



CELAN – Language Strategies for Business

Mike Hammersley

Fondazione Aldini Valeriani (Italy)

mike.hammersley@FAV.IT

Abstract

The CELAN project, which is funded by the European Lifelong learning Programme, has been designed and developed by a network of organisations and their associates belonging to the EU Commission's Business Platform for Multilingualism. The project aims to address in the broadest possible terms the question of how best to identify, record and assess the actual language needs of business users and so define and develop effective and relevant solutions. The first stage of the project was to collect pertinent data on language needs directly from business users across Europe, helping respondents, where possible, to express explicitly needs which may not have been specifically perceived. The next activity involves a survey of the language market to identify the range of services, tools, strategies and policies available to organisations wishing to consolidate and/or enhance corporate linguistic skills and culture. Following these exploratory activities, the project will concentrate on the development of dedicated tools to support business users in analysing and responding to their language needs. In particular, an online 'language needs assessment tool' is being designed to help business users to match language requirements which they have already perceived or which they identify through comparison to similar practice with verified successful solutions. The tool is based on a decision-tree analysis that exploits the data and information collected in the first phases of the project. Other tools that are being developed include a showcasing system to present examples of effective solutions, a management tool-kit to support the development of business-oriented language strategies and policies, and a series of computer-based instruction modules to provide training in addressing language needs in corporate environments. Ultimately, project will seek to provide the business community with effective resources to expand and improve multilingual skills as a key element of all business activities.