



ECSPM EVENT PROCEEDINGS REPORT

The first assembly and symposium organized by the ECSPM in Athens, Greece, on December 1st (hosted and financially supported by the Hellenic Open University and the School of Education of the University of Athens) was successful. Approximately 100 people attended and reported that they were very impressed with the content of the presentations made by our guests, partners and members –even by those of the few that made their presentation from afar.

The focal points of the symposium, which was entitled LANGUAGE BEYOND BORDERS were: a) “Social, aesthetic and linguistic literacies for the creative participation in European societies of displaced populations and people in adversity” and b) The role of translation, technology and linguistic resources for the safe-guarding of multilingualism in Europe. These thematic choices which are among but not our exclusive concerns, were motivated by the Greek institutions funding and hosting the symposium. We do so hope that in the future, the concerns of other places and organizations hosting ECSMP symposia, workshops, conferences, etc., will be inspired by local or institutional concentrations and different ECSMP thematic interests.

The symposium became a highlight of the event in Athens, though it started out merely as a pretext for ECSPM members and partners to assemble in order to: (a) to agree upon the final wording in our statutes; (b) to elect an Executive Committee (henceforth ExCom). Auspiciously, we accomplished what we had planned and more. Specifically, we achieved the following:

- 1) Carefully went through the updated version of the ECSPM statutes, having incorporated the suggestions made by our members over the past year and during the Athens assembly.¹ We now intend to upload the statutes on our website which will shortly be updated and ‘refreshed’ by Guðrún.
- 2) Obtained an Executive Committee which will have to do all the hard work needed to reconstruct the ECSPM as a genuinely active NGO that views “multilingualism” as much more than learning the five dominant languages of the EU and supporting the national/official languages of the EU member states (as one can see stated in our statutes). The ExCom, which we are now proud to have includes the following members: Cor van der Meer (Mercator), Johan Van Hoorde (Taalunie & EFNIL), Terry Lamb (FIPLV) and Alexandra Büchler (Literature Across the Frontiers). Guðrún Gísladóttir (European Artists Rights) is the fifth member of the ExCom and she will continue to serve as our general secretary and our webmaster, while I shall remain President of the organization, but am willing to serve on the ExCom for *one* term in this capacity, hoping that the ECSPM will be steady on its feet by the time the term is over.

¹ The text with the statutes in final form is being sent off to members via email.



- 3) Welcomed two new ECSPM members:
 - a) the Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism (CeLM) of the University of Reading in England, represented by its Director, Prof. Theo Marinis
 - b) the Center for Multilingualism of the University of Konstanz in Germany, represented by its Director, Prof. Tanja Rinker
- 4) Asked Professor Theo Marinis to act as ECSPM Ambassador in order to recruit other university multilingualism research centres across European states and to encourage them to become members of the ECSPM, so that there can be an ECSPM Division of academic institutions working in Bilingualism and Multilingualism and cooperating across Europe to achieve common goals.
- 5) Decided that we will keep a very low membership fee of 200 euro annually which will be used basically for the maintenance of our website and for its enrichment with operations which can help us work from a distance and provide services to the various communities concerned with issues relating to multilingualism. It was also decided that those who have already paid an annual fee in 2016 will not be asked to pay again in 2017, but everyone (old and new members) will be sent an invoice for 2018.
- 6) Discussed projects that could be collaboratively pursued by ECSPM groups of members and partners, especially those projects that might develop into proposals for European programme funding (for example, by ERASMUS+). The areas which were mentioned, and which fall within the scope of our organization are the following:
 - a) Supplement to the revised and updated EQF: The literacies of immigrants and refugees
 - b) European integration through education projects: electronic data base organized in terms of the metadata defined on the basis of research
 - c) Defining and describing in detail the role of Mediator in communicative situations and in different social and cultural contexts, for different purposes: (a) among artists, academics and professionals, and using networks such as SONETOR for the training of cultural mediators (see: www.culturalmediators.eu) and (b) between individuals and social groups in host countries and individual or groups of immigrants and refugees.
 - d) Language education for immigrants' and refugees' development of interlinguistic and intercultural competence in receptive local contexts
 - e) Inclusive education and multilingual pedagogies in multilingual school classes with bi- tri- and multilingual students studying alongside monolingual ones
 - f) University language studies departments and the Connecting Europe Facility (via the European Language Resource Coordination: Student training and involvement through working practice.



- 7) Suggested possible forum discussions led by the ECSPM Multilingualism expert group including the topics below but hoping that this list might be enriched or altered by the experts themselves:
- a) The divergent and the common concerns of Bilingualism and Multilingualism research and studies; Ideologies and/or dominant discourses in Bilingualism and Multilingualism studies
 - b) Creating policies for education that aims toward the development of plurilingual competence in schools - Educating monolingual and bilingual students in elementary and secondary school as well as in vocational education
 - c) Minority languages in Europe and linguistic rights of minority populations
 - d) The post-Brexit role of English in Europe
 - e) Discourses of populism across European languages

Before closing this brief report, to which I am hoping that ECSPM members and partners will react positively, I am happy to pass on information provided to me by the Multilingualism Policy Officers of the European Commission and to inform our members and partners about:

- a) the extremely important decision of the Social Summit in Gothenburg –the decision to add an education initiative to the Summit.
- b) the ERASMUS+ call which has just been published with the following priority: “Mainstreaming and further developing multilingual pedagogies in school education (e.g. working in multilingual classrooms / with bilingual children) and supporting teachers and their training to deal with diversity in classrooms” (See the call for proposals by linking to the webpage: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2017.416.01.0011.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2017:416:TOC)

9 December 2017

The ECSPM President

Prof. Bessie Dendrinou