Exchange activities are important to understanding between cultural and linguistic areas and promote language learning. The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) adopted in 1985 the first Empfehlungen [Recommendations] on promoting student and teacher exchanges between the regions of Switzerland. The 2004 EDK Sprachenstrategie [languages strategy] advocates an increased use of exchange activities within Switzerland for language learning. To develop language teaching and language learning, different forms of exchange of teachers and learners across language borders are to be promoted. Exchange projects supplement language teaching. Pupils and their teachers are offered various opportunities to enter into direct contact with partner classes from other language regions.

Exchanges should begin as early as possible and facilitate repeat contacts at the different school levels. These do not have to be exclusively physical contacts. Media such as videos, e-mails and chat can also be used.

The ch Stiftung für eidgenössische Zusammenarbeit [ch Foundation for Federal Cooperation] works together with a network of cantonal contact persons for exchange projects. In cooperation with the cantonal education departments, each year it collates national statistics on exchange activities within Switzerland and with countries abroad. This lists, for all school levels, reciprocal class exchanges and other types of exchange between the cantons, with Europe and in countries outside Europe.

**Pupil Mobility**

In a multilingual country the coordination and development of language teaching is of particular importance. During compulsory education, alongside the local national language, each pupil learns two more languages. In Switzerland these are a second national language and English from primary level, and an optional third national language from lower secondary level.

To ensure that language exchanges are motivational, they must be given specific support and integrated into teaching. With the publication of the Swiss Language Portfolio the EDK has provided learners with an instrument which they can use to document their intercultural and linguistic exchanges, and reflect on their future language learning.

**Exchange programmes in Switzerland**

Pestalozzi – the national exchange programme for the primary and secondary level facilitates individual exchanges, class exchanges and school partnerships in another language region:
Individual exchange: the children of two families spend part of their holidays with the exchange family in the other language region and are integrated into the host family.

Class exchange and school partnerships: the pupils of a class or entire school attend lessons in a partner school, for instance, and live with a host family. Other forms of exchange include joint project weeks and class camps.

Rousseau [8] – the national exchange programme for general education upper secondary level schools allows exchange on an individual basis, or as a group or school class project, in another language region.

- Individual exchange: pupils completing a bilingual baccalaureate generally have the opportunity to, or may even be obliged to, follow a language exchange course in another language region. Even pupils who are not completing a bilingual baccalaureate can take part in an individual pupil exchange.
- Class exchange and school partnerships: a partnership with another school allows pupils from a class or even an entire school to get to know another language region. During the exchange pupils usually live with a host family in another part of the country and experience everyday life in a new place. Other forms of exchange are also possible.

Piaget [9] – the national exchange programme for vocational training allows aspiring professionals to exchange apprenticeships, or young graduates from apprenticeships and courses of study who have not yet found a job, to complete a traineeship in another language region.

- Apprenticeship exchange: two learners from different language regions in Switzerland exchange apprenticeships – either concurrently or at different point in time. However, reciprocal exchanges are not imperative.
- Work placements: The ‘open jobs’ programme offers young graduates from apprenticeships and courses of study who have not yet found a job the opportunity to acquire additional skills which are in demand in the labour market. During a work placement participants spend 80% of their time working in a company in another language region of Switzerland while 20% of the placement is devoted to language learning.

Exchange programmes in Europe

Comenius [10] – the European programme for the entire education sector facilitates individual mobility for learning purposes. Partnerships promote cooperation between schools. School partnerships can be used to fund exchanges of classes, individual pupils or teachers.

Leonardo da Vinci [11] – the European programme for vocational education and training enables VET institutions, with mobility projects, to organise placements abroad for trainees and VET staff and to apply for funding to carry out these projects.

Youth in Action [12] – the European programme for young people, young adults up to the age of 30, youth organisations and people active in extracurricular youth work, promotes non-formal education and exchanges in and with Europe. Mobility projects promote exchanges and solidarity among young people in Europe and people active in youth work. Through cooperation projects, partnership projects are possible in the youth sector with interested institutions and organisations.
Exchange programmes outside Europe

Magellan [13] – the international programme enables schools to carry out virtual and real exchanges with partner schools in other countries. Competitions, study trips and visit programmes are also regularly offered.

Teacher Mobility

Exchange programmes in Europe

Comenius [14] – the European programme for the entire education sector supports different learning mobilities – from sitting in on lessons in other European countries to participation in courses and conferences, and teaching assignments. The projects are always related to school education; what participants learn is passed on to pupils.

Leonardo da Vinci [15] – the European programme offers vocational education and training institutions the opportunity to organise placements abroad for VET staff, and also enables them to apply for funding to carry out these projects.

Language Assistant Programme [16] (LAP) – the international language assistant programme enables Swiss students and graduates to spend one year attending a school in another country, teaching their mother tongue. The programme is directed at students or graduates of German, French, Italian, English and Spanish language and literature.

Alongside the Swiss Competence Centre for Exchange and Mobility, various institutions offer their services in the field of mobility and exchange, including Intermundo [17], AFS Schweiz [18], echanges [19], EF Schüleraustausch [20] and, in the field of vocational education and training, xchange [21], and visite [22].

The Swiss education server educa.ch [23] provides students and teaching staff with the addresses of schools in Switzerland, Swiss schools abroad and school partnership organisations. educa.ch also contains information on other contact points for exchange and mobility programmes and on contact points in the cantonal education departments which, in cooperation with the ch Stiftung, support teachers in planning and implementing exchange projects.