



European  
Award  
*for Languages*



Winners • 2003

## European Award for Languages 2003

In this booklet we present the fifteen UK projects which have won a European Award for Languages in 2003. The European Award for Languages (also known as the European Label) is a European Union initiative designed to promote best practice in innovative and effective language-learning initiatives. We are very grateful to the Department for Education and Skills for its support for the initiative in the UK, and to all the members of the Advisory Group who assist CILT in planning and judging the Awards.

This year the winners include projects from primary, secondary and special schools, universities, local education authorities and community organisations. They involve a wide range of languages and diverse groups of learners. They demonstrate some of the most positive developments which are taking place in languages in the UK today – from projects which link languages to the world of work to those which widen horizons and opportunities for disadvantaged or disabled members of our society. The winning projects were selected from a large number of entries and visited by members of the judging panel, who have witnessed their effectiveness at first hand. They are all projects which have inspired learners and enriched lives.

We hope you will enjoy reading about them and be inspired by their example.

Teresa Tinsley  
Assistant Director, Communications  
CILT

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## European partnerships stimulate language learning

Portal House School is a special school for boys of primary school age with behavioural and emotional problems and associated specific learning difficulties.



The project had its origins in a European-funded initiative which enabled the school to develop close practical working links with partners in France and Germany. There are regular residential events for pupils from these partner schools, together with a new partner school in Belgium. The focus is on cultural links to explore how other countries experience festivals such as *mardi gras* and Halloween, and a variety of joint curriculum projects encompassing all areas of the curriculum.

As a result of this activity, the school decided to introduce French teaching. This is carried out by one of the class teachers who was formerly a secondary school teacher of French. The judges who visited the school were extremely impressed by both the teacher and the pupils. In spite of their learning difficulties, pupils were attentive and focused. They produced responses which were of a very high standard, both in terms of accuracy and accent. All the boys were keen to participate and clearly enjoying learning another language.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This project has used the experience of its European partnerships to anchor language learning in pupils' curiosity about other countries and their way of life. It provides for language learning in an institutional context where it is more often than not absent. It demonstrates that with good teaching and good support from senior management, learning a language can provide an exciting and enriching experience for children in special schools in the primary sector.

