

# FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCES AND SKILLS – WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE NORDIC REGION & BALTIC STATES?

11 May 2007

Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus, Denmark

With the advent of globalization, successful communication across linguistic and cultural barriers is more important than ever. We need foreign language and intercultural skills to communicate as part of our job, when studying or working abroad, and when travelling for business or pleasure. The question is, then, which foreign language and intercultural skills are needed, and how we can ensure that everyone who needs to do so has the opportunity to develop them.

The Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (2003-06) has developed a set of recommendations comprising

- which competences and skills are needed;
- what should be done at Higher Education (HE) level to ensure that adequate language instruction is provided;
- how higher education institutions and their stakeholders on the labour market can collaborate so that the HE graduates develop the linguistic and intercultural skills needed in the world of work.

## Why this conference?

At the conference, the results of the Thematic Network Project (TNP) will be presented to a wider audience – representatives of educational institutions, educational authorities, employers in various professions, graduates, and students.

The aim of the conference is to discuss the TNP outcomes and to strengthen the dialogue and collaboration between the universities and their stakeholders, the ultimate result being that the HE language provision is geared to meet the needs of the labour market in the widest sense. This applies to language specialists as well as all other professions that need a foreign language component – to name but a few examples, engineers working abroad, medical doctors treating foreign language patients, people working in import / export businesses, etc.

## The Nordic Region & Baltic States

The countries of the Nordic Region and Baltic States are all relatively small countries in Europe, and they each have one of the less widely used and taught languages as their national language. As a consequence, there is a strong need for foreign language and intercultural skills in order for these countries to be active members of the international community and stay competitive in the global market place.

Educators, ministry representatives, employers, university graduates and students all have a stake in the development of linguistically competent communities. By participating in this conference, and by entering into dialogue and collaboration with each other, they can contribute actively to the development of such communities.



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- 8:30      **Registration**  
Coffee/tea
- 9:30      **Words of welcome**  
  
*Peder Østergaard, Dean of Education  
Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus, DK*
- 9:45      **Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages (TNP3-D)  
What, why & how?**  
  
*Karen M. Lauridsen  
TNP3-D Deputy Coordinator &  
Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus, DK*
- 10:00     **Skills and competences required in the language industries  
and in the language-related professions**  
  
Presentation of the main points of the regional synthesis report  
*Birgitte Norlyk, University of Southern Denmark, DK*
- 10:15     *Panel:*  
*Karen Korning Zethsen, Aarhus School of Business, University of  
Aarhus, DK*  
*Mette Huuse, Language Manager, Lionbridge Denmark*  
*Lise Jensen, Sales Coordinator, Kosan Crisplant a/s, Aarhus, DK*  
*Sheryl Hinkkanen, AS-English Specialists Oy, Espoo, FI*  
  
*Chair: Birgitte Norlyk, University of Southern Denmark, DK*
- 11:15     Coffee / tea
- 11:45     **Linguistic and cross-cultural skills and competences for  
enhanced opportunities on the European and international  
labour markets**  
  
Presentation of the main points of the regional synthesis report  
*Anne Räsänen, Jyväskylän yliopisto, FI*
- 12:00     *Panel:*  
*Professor Riitta Pyykko, Turun yliopisto, FI*  
*Juris Binde, President & CEO, Latvijas Mobilais Telefons, LV*  
*Kim Staack Nielsen, President and CEO, Personalechefer i Danmark,  
DK*  
*Andreas Højlund Nielsen, Erasmus Student Network*  
  
*Chair: Ole Helmersen, Copenhagen Business School, DK*

13:00 Buffet lunch

14:15 **Consultation and Collaboration between universities and other sectors of education**

Presentation of the main points of the regional synthesis report  
*Anita Malmqvist, Umeå Universitet, SE*

14:30 *Panel:*  
*Dainuvite Bluma, professor & Head of Teacher Education, University of Latvia, LV*  
*A Representative of Skolverket, SE*  
*Mogens Enevoldsen, Aarhus Technical College, DK*  
*Peder Østergaard, Dean of Education, Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus*

*Chair: Anita Malmqvist, Umeå Universitet, SE*

15:30 Coffee / tea

16:00 **Small group discussion of recommendations**

Outcome: Updates and revised recommendations as regards

- Skills and competences required in the language industries and in the language-related professions
- Linguistic and cross-cultural skills and competences for enhanced opportunities on the European and international labour markets
- Consultation and Collaboration between universities and other sectors of education
- Consultation and collaboration between the higher education institutions and the world of work
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17:20 **Where do we go from here?**

*Conference rapporteur: Ole Helmersen, Copenhagen Business School, DK*

17:45 **Closing remarks**

*Karen M. Lauridsen, Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus, DK*

