



**Hertha Firnberg Schulen
Firnbergplatz 1
1220 Wien
Austria**

10 & 11 October 2024

DAY 1

10 October 2024, Vienna

Conference Opening & Welcoming Words

Belinda Steinhuber, National CertiLingua Coordinator for Austria, welcomes the participants from Italy, Estonia, France, Germany and Austria in Vienna and provides a brief organisational overview of this year's conference. She expresses her gratitude for the opportunity to host the conference at the Hertha Firnberg Schools and thanks the school's principal, Ulrike Zwinger, the department heads Christian Keller and Bernhard Moritz, and Michael Karnbach as well as the schools' students helping with the conference.

Ursula Dallinger, Representative of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, also welcomes the participants on behalf of the ministry. She underlines the chances such a conference offers, which provides an international forum to explore and enhance approaches of multilingual education, language learning, and, most importantly, the development of intercultural competences. These, she says, are vital for preparing students for global careers.

Ulrike Zwinger, the schools' principal, echoes the words of welcome and expresses her delight in hosting this conference. It provides an opportunity for her students to gain an insight into such an international event which she regards as a great experience for her students attending an event management school.

Silke Hinz, chairwoman of the International Steering Group, thanks Belinda Steinhuber and her team for the great efforts they have taken in hosting this year's Annual Conference in Vienna.

She stresses the idea of European cooperation the label stands for and points out the importance of the International Annual Conference as a place to renew one's commitment,

to gain an overview of the label's current standing in the member states, as well as to discuss and explore the label's future course.

She stresses CertiLingua's vast potential by addressing pressing educational demands of the 21st century and connects CertiLingua to the ideas on 21st century education expressed in the OECD Learning Compass 2030, such as the transformative competencies mentioned in it or the demand for the development of attitudes and values.

CertiLingua can be regarded as a catalyst for school development as it provides space for student agency and does not only focus on the acquisition of knowledge but expects students to act in an international context - a requirement that no other label places on students.

The fact that the label has developed innovative formats of assessment, such as the project documentations with audiovisual elements and is piloting these further (video only), underlines the label's potential as a learning field for the development of new approaches in education and assessment that can be transferred to other areas of foreign language learning, or, potentially, other subjects as well.

Christian Balzer presents the current evaluation data. The number of participating schools has again slightly increased to 345 in the year 2023. And after the "Corona Dip" in 2022, the number of certificates rose to 732 again, which means that there is a five-digit total of 10,532 certificates by now!

Reports from the Member States

The Member States have provided information on the label's current development in their respective states in advance. A padlet had been created for this purpose and the representatives of the Member States comment only briefly on it (cf. https://padlet.com/certilingua/certilingua_annual_2024).

Keynote Speech – Alicia Bankhofer

AI as a Catalyst: Shifting the Language Learning Mindset

Alicia Bankhofer, Educator & Educational Technologist, presents various ideas and approaches to using AI in the language classroom.

She stresses the chances AI entails for language learning, but also calls for an ethical and sensible use of the technology.

Especially the adaptive component and the chances AI offers to create individualized learning environments and personalized feedback are underlined, while at the same time examples

are provided for rules and procedures of how to use AI responsibly. Further details can be found in Ms Bankhofer's complete presentation provided here: <https://bit.ly/Alcatalyst>.

Video Presentation - Geoff Stead

AI in Education: Adapting to a new, seismic reality

Geoff Stead, Mobile Tech Designer & Chief Product Officer at [MyTutor.co.uk](https://www.mytutor.co.uk), outlines the changes and challenges AI entails for education in general.

Generally speaking, AI has become incredibly good especially at writing well and has thus acquired a skill often used to define human intelligence. Therefore, AI is often seen as intimidating and eyed very critically by the "educational establishment" without further consideration.

However, he stresses the technology's potential and the need to actively explore it in order to gain an understanding of it.

He points out that frequently a minimum of about ten hours is considered to be necessary in order to get an idea of how AI might be used in the classroom and encourages the participants to investigate the potential of AI themselves.

Mr Stead's presentation can be found as an attachment to these minutes.

