

CERCLES:
a European view of university
language centres

David Little
President of CERCLES

What is CERCLES?

- Confédération Européenne des Centres de Langues de l'Education Supérieure
- Founded in Strasbourg in 1991
- Confederation of eight independent national associations: AICLU (Italy), AULC (UK and Ireland), AKS (Germany), GI-ELHE (Switzerland), LINGAL (Poland), APOCLES (Portugal), RANACLES (France), NUT (Netherlands and Belgium)

Aims of CERCLES

- To support language centres in European establishments of higher education, for the provision of language training backed up by appropriate technological and pedagogical resources
- To promote research in foreign language learning at international level
- To encourage international and interdisciplinary cooperation between language centres in order to enable them to co-ordinate the pursuit of their objectives

Principal focuses of CERCLES

- Language centre management
- Technological developments
- Self-access facilities and resources, advising, autonomous learning
- Language testing
- Quality control

Chief developments since 1995 (1)

- Two new full members/national affiliates: LINGAL and GI-ELHE
- Two new full members incubating: Czech and Slovak Republics, Spain
- Steady growth in the number of affiliated language centres
 - 1995: 138 language centres in 11 countries
 - 2000: over 250 language centres in 22 countries

Chief developments since 1995 (2)

- A newly designed and more substantial bulletin, published twice a year and disseminating news and view from language centres across Europe
- International conferences in Dresden (1996), Bergamo (1998), and Antwerp (2000)
- Three volumes of conference proceedings published from Plymouth: Hull (1994), Dresden (1996), Bergamo (1998)

A view of the future (1)

- CERCLES has passed through two stages of development:
 - 1991-1995: infancy and childhood
 - 1995-2000: adolescence and early adulthood
- 2000 onwards: maturity
 - Further growth in the number of full members and affiliated language centres
 - Consolidation of existing services and activities
 - The development of a more proactive role in Europe

A view of the future (2)

- Develop the relationship with the Council of Europe
- Through the full members, create a research-and-development network to explore the possibility of collaborating on a scheme of accreditation/certification
- Explore the possibility of producing a CERCLES version of the European Language Portfolio