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RE: Nomination of participants to the ECML-EC peer learning event “Ensuring a sustainable future for RMLs: Linguistic Models and Strategies for Multilingual Classrooms” within the framework of the ECML’s joint action with the European Commission *Innovative methodologies and assessment in language learning*, 19-20 November 2026

Venue: Valencia, Spain

Date: 19-20 November 2026

Participants: 1 delegate per member state of the ECML and the European Union, to be nominated by the National nominating authorities

Working languages: English, Spanish, and Valencian. Simultaneous interpretation will be available from Spanish and Valencian into English (but not vice versa). All participants should therefore have listening comprehension in English at least at B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; see attached nomination form.

Deadline for nomination: 10 September 2026

Information on the colloquium: www.ecml.at/2026peerlearning

Focus of the event

Following the introduction of a major reform by the Valencian educational authorities in 2025, this 2-day peer learning event on 19 – 20 November offers participants a unique opportunity to engage with a rare and highly instructive policy context while situating their own experiences within a broader European perspective.

The Valencian case provides concrete insights into how legal frameworks, territorial differentiation, parental consultation mechanisms, and classroom realities interact in the governance of a regional and minority language, offering lessons that are directly relevant to other multilingual and minority-language settings. The event will combine in depth analysis of the specific Valencian context with structured exchange among participants from the member states of the ECML and the EU, enabling mutual learning, critical comparison of models, and the identification of transferable strategies for supporting RMLs within multilingual classrooms. School visits, policy discussions, and practitioner exchanges further allow participants to move beyond abstract frameworks and observe real-world implementation, strengthening their capacity to adapt successful approaches to their own national or regional contexts.

Background and Rationale

Regional and minority languages (RMLs) face a common and growing challenge across Europe: how to sustain meaningful transmission and use in educational settings that are increasingly multilingual, diverse, and shaped by demographic change. Effective language education policy must navigate protecting the vitality of the RML, responding to the linguistic backgrounds of learners, integrating newly arrived communities, and ensuring that all pupils achieve genuine competence in both official languages (Valencian and Spanish), as well as in at least one foreign language, most notably English, as a key curricular language.

The Valencian Context

The Valencian Community (Spain) provides an exceptionally setting for this discussion. As a co-official bilingual territory, it has been governed since 1983 by the *Llei d'Ús i Ensenyament del Valencià* (Law 4/1983 on the Use and Teaching of Valencian), which introduced a foundational distinction that remains unique in the Spanish context: a formal territorial division between **zones of Valencian linguistic predominance** and **zones of Spanish linguistic predominance** (Articles 35-36). This zoning determines the legal framework for language instruction in schools, and directly mirrors the concept of "lost areas" and detached communities that recurs in RML education debates across Europe.

More recently, the *Llei 1/2024, de 27 de juny, de la Generalitat, de llibertat educativa* (Law 1/2024, of 27 June, of the Generalitat, on Educational Freedom) introduced a novel mechanism: a formal consultation process in which the legal representatives of pupils in each school vote to select the **base language of instruction** (Valencian or Spanish) at each level of pre-university education. The consultation was carried out in February-March 2025, with results applied from the 2025-2026 school year.

This constitutes a **singular case in the European landscape of RML education policy**: a binding collective consultation of families at school level to determine the medium of instruction in a territory with a legally protected regional language. While parental choice mechanisms exist in other contexts, none involve a periodic vote with direct, binding effects on the linguistic configuration of school units.

The Peer Learning Dimension

The event brings together policymakers, education administrators, curriculum developers, researchers and community representatives from across Europe to exchange experiences on shared challenges and explore practical, evidence-based responses.

It combines two complementary dimensions. The Valencian Community serves as a host showcase: its policy framework, the results of the 2025 consultation, and the concrete reality of multilingual classrooms -including schools with significant migrant populations- will be examined in depth and observed directly through school visits on Day 2. At the same time, representatives from other European territories will contribute their own policies, initiatives and projects, bringing models and experiences that reflect a diversity of approaches to RML education. The exchange is designed to be genuinely bidirectional: Valencia's context serves as a starting point for reflection, while the contributions of other regions enrich the discussion and offer transferable lessons for all participants.

Objectives of the peer-learning event

- **To analyse and compare policy frameworks** for the teaching of regional and minority languages (RMLs) in multilingual education systems, with particular attention to legal

mechanisms, governance models, and decision-making processes affecting language instruction.

- **To examine the Valencian case as a linguistic model**, focusing on its territorial zoning, recent parental consultation process, and their impact on language education, equity, and classroom practice.
- **To exchange evidence-based strategies and pedagogical models** that support effective teaching and learning of RMLs in increasingly diverse classrooms, including contexts with significant migrant and multilingual populations.
- **To explore how different European regions address shared challenges**, such as sustaining RML transmission, balancing linguistic rights and educational freedom, and ensuring high levels of competence in the regional and state languages as well as in additional languages within the curriculum.
- **To identify transferable approaches and policy lessons** that can inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of RML education in other national and regional contexts.
- **To strengthen professional networks and peer collaboration** among policymakers, education administrators, researchers, and community actors engaged in regional and minority language education.
- **To contribute to continuity across peer learning activities**, generating insights and conclusions that will feed into subsequent events, including the next peer learning event hosted in Frisia.

Expected outcomes

- A rapporteur's synthesis document capturing key lessons and transferable insights from all participating territories;
- A set of conclusions feeding into the next peer learning event (Frisia);
- A short video capturing the Valencian context and the event's key messages for wider dissemination.

Profile of participants

Nominees should fulfill at least one of the following professional roles:

- educational and school administrators;
- language policy makers actively engaged with regional and minority languages in national and regional education systems;
- curriculum developers;
- national and regional government representatives;
- community leaders and NGOs;
- researchers engaged with RMLs;
- school leaders;
- inspectors.