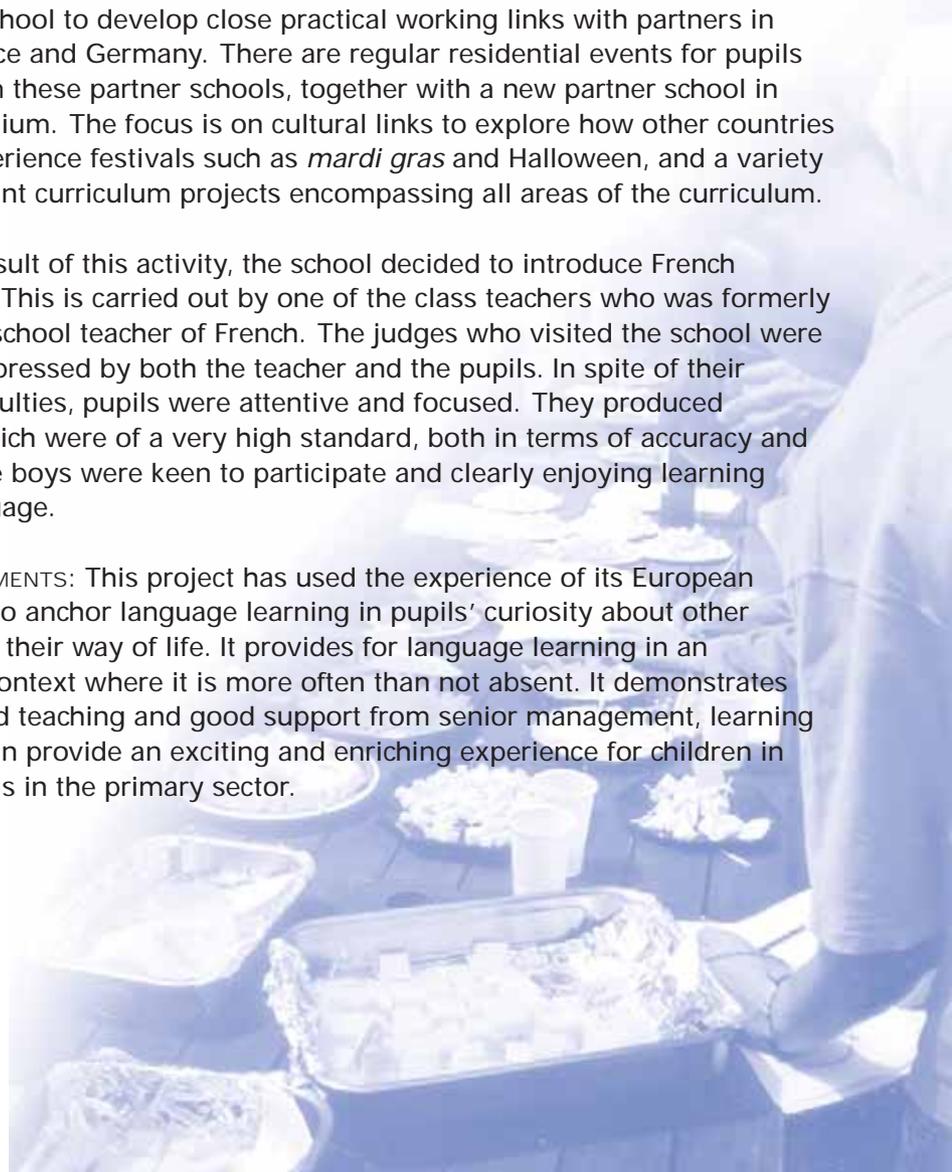
### Breaking down barriers

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## Rappers' delight

Robert Gordon College Junior School in Aberdeen has brought an innovative approach to the question of how to help young learners of French acquire vocabulary and a good accent. They produced their own audio CD of raps and songs for young primary learners.

The children themselves were involved in producing the CD, with the help of twelve native French-speaking children living locally. Each child from Robert Gordon's was given a week to mimic and learn one of twelve songs from the album, initially recorded by the native speakers. British and French voices were then mixed to produce a unique resource.

The CD comprises a variety of songs and raps, in addition to just the music and rhythm, allowing listeners to use the CD karaoke style. Specifically written lyrics based around the main topic areas for primary languages have been set to familiar catchy tunes and rap rhythms. Topics for the material include learning of numbers and travel and transport, and the music has also been adapted for concerts performed to the pupils' parents.

The CD is available commercially, and there are plans to produce a follow-up compilation, along with an illustrated pupils' book including vocabulary, songs, raps and jokes.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This project is providing a fun-filled start to learning French which prepares pupils well for the secondary school. Children are enthusiastic and well-motivated, and their pronunciation and intonation skills are impressive. Demand for the CD from other schools has been exceptionally high – evidence of the success of the project well beyond Robert Gordon's College.



*Français  
Français*

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## Challenging disadvantage through French

This is a project which had a profound effect on the judges who visited it. Maplewood is a school for emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children. All 90 of its pupils have been excluded from mainstream education for being 'unmanageable'. The world of these children tends to be extremely narrow and opportunities to look beyond to the world outside are rarely sought or welcomed. Three years ago Maplewood embarked on an ambitious project to offer its pupils a new learning experience through French.

The course was planned to take into account pupils' special needs – Maplewood's pupils have a very short attention span and poor memory recall – while maintaining a strong emphasis on fun and enjoyment. Negative attitudes towards language learning also had to be tackled.

