



## European Language Portfolio for the Blind and Visually Impaired Accredited model No 108

### Introduction

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a document in which those who are learning or have learned a language - whether at school or outside school - can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences.

It may be used, both (a) to report on your level of attainment, for example, to someone who needs evidence of your competence in a language and (b) to assist the learning and teaching process by providing the basis for you to reflect on your learning and discuss it with a teacher or tutor.

**The European Language Portfolio consists of three parts.** It contains:

1. A **Language Passport**, which you regularly update. A full description of how it works is given in the 'Language Passport' Section of the User's Guide.
2. A detailed **Language Biography** describing your experiences in each language and which is designed to guide you, the learner, in planning and assessing progress. A full description of how it works is given in the 'Language Biography' Section of the User's Guide.
3. A **Dossier** where examples of personal work can be kept to illustrate one's language competences. A full description of how it works is given in the User's Guide.

Owning a European Language Portfolio may be of help in any situation, such as when applying for a job in an area where the main language is not your mother tongue. It provides an instant and comprehensive record of every aspect of your language skills and intercultural experience, whether formally learnt or acquired through upbringing, personal contact or residence in a particular language community.

All recorded attainments are cross-referred to the Council of Europe's widely recognized self-assessment scale, which provides 'I can...' statements for each of five different language skills at each of six defined levels. More will be said about this later.

### Special considerations for this European Language Portfolio

Portfolio models vary according to countries and educational contexts. Any nation or organization within the Council of Europe may submit for validation a version dedicated to a particular age group (e.g. Primary, Secondary or Adult), to a particular purpose, (e.g. vocational or even specifically for a work sector, such as tourism or banking) and, in the case of this version, to your particular way of doing things as a blind or visually impaired person.

In your version, account is taken of your special circumstances as blind or visually impaired person.

1. The need for what may be called '**specific support for the blind and visually impaired**' in performing certain language tasks. The most obvious device is the Braille alphabet and associated technology for using it. Other devices may include such reading aids as text-generated audio (screen reader) or Braille display, and for visually impaired people, various enlarging devices.
2. The existence of **constraints** on both productive (self-expression) and receptive (comprehension) language skills that may make certain language acts either impossible (e.g. interpreting facial expression) or slower to accomplish (e.g. reading an extensive text).
3. The fact that if you have been blind from birth, you will have no sensory concept of many visually descriptive words, and therefore will be more likely to use descriptive words associated with touch and hearing and less likely to respond to colour and two-dimensional shape descriptions by sighted speakers.

At various points in the Portfolio there will be reassurances and reminders about the above special conditions, sometimes in individual performance descriptors, but at other times, simply as section headings.

## **Presentation of this model of the European Language Portfolio**

A special feature of the User's Guide and of the accompanying documents is the way in which the contents are presented.

Every opportunity is taken, from the beginning of each section, to advise you of what is to come, so that you do not need to scan the text ahead. Each introductory section carefully summarises sub-sections that follow, and it is made clear when you are moving from one sub-section to another.

All text is in paragraph format, rather than in table format, so that there is no problem with tracking information across the page. What comes next is always below.

## **Equality issues**

In the text you, the owner of the European Language Portfolio, are described as a blind or visually impaired user.

In attaining a given level of skill, your performance will be expected to be similar to that of any other person. Sometimes there will be tasks that are impossible for a blind or visually impaired user. In other cases, using specific support for the blind and visually impaired may limit your speed or accuracy in a task. These constraints will be taken into account in assessing your level. Apart from this, the complexity of language you are expected to understand and produce will be exactly as defined. The level of complexity of your language production or comprehension is as defined by the descriptors in the self-assessment scale (Passport Section).