

Cambridge English

Transforming Language Education

European Survey on Language Competences

Client: European Commission

Country: 16 participating countries or regions

Cambridge English Language Assessment has led an international team of experts in the fields of language assessment, questionnaire design, sampling, translation processes and psychometrics to deliver a unique languages survey for the European Community.

In 2008, following a competitive tender process, SurveyLang, a consortium of eight expert organisations, was chosen to carry out the European Survey on Language Competences.

The Survey, the first of its kind, was proposed by the European Commission to provide data about the demographic, social, economic and educational situations that affect linguistic proficiency. There was no existing comparable data of this kind.



The survey focussed on the two most widely taught official European languages (out of English, French, German, Italian and Spanish) in each country from a representative sample of pupils in their final year of lower secondary education.

53,000 students enrolled in schools in 16 participating countries or regions were assessed in the Main Study in 2011 and the test results related to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The administration of the survey and analysis of the data has been completed and a report was submitted to the Commission in February 2012.

We co-ordinated and managed SurveyLang and provided the English language testing component. The other SurveyLang partners were: Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques (CIEP); Gallup; Goethe-Institut; Instituto Cervantes; National Institute for Educational Measurement (Cito); Universidad de Salamanca; and Università per Stranieri di Perugia.

SurveyLang developed many innovative and exciting new approaches and

processes to deliver this project, particularly in developing collaborative language tests and in the software systems used to deliver the Language Test and Questionnaires.

This groundbreaking work is set to revolutionise understanding on how languages are taught and learnt throughout Europe and will be a key tool for European governments to use when developing language-learning policies.

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