Maplewood set demanding targets for themselves and their pupils by seeking accreditation from AQA on the same basis as pupils in mainstream education. These high expectations have been rewarded with every pupil who began the project having achieved national accreditation for their achievements.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This project is as effective as it is heart-warming. The experience of successful language learning has raised pupils' self-esteem and its impact is being felt throughout the school. Pupils greeted us in French spontaneously, and we saw evidence of a European dimension reflected in all their work, particularly Maths, Art and English.

### Integrating a language into a special school

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## Multicultural, multilingual, multimedia

This project run under the auspices of Gloucestershire Ethnic Minorities Achievement Service, uses bilingual pupils to create multimedia materials that support literacy in both English and the home language. They make resources – in hard copy as well as CD-ROM and web-based – drawing on their own experiences in their home country and in the UK, incorporating photos and visual material alongside their own words. Making the materials develops their literacy and ICT skills in both languages as well as helping them to reflect on the different cultures to which they have access. They also create valuable and very appealing resources which are used with other pupils and in schools throughout the county.

Some 20 community languages have so far been involved, including languages as diverse as Kurdish, Tagalog, Chinese and Croatian. The judges met a brother and sister from a Greek Cypriot family who had produced a multimedia book documenting a trip to Cyprus. The book had then been used to teach the wider school about Cypriot language and culture, as well as supporting younger members of the family and other pupils in their learning of English.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** A well-planned, truly innovative project which is having a real impact in a priority area. The project is based on an important principle: that the development of language and literacy in bilingual pupils is most successful when it takes into account both languages.



### Multimedia multilingual talking books

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## Performing miracles

This creative project involves sixth formers in running drama workshops in French and German with groups of primary school pupils and their teachers. The Sixth Formers – students of either languages or performing arts, accompany a specialist teacher from Bridgewater High School in workshops involving mime, performance, dance, and group work. Primary students create number machines, superstar sketches and animal totem poles, or recreate European paintings, turning them into life through drama. The performance and display of their work is shared throughout the school.

An underlying aim of the project is to enthuse the primary school teacher and to draw them into wanting to do more work with languages.

Bridgewater High School is a Specialist Arts College and works also with Lymm Language College, who have been able to extend the project within the borough of Warrington to include community languages. Workshops, training and presentations are also offered to other schools nationwide.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** By applying the specialist techniques of one curriculum area to another and cutting across traditional boundaries of age and sector, this project succeeds in enthusing everyone involved. It was a delight to observe the complete absorption of the children in the workshop and their pleasure as they became aware that they were understanding and communicating information using French.

### Drama and creativity languages link

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## Multiple projects in the Wirral

Wirral Metropolitan Council wins a European Award for its wide-ranging support for language learning through five separate projects, involving a total of 1500 pupils.

The Festival of Languages, established since the mid 1990s, helps raise everyone's awareness of foreign languages with secondary school pupils performing songs and sketches in front of parents and staff. The Borough has introduced Foreign Language Assistant presentations for Wirral sixth formers. Younger pupils, aged 14-15, are introduced to French folk music by Canadian group La Volée d'Castors.

Wirral Council also organises two language fairs, one in German and one in French. The German fair, organised and run by students from Siegen University and their tutor, provides an opportunity for pupils to take part in a variety of intensive interactive activities in German. These include quizzes, watching German children's television programmes, a slide show and an introduction to German pop music. The French equivalent provides a similar offering, including bingo and a crash-course in French text messaging, as well as various ICT activities. Both events provide an excellent opportunity for pupils to learn new vocabulary, listen to native French and German, and gain an insight into contemporary France and Germany.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** The collective work of Wirral Council has many facets and is particularly impressive bearing in mind the impact it achieves across a range of languages and age groups. This work is a fine example of what can be achieved with solid collaboration between the local education authority, the local branch of the Association for Language Learning, as well as all teachers and students within the catchment area.



### Wirral projects

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## Friendship through languages

In this project, secondary school pupils become teachers of the languages they use in their homes and communities, working over a ten-week period to prepare short dialogues and sketches with a friend wishing to learn the language. This year there were fifteen pairs of pupils, ranging in age from 11 to 14. The languages taught were Albanian, Arabic, Czech, Danish, Greek, Hindi, Ibo, Lingala, Polish, Spanish, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh and Zulu.

