

# **Use of CEFR and main aspects of the EU common values in teaching foreign languages**



Human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, are values which are shared by EU Member States. They form the fabric of our Union that binds countries, communities and people together, as outlined in Article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon.



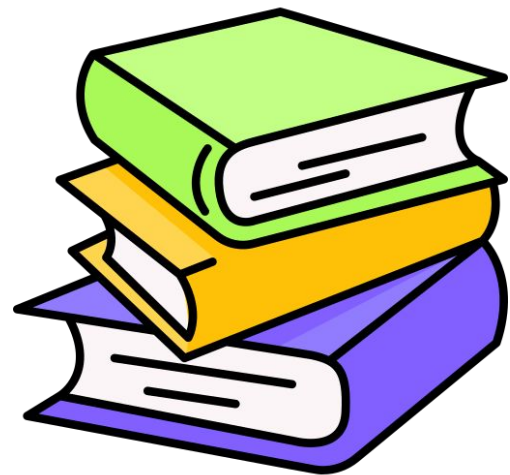
The CEFR has become very important in the framing of language policy and the design of curricula and syllabuses. In practice, the CEFR can provide a straightforward tool for enhancing teaching and learning, but many teachers and other language professionals find the document difficult to use without further guidance.

Language professionals may need to interact with the CEFR and teaching at 2 levels:

- using the CEFR in designing curricula and syllabuses
- using the CEFR in the classroom: teaching and lesson planning.

## *Using the CEFR in curriculum and syllabus design*

It is important to remember that the CEFR is a framework of reference and so must be adapted to fit your context. Linking to the CEFR means relating the particular features of your own context of learning (the learners, the learning objectives, etc.) to the CEFR, focusing on those aspects which you can find reflected in the body of the text and in the level descriptors. Not everything in the CEFR will be relevant to your context, and there may be features of your context which are important but are not addressed by the CEFR.



## **Using the CEFR in the classroom: teaching and lesson planning**

A clear proficiency framework provides a context for learning that can help learners to orient themselves and set goals. It is a basis for individualising learning, as for each learner there is an optimal level at which they should be working. It allows teaching to focus on the strengths and weaknesses which are helping or hindering learners. It enables a shared understanding of levels, facilitating the setting of realistic learning targets for a group, and relating outcomes to what learners can do next – successfully perform a particular job, or pursue university studies using the language, and so on.

The CEFR invites readers to be explicit about their own beliefs about the process of learning; which teaching approaches they favour; what they take to be the relative roles and responsibilities of teachers and learners, and so on. These invitations to reflect on methodology show the CEFR as an open, flexible tool.



Another key aspect of the CEFR's approach is the belief in plurilingualism. This is the understanding that a language is not learned in isolation from other languages. Studying a foreign language inevitably involves comparisons with a first language. Each new language that a learner encounters contributes to the development of a general language proficiency, weaving together all the learner's previous experiences of language learning. It becomes easier and easier to pick up at least a partial competence in new languages.