**Migration & Education**

**Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles de Belgique**

**15-17 October 2012 Larnaca**

* *What is the role of school and teachers concerning the welcome and the education of every child, autochtonous as well as migrants from first and second generation ?*
* *What is the role of institutions close to the school ?*
* *What is the responsibility of every adult ? Of us ?*
* *How to promote a collective responsibility ? An articulation of everyone’s role ?*
* *What about our school culture ? How does it change ? What’s the place of diversity ? Which are the common values to be constructed and defended ?*

The problem is complex, because the actors are multiple, the political and ethical implications are important.

The situation is even more sensitive in FWB (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles), as the outcomes of international surveys confirm the poor results of migrant children at school, (although the results from 2009 are slightly better than those from 2006).

The indicators also show different results according to the native country of the pupil, and to the language spoken at home.

The problem is sensitive also because it deals with migration and with migration policies as described in the European green paper on migration[[1]](#footnote-1) but it deals also with (un)employment and school in its mission of education and social emancipation (see the four objectifs of the Missions decree).

The problem is sensitive because it is expanding in FWB and more particularly in the big cities : Brussels, of course, but in a lot of other cities as well.

Keeping this in mind, we must not forget that migration and mobility is a constant historical phenomenon, and that taking migration and mobility into account brings us into a win win situation. The opening of the mind is profitable for everyone. Thanks to the development of knowledge of the world and of languages some stereotypes can be banned.

**Legal references : international, in Belgium, in FWB**

In the law of 25 November 1991, Belgium subscribes the Convention on the rights of the child, adopted in New York on 20 November 1989. The law of 26 June 1953 subscribes the international Convention on the statute of refugees, signed in Geneva on 28 July 1951. Belgium clearly showed its intention to provide every child within the age of compulsory education, with an education that is adapted to the child’s needs.

In FWB, the Decree Missions of 24 July 1997 foresees that one of the general objectives of education in FWB is to prepare all pupils to become responsible citizens, capable of contributing to the development of a democratic society, solidary, pluralistic and open to other cultures.

The decree of 30 June 1998 instaures a system of positive discrimination aiming to guarantee equal opportunities for social emancipation to all children, whether they are legally in the territory or not.

At the European level, a number of recommendations have been produced related to education for migrants. I just name the Directive of the Council of the EU from 25 July 1977 aiming at the education and schooling of the children of migrant workers, and the recent resolution of the European Parliament (2 April 2009) on the education of children of migrants, based on the green paper mentioned supra.

**Initiatives in FWB**

These texts have inspired several initiatives in the FWB. I will give some information on DASPA (‘classes passerelles’), on ALE (‘adaptation à la langue de l’enseignement’ = adaptation to the language of school), and the programme LCO (= Langues et culture d’origine = languages and culture of the home country), that has been rebaptised OLC (‘Ouverture aux langues et aux cultures’ = openness to languages and cultures).

**1. ‘Classes passerelles’ or DASPA**

In 2001, a decree aiming at the insertion of newcomers in the education organised or subsidezed by the ‘Communauté française’, adapted the education to the specificity of the newcomers. The law said that not taking into account those pupils and those youngsters means, at the same time, penalise the schools that welcome them, and, through these schools, also the other pupils of those schools. In 2001, the ‘classes passerelles’ were initiated : they allow the newly arrived pupils to enjoy a ‘passerelle’ learning between scolarity before their arrival in Belgium – in some cases the absence of scolarity – and the scolarity in a class with a focus, as you can imagine, on the French language, the instruction language.

The ‘passerelles’ classes were organized in the schools close to the reception center (‘centre d’accueil’) in a number of schools in the region Brussels Capital.

Within a period of ten years, the welcome and the education of migrant pupils and youngsters has changed. We have thus tried, with the stakeholders on the field (of which a lot are represented at this conference), to adapt the profile of the ‘passerelle’ classes.

Today, they are called DASPA.

On 18 May 2012, the DASPA decree has been unanimously approved by the Parliament.

On 19 July 2012, the government has granted 74 DASPA (in primary and secondary education), which is 9 more than the previous year.

The DASPA concept (Dispositif d’Accueil et de Scolarisation des Primo-Arrivants) aims to insist on the collective responsibility of the pedagogical team of the institution, that is entitled to a supplementary support for the education of newly arrived children. This collective responsibility has as a starting point the collective autonomy within the project of the institution. Indeed, DASPA is far more a structure than a class group, and it can take various forms, depending on the situations, the initiatives of the educational communities and the available human resources.