The project culminates with an event at which the performances of both teacher and learner are judged by volunteer native speakers. Each pair also prepares a display representing the culture of the country where the language is spoken, and their performance may also include traditional costumes, music and dancing, or food to tempt the judges. Sixth-form students, PGCE trainees and the Modern Languages department all help to advise and support the pairs throughout the time they are preparing for the competition.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This project not only brings out the enjoyment in teaching and learning a new language, but helps pupils form new and deeper friendships across cultures. Those doing the teaching grow in self-esteem and take immense personal responsibility for their partner's performance. Those doing the learning have the chance to learn languages not normally offered within the school curriculum, and gain a richer insight into the multicultural, plurilingual environment that surrounds them. An inspirational project superbly organised and run.

### Teach a friend a language (TAFAL)

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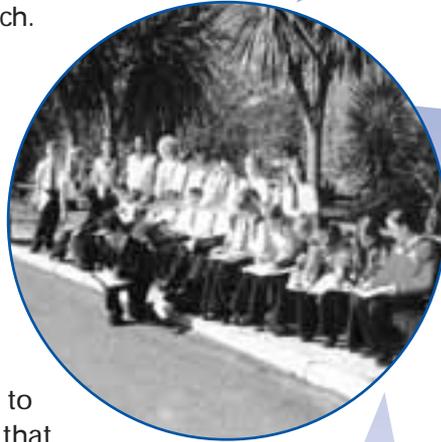
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## The languages zoo

This project has embedded the theme of a zoo into the scheme of work for Year 7 pupils and involves local zoo staff in creating a specially adapted environment to get pupils off to a good start in French.

Preparatory work centres on the vocabulary and language pupils will need for a zoo visit. Then all pupils take part in a day trip to Newquay Zoo in which they are exposed to nothing but French. The zoo is mapped and signed in French, and all activities and exercises are conducted in French in a specially prepared workbook. There is a puppet show, a talk about the zoo's pet python and even a French café.



The involvement of zoo staff provides an important message to pupils that languages are useful for many types of work and that you do not have to speak the language perfectly to communicate effectively. Pupils are immersed in a French environment in their own backyard without the expense of a trip abroad. Once the trip is over, follow-up activities in school consolidate the language learnt on the day, and there is a prize for the best workbook.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This project provides a motivating way for students to understand, learn and use a foreign language in an exciting 'real' context outside the classroom. The involvement of the wide community in the children's language learning is an original and important feature of the project which should be replicated in other schools.

**Foreign language  
zoo trip**

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## A great debate

This project aims to give Gaelic-speaking teenagers an opportunity to meet and debate topical issues. The competition aims to strengthen linguistic skills and provides a forum for participants to build self-confidence.

Hosted by Liniclate Education Centre on Benbecula, one of the few Gaelic-medium secondary schools in Scotland, sixteen teams are drawn against each other in a knock-out style competition. Topics are given prior to the debate to provide adequate time to gather support material.

Each pair of teams has 15–20 minutes to debate a current issue in Gaelic on anything from the effects of soap operas on society to parental responsibility. Credit is given to independent thinkers and to those who can articulate their thoughts based on what they have heard. The final is broadcast live on BBC Alba Craoladh nan Gàidheal and judged by professionals, mainly from Gaelic media backgrounds. A trophy is awarded to the winning team.

There are plans for the 2004 final to be hosted in the Scottish Parliament, and the winners will have the opportunity to undertake journalistic work experience with the BBC Gaelic News Team.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** Students learn a lot from this experience. The whole process improves presentation styles, debating techniques, as well as general self-confidence; all transferable skills of considerable value. In addition this competition allows Gaelic speaking pupils from across Scotland to meet and make friends in the heartland of the language.

