*, 3/07: 23–26.
- North, B. (2000). *The development of a common framework scale of language proficiency*. New York: Peter Lang.
- North, B.; Schneider, G. (1998). Scaling descriptors for language proficiency scales. *Language Testing*, 15 (2): 217–262.
- Puklavec, N.; Enčeva, M.; Mulej, S. (2006). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za srednješolce v starosti od 15 do 19 let*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport in Založba Tangram.
- Rehm, G.; Uszkoreit, H. (2013). Multilingual Europe: Facts, Challenges, Opportunities. In: Rehm; Uszkoreit (Eds.). *META-NET Strategic Research Agenda for Multilingual Europe 2020*. Berlin. Available at: [http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/416/chp%253A10.1007%252F978-3-642-36349-8\\_2.pdf?auth66=1383644166\\_f0fb47a3d1de5b5f17df9e56ca4365e8&ext=.pdf](http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/416/chp%253A10.1007%252F978-3-642-36349-8_2.pdf?auth66=1383644166_f0fb47a3d1de5b5f17df9e56ca4365e8&ext=.pdf) (30.10.2013).
- Schärer, R. (2000). *European Language Portfolio: Final report on the pilot project*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Modern Languages Division.
- Schärer, R. (2004). *A European Language Portfolio. From piloting to implementation (2001–2004). Consolidated report – Final version*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/History/ELP\\_report\\_2001\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/History/ELP_report_2001_EN.pdf) (4.10.2013).
- Schärer, R. (2007). *European Language Portfolio: Interim Report 2007*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Available at: [www.coe.int/portfolio](http://www.coe.int/portfolio) (7.10.2013).
- Schneider, G.; Lenz, P. (2001). *European language Portfolio: Guide for Developers*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Modern Languages Division.
- Sheils, J. (1999). Developing European Language Portfolio. *Education Newsletter*, 7/99: 2–4. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/Newsletter/Bulletin7\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/Newsletter/Bulletin7_EN.pdf) (17.10.2013).

- Sisamak, E. M. (2006). *The European Language Portfolio in Irish Post-Primary Education: A Longitudinal Empirical Evaluation*. [unpublished PhD Thesis in Applied Linguistics]. Dublin: University of Dublin, Trinity College. Available at: [http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp\\_tt/Results/DM\\_layout/Reference%20Materials/English/Manolis%20Sisamak%20PhD%20Thesis.pdf](http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp_tt/Results/DM_layout/Reference%20Materials/English/Manolis%20Sisamak%20PhD%20Thesis.pdf) (26.10.2013).
- Skela, J. (2000). *Jezikovni listovnik za osnovnošolce. Priročnik za učitelja*. Maribor: Pedagoška fakulteta UL in Založba Obzorja.
- Skela, J.; Šorli, M.; Holc, N. (2000). *Jezikovni listovnik za osnovnošolce*. Maribor: Pedagoška fakulteta UL in Založba Obzorja.
- Skela, J.; Holc, N. (2006). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za osnovnošolce v starosti od 11 do 15 let*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport in Tangram.
- Skela, J. (2012). Evropski jezikovni listovnik. In: Holc (Ed.). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v Sloveniji*. Ljubljana.
- Stoicheva, M.; Hughes, G.; Speitz, H. (2009). *The European Language Portfolio: An impact study*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division.
- Svet Evrope. (2011). *Skupni evropski jezikovni okvir: učenje, poučevanje, ocenjevanje*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo RS za šolstvo in šport.
- The Maastricht Treaty (1992). Available at: [www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichtec.pdf](http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichtec.pdf) (5.10.2013).
- Troha, A.; Leva, B.; Kosem, B.; Dragar, K.; Zaranšek, P.; Mihalič, P., Koščak, S. (2000). *Evropska jezikovna mapa za študente*. Ljubljana: Študentska organizacija Univerze v Ljubljani, Pedagoška fakulteta UL.
- Ushioda, E.; Ridley, J. (2002). *Working with the European Language Portfolio in Irish post-primary schools: report on an evaluation project. CLCS Occasional Paper No.61*. Dublin: Trinity College, Centre for Language and Communication Studies.
- Vrhovac, Y. (Ed.) (2012). *Introducing the European Language Portfolio into Croatian and French Foreign Language Classrooms: From Language Use to Language Awareness. / Introduire le Portfolio européen des langues dans des classes croates et françaises de langues étrangères: De l'usage de la langue à la conscience linguistique*. Zagreb: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Yazbeck, A. M. (1999). *(European) Language portfolio: independence in language learning and self-assessment*. Neobjavljeno diplomsko delo [unpublished B.A. dissertation]. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta UL, Oddelek za anglistiko in amerikanistiko.
1. For Introduction to the bank of descriptors for self-assessment in European Language Portfolios (Lenz and Schneider), see <http://commonweb.unifr.ch/pluriling/pub/erleweb/portfolio/downloadable-docu/Intro-collection-of-ELP-descriptors-feb-04.pdf>.
  2. [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/accredited\\_models/Accredited\\_Models\\_date\\_EN.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/accredited_models/Accredited_Models_date_EN.asp#TopOfPage).
  3. For further information, see <http://www.lilama.org/uploads/documents/Prof-ELP%20-%20Europe.pdf>.
  4. For further information, see [http://www.oesz.at/download/publikationen/cromo\\_29\\_08\\_2007\\_slowenisch.pdf](http://www.oesz.at/download/publikationen/cromo_29_08_2007_slowenisch.pdf).
  5. For the Slovenian version of *Europass*, see [http://www.europass.si/europass\\_zivljenjepis.aspx](http://www.europass.si/europass_zivljenjepis.aspx).
  6. Available at <http://www.ff.uni-mb.si/oddelki/germanistika/dokumenti/sprachenportfolio.pdf>.
  7. For more information, see <http://www.cpi.si/strokovna-podrocja/mapa-ucnih-dosezkov.aspx>.