



## Introduction to a portfolio approach

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a project of the Council of Europe (CoE) and was developed as an application of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

This Common Framework is an instrument of European language policy which significantly reformed foreign language curricula and teacher education. Its most relevant and best known contribution to language learning and teaching is the description of communicative proficiency at six levels arranged in three bands (A1-C2) in relation to the five communicative activities: listening, reading, spoken production, spoken interaction and writing.

Today the CEFR is translated in 39 languages (not only European ones) and there are 132 accredited or registered ELPs.

The ELP is a personal document. It is at the same time an information document and a learning companion. It was conceived to bring the goals of the CoE and of the CEFR directly to the learner. In this context the main objectives of the ELP are:

- To foster plurilingualism and interculturalism
- To facilitate European comparability of language certificates and mobility
- To foster autonomous learning
- To promote lifelong language learning – formal and informal.

According to the “Principles and guidelines”<sup>1</sup> of the ELP:

(a) It has two main functions:

- **the pedagogic function**, “to support the development of learner autonomy, plurilingualism and intercultural awareness and competence”
- **the reporting function**, to allow users to record their language learning achievements and their experience of learning and using languages”<sup>2</sup>.

(b) It follows the principle that “the portfolio is the property of the learner”.

(c) It consists of three parts:

- The **Language Passport**, which shows at a glance the current level of language proficiency and intercultural experience. The learner records their profile of language skills in relation to the CEFR, a summary of their language learning and intercultural experiences and a record of their certificates and diplomas
- The **Language Biography**, which helps learners to document and reflect on previous language learning, intercultural experience and learning processes, to assess their language skills, to set learning goals and to plan and monitor future learning
- The **Dossier**, which contains a selection of work that in the owner’s view best represents his/her foreign language proficiency.

The MAGICC-ELP provides an international set of categories to describe communication skills and proficiency levels and to help language learners to plan, manage and assess their learning. It has adapted ELP principles for Higher Education users. For this reason the language competence that is addressed is strongly related to academic and professional skills.

In the MAGICC-Portfolio the students can record all languages that they have learned throughout their lives either through formal and or informal language learning. It aims to present in a structured and user-friendly way their

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/ELP-REG/Default\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/ELP-REG/Default_EN.asp)

<sup>2</sup> see the website of the ELP, [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/Default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/Default_en.asp)

multilingual profile. Value can be given to all types of competences, also partial competences. Particular emphasis is placed on intercultural awareness and competences and lifelong learning strategies.

Although the MAGICC Portfolio clearly implements the two functions of a portfolio (the pedagogical and the reporting function) the focus of the MAGICC ePortfolio is on the reporting function. The main purposes of the MAGICC ePortfolio is to show what students are able to do in an academic multilingual and multicultural setting, to assess how well they can do this, and to identify the types of academic and professional communicative competence they have achieved.

Thanks to the features of an e-portfolio the MAGICC-ELP presents some important differences to paper versions of the ELP. The Passport is organised first by communicative activities and then by languages in order to show the multilingual profile. Furthermore the general multilingual profile and the specific type of competences (MAGICC descriptors) can be documented in parallel.

One of the main aims of the MAGICC portfolio is to foster employability. So the Language Biography and the Dossier are structured in a way that the student can collect and gather evidence about their learning experience.

In the Biography, as well as checklists and the possibility to set learning objectives, there is an Autobiography of academic intercultural competence and a question list to raise awareness about autonomous language learning. These are two further innovative features of the MAGICC ePortfolio.

Last but not least are two further significant advantages in terms of networking and communication:

- The pedagogical function of individual autonomous learning has been expanded to include group work and group interaction
- The recording function of the ELP as a personal document has been expanded to include “pages” which are designed by the individual to showcase external interests, e.g. for teachers, employers or institutions.

For more information: [www.magicc.eu](http://www.magicc.eu)

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