### BT Scotland national Gaelic debate

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## A special commitment

The Perry Common Special Schools are a group of three special schools, all on the same campus, catering for deaf, blind and physically disabled students. Staff have created a languages-friendly environment in which the greatest possible number of students can learn French, whatever their disability. All students receive accreditation for their achievements at Key Stage 4.

Lessons are differentiated so that pupils can access the skills that their disability allows. Pupils with hearing impairment use mainly reading. The visually impaired use worksheets or text books in Braille, MLP or Moon. Lessons for pupils with physical disabilities are structured so that they do as much of the work as possible themselves, using a mixture of appropriate resources, including word and picture match.

Whatever their impairment, all pupils are encouraged to use the target language and the target language is used as a medium in all lessons. Use of the language extends to all curriculum areas, for example students who need regular physiotherapy count their exercise routines in French. Outside the classroom there have been visits to local French markets and *crêperies*, the Channel Tunnel exhibition, and residential visits to Northern France. Good use is made of ICT and a link has been set up with a school in Finland.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This is an outstanding example of a school making a language accessible to all pupils. There is evidence of a deep commitment from staff in developing methodologies to overcome each child's disability. Students are confident and enthusiastic and their concentration, appreciation of others' work and confidence with visitors is impressive.



*Peu à peu*

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## Languages work post-14

This project is providing an innovative way of introducing a third language to pupils at Key Stage 4, and of underlining the significance of languages for working life. At Frederick Gough School and Language College, all students study two languages in Key Stage 3. When they progress to Key Stage 4, they all take one of these languages at GCSE, and follow, in addition, a vocational-style Spanish course, leading to the OCR Certificate in Business Language Competence.

The teaching is done in modules – ten weeks in Year 10 and seven weeks in Year – and assessment is carried out by an external examiner. The school has achieved an excellent pass rate of 92%. Achievements are recognised at special awards presentations, including a Business Spanish awards ceremony sponsored by a local supermarket.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This project setting an important example for post-14 provision through its innovative use of a course traditionally designed for post-16 learners. The chance to learn a third language – and to do so through a course which stresses the usefulness of language skills in a business context – is important in widening pupils' horizons and increasing their understanding of the relevance of language skills. It also provides them with a useful qualification to offer future employers.

### Business Spanish

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## A thirst for languages

This project offers an opportunity for gifted and talented students to learn a fourth language.

The Italian enrichment project was originally intended to give Year 9 pupils the option of taking an additional language to GCSE. These have been joined by sixth formers who complete the GCSE in one year, and by non-exam pupils who simply want to experience Italian language and culture. The high attendance rate of all pupils for what is an out of school activity is a strong indicator of the scheme's success.

The scheme provides enjoyment and intellectual challenge, and the exposure to Italian language and culture reinforces students' understanding of the other languages they have learnt. It allows talented linguists to thrive, while contributing to their understanding of European culture. Plans are underway to begin an AS level Italian course and to organise a school trip to Italy in 2004. It is also hoped to extend the offer of the GCSE to pupils from Poole Grammar School for Boys.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This is an important project which shows how a fourth language can be sustained within a school and provide challenge and motivation for pupils. The school has shown how it is possible to engender a thirst for languages and stimulate an intellectual curiosity which will stand pupils in good stead in the years to come.



### Italian enrichment project

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## Distance support for languages post-16

Partners in Excellence is an initiative funded by the Scottish Executive Education Department, involving three local authorities: Argyll & Bute, East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire. The project acts as a virtual Centre of Excellence for modern languages and involves a community of language learners and teachers across the 29 participating schools. The initiative has been running since June 2000, and to date the three participating authorities have noted a rise of up to 78% in uptake across all languages post Standard Grade and significant rises in attainment, e.g. a 30% increase in the number of A's at Higher level.

Increased access to technology has allowed students and teachers in the participating schools to develop new ways of learning and teaching in the classroom. The project has also developed the LanguageZone website which provides original materials for language learners. LanguageZone also acts as the backbone of the language-learning community through the use of a bulletin board and chatrooms.

