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The European Language Portfolio: A New Challenge for Language Teachers and Learners

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The *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) is one of the latest in a long series of practical tools produced by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe. The ELP is intended to:

- facilitate mobility in Europe;
- encourage the learning of foreign languages (in and out of school);
- emphasise the value of multi-lingualism and multi-culturalism, and contribute to mutual understanding in Europe; and
- promote autonomous learning and the ability to assess oneself.

The ELP, developed and piloted from 1998 until 2000 at all educational levels in fifteen member states of the Council of Europe, was launched on a pan-European level during the European Year of Languages (2001). Following extensive field consultation and trialling, the ELP and its accompanying user guides are now in widespread use and are publicly accessible on the Council of Europe website.

This presentation will first provide an overview of the ELP: its rationale, design and individual parts with samples taken from both the Greek ELP and other ELP's used in other member states. The presentation will also discuss the benefits on both instruction and learning and will demonstrate how teachers can set up this innovative method in their EFL classrooms. It will also discuss the suitability of the use of language portfolios in traditional educational contexts, in exam classes and will make recommendations for their effective use.