The beneficiaries of the DASPA are all those within the age of compulsory education, arrived in Belgium at least one year ago, and who are in a procedure of request of the statute of refuguee. The new decree foresees that, in secondary education, every pupil, foreign or adopted, who does not have sufficient notion of the French language to integrate successfully in the class activities, can also benefit of DASPA (ALE in primary school).

Professional development and pedagogical support of the concerned teachers has been enhanced. The success of the newly arrived pupils depends on the means that are invested by the government, but also on the professionalism of the teachers. The awareness of the hetereogeneity of the profiles of the pupils, the mastery of the FLE didactics (Français langue etrangère), how to deal with pupils who have never been to school.. A number of challenges for the DASPA teacher.

That’s why the new decree details the training modalities of the professional development and the specific competences that have to be reached in DASPA.

A reflection is going on concerning the construction of a kind of ‘FLE referentiel’ to offer to the teachers some guidance concerning the learning phases of the pupils whose mother tongue is not French. This brochure has a double public : the allophone pupils, and vulnerable French pupils.

Indeed, experts and stakeholders agree that a pupil who does not speak the language at all asks for a different pedagogical approach than a pupil that is speaking French, but not good enough to benefit at the most from school.

**2. ALE for primary school**

An adaptation class to the instruction language can be organized for foreign pupils

1° whose mother tongue or usually spoken language is different from the instruction language.

2° who are in the primary education of the French Community for less that three full years and do not know sufficiently the instruction language to adapt successfully to the class activities.

Schools are granted a number of ALE periods depending on the number of pupils corresponding at the definition. The school is free to use those periods, to combine with DASPA and to use both complementarely.

**3. LCO Langues et cultures d’origine – OLC ouverture aux langues et aux cultures**

These are parnterships between the French Community and the countries with an important immigration towards Belgium.

Today, there are 8 OLC partner countries : Spain, Portugal, Italy, Marocco, Greece, Turkey, Romania. In 2011, China is added. There are projects for conventions with other countries, amongst others Poland.

Today, almost 240 school institutions are in this programme, from primary until the end of secondary.

OLC (programme d’ouverture aux langues et aux cultures) is the successor of LCO (langue et culture d’origine), based on the CEE Directive (25.07.1977) cf supra.

The objectives of this directive were not only to aim at a successful scolarity but also at maintaining the link with the country of origin. At the time, returning back to the country of origin was assumed to be part of the family project : the knowledge of the language and the culture were thus necessary for the reinsertion.

The host country has become, to a large extent, the country chosen to live in.

Since, the emphasis has been on facilitating the insertion and the integration of all those who decided to stay in the host country and to organize the living-together.

At this moment, the programme is not only aiming at migrant children, but at all children in the schools of the FWB, from primary until the end of secondary.

In 2012, the name of the programme has changed, from LCO to OLC, in order to emphasise the intercultural approach.

For the pedagogical teams, the foreign and Belgian teachers in this programme, it is crucial to give room to the cultures and the languages of the pupils in the school. The presence of a migrant teacher in a FWB school, who is invited to teach and to participate in all the events organized by the school, can incite pupils and their families to talk about their culture.

Such a programme helps pupils and teachers to question ones own culture, the culture of the host country and the multiple interactions between them.

It is clear that the attention for or the restauration of the mother tongue and of the culture of the country allows the pupil to reinforce his identity, his self confidence, and that the acquisition of foreign languages is a plus for the future citizens of our country. That is why we also wanted to insist on the dimension of the dialogue between cultures.

School, next to family, is the place where our identity is constructed, it is important to promote school as places where differences meet, where there is room for dialogue.

We are all at the crossroad of different cultures, more or less marked in our personal history.

Amin Maalouf denounces the murderous identities. We would like the identities to be fruitful thanks to an intercultural approach from the earliest age.

Organisation of OLC courses :

Teachers coming from the partner countries give two types of courses in the FWB schools :

* Courses of opening towards languages and cultures (during the school courses), and aimed at all pupils from the same class. Given by the OLC teacher and by a Belgian teacher, in French.
* Language courses, during the week, after school time. It is non compulsory and aimed at all pupils whose parents asked for it.

Those courses are free.

Countries design, award and guide teachers. FWB organizes training helping the teachers to get to know the French speaking Belgian school system and the current pedagogical practices.

1. Livre vert de la Commission du 3 juillet 2008 intitulé "Migration et mobilité: enjeux et opportunités pour les systèmes éducatifs européens [↑](#footnote-ref-1)