The initiative has also developed a range of non-classroom based activities including immersion visits and foreign language film-making weekends.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This is a significant project which is making a huge impact on both the quality and quantity of language learning post-16. It is innovative in its use of new technology and creative in the content material it has developed. Its activities have clearly excited learners and stimulated their enthusiasm for language learning.

### Partners in excellence

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## *Médecins sans frontières*

While many universities offer language courses to students of other disciplines, at Glasgow provision is made for medical students to study a language module which counts as part of their degree. The module is run as an intensive course over five weeks, with three-and-a-half hours of tuition per day followed by the same number of hours of guided self-study.

The courses are well-organised and specifically designed for medical students – students can even watch videos of operations with commentaries in different languages. Assessment involves each student producing a fifteen-minute presentation about a medically related subject using the target language.

At the University of Glasgow all medical students are given the opportunity to spend one to three months in foreign hospitals or medical centres. Students who have studied a language have a wider choice of countries for their placement. For example, those who studied Spanish this year spent the summer in hospitals in Guatemala and Honduras. Other languages offered are French, German and Russian.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This is an excellent example of how languages support professional studies in another discipline, enhancing the opportunities available in the future. These students have acquired a practical skill which will be useful to them in their careers, whether encountering speakers of the language in question as patients in the UK, or working abroad themselves.

They feel more confident about working abroad, for example for an aid agency, and feel they could now easily embark on another language if they were in a situation where they needed to do so.



**Special study modules  
for professional  
purposes**

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## Italian in the news

This project involves adult Italian learners in a simulation of an Italian newspaper and TV news bulletin. Students play the part of journalists who report on various aspects of Italian language and culture. On a weekly basis, they decide who will report from which area of Italy, and on which topic. The result is *Il Faro d'Italia*, a newspaper and television programme. The written version is used to work on grammar and style, with the tutor playing the role of Editor, highlighting areas of improvement in the first draft. The material is then presented in the form of a TV news bulletin with the tutor playing the role of the presenter and introducing the students as journalists. The programme then ends with a *Question time* session, and sometimes a game of *Call my bluff*.

Students are of mixed ability and aged from 19 to over 60. The current group includes university students, staff, members of the local community, overseas students and third-generation Italians. The simulation not only provides an authentic context for developing learners' competence in Italian, but also allows for a differentiated approach in which students work at their own level and follow up their own interests in Italian culture. Tutors are able to provide individual feedback on students' drafts and oral presentations, focusing on their specific strengths and weaknesses.

This year a web-based version of the newspaper has been created which the University of Hull hopes to open to students of Italian all over the world.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This initiative has obviously been extremely motivating to students. Performance in assessments has been raised, and not a single student has dropped out of the course. Students are motivated to do more work for the simulation than they would with a more traditional approach and at the same time the content matter is culturally rich and relevant to their interests. This is an approach which could be used more widely in a range of language-learning contexts.

### *Il Faro d'Italia*

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## Presentation ceremony

Welcome

His Excellency Signor Luigi Amaduzzi, Italian Ambassador

Introduction

Dr Lid King, National Director for Languages

Presentation of awards 1–5

Sir Trevor McDonald

Project presentation

Bridgewater County High School, Warrington

Presentation of awards 6–10

Sir Trevor McDonald

Project presentation

Perry Common Special Schools, Birmingham

Presentation of awards 11–15

Sir Trevor McDonald

Project presentation

University of Hull

Presentation of Mary Glasgow Trust Award

Reception



European  
Award  
*for* Languages

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*26 September 2003*

We are grateful to the following  
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Steven Fawkes • BBC

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Marta Gutiérrez • Consejería de Educación y  
Ciencia

Tony Hein • Mary Glasgow Languages Trust

Ceri James • CILT Cymru

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### Hosting the presentation ceremony

Italian Cultural Institute

### Financial support

European Commission



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