DAY 2

11 October 2024, Vienna

Workshop Results

AI in Education

The tools presented in the keynote presentation the day before are explored further in the workshop and some additional ideas are presented:

[NotebookLM](#) is used to create a podcast that, in the presented example, comprises several CertiLingua documents, and it is discussed whether the label could become better understandable and approachable through the use of AI.

As another example of how AI can help in producing things that explain CertiLingua in an attractive, easily understandable way, a CertiLingua Song produced with [suno.ai](https://www.suno.ai) is presented.

Audio-Video only project documentations

In the workshop many aspects with regard to piloting “Audio-video-only documentations” (short “AV-only”) are discussed, and it is pointed out that this option would be one out of three options with the written documentation always remaining a possible format, too.

It is said that also for the pilot phase a certain standard should be developed and provided to the schools since otherwise it must be feared that hardly anybody will try this format for a lack of orientation. A justifiable “no fail”-message for those students that are willing to hand in an AV-only documentation might be considered by the corresponding member states on a pilot group level to reduce anxieties.

While certain interim standards might be necessary, it seems clear that, on the other hand, a certain amount of openness and creativity will always be a characteristic of a video-only format or an audiovisual part in general.

It needs to be discussed to what extent this format can serve as proof of language skills (B2), of intercultural competences only, or as a proof of both.

It is agreed that some agile development and prototyping would best serve the label in this case and therefore a padlet is set up (<https://padlet.com/certilingua/AVonly>) to compile and share corresponding documents and ideas from and for the member states. In many cases member states are currently searching for new ways of assessment in upper secondary education anyway and these developments seem mutually enriching.

Generally speaking, a critical mass of interested schools and member states seems to be building up, and it is agreed to invite everyone interested to the ongoing pilot group in North Rhine Westphalia that is regularly meeting online.

Website

Christian Balzer points out that two examples of a video documentation with audiovisual elements have been published on the website. It is hoped that they will provide a much asked for orientation and might motivate more students to opt for such a documentation.

https://www.certilingua.net/?page_id=278

Annual International Conference

All resolutions must be taken unanimously. The official representatives of states that were unable to attend the Annual Conference had transferred their voting rights in advance.

Update of standards

The following resolution is accepted unanimously:

The Annual Conference gives a mandate to the international steering group to check and, if necessary, recommend an update of the CertiLingua Standards of Excellence in Intercultural Competences using the CEFR Companion Volume from the year 2020 as a reference document.

A special, but not exclusive, focus in this process will lie on the descriptors for the new area of mediation

Steering Group 2024 - 2027

Muriel Surroz-Bost replaces Cyrille Budzynski in the CertiLingua Steering Group.

Ideas

During the course of the conference several ideas and suggestions were mentioned that are compiled at this point in the minutes regardless of whether they were mentioned on day one or two.

Gisella Langé:

- *“Talk about the label wherever you go, advertise it wherever you can.”*
- *“Use the conference to learn more from each other by reporting more about how things are actually done on the school level.”*

Michael Grabis:

- *“Ask schools to put CertiLingua at the top of their websites where it is quickly found to make it easier to get in touch with the coordinators.”*

Thomas Wegner:

- *“Ask schools to create, if possible, a permanent email address for CertiLingua to simplify communication and provide continuity when coordinators change (certilingua@xyz-school.de).”*

Belinda Steinhuber:

- *“Use Erasmus funds to also co-finance CertiLingua activities if possible.”*

Closing of the Annual Conference

On behalf of the International Steering Group and all participants Silke Hinz thanks Belinda Steinhuber and her team for the splendid organization of Annual Conference 2024 in Vienna. A special tribute is paid to the students and their teachers that provided an outstanding support during these two days. And special thanks go to Christian Balzer for his invaluable contribution as well.

A date and a place for Annual Conference 2025 is still being discussed and will be communicated as soon as possible.

Belinda Steinhuber thanks all participants for having come to Vienna and highlights the motivational boost the conference provided and the renewed commitment for the label and the goals it stands for. She stresses that CertiLingua is awarded to students at no financial cost and in conclusion calls it a “wonderful label”.