

The European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism

Guðrún Gísladóttir

<http://ecspm.org>





What is the ECSPM?

- › a **civil society** and is therefore the aggregate of non-governmental organizations that manifest the will of citizens –not the interests of (inter)governmental institutions or (supra)national federations.
- › an **umbrella organisation** that gathers European networks active in advocating, researching and operating to put multilingualism in practice.
- › an **alliance for languages and multilingualism** in Europe, making possible the cooperation between European, national, and international organisations, federations and associations that view multilingualism as an asset for European social, cultural and economic development, and as a facilitator for intellectual growth, social, and personal advancement.



Aims and role

- › Understanding multilingualism as a means to cultural development, a product of quality education and a route to conviviality, the ECSPM sets out to be actively involved in research and project work having to do with multilingualism in the fields represented by its member organisations.
- › It is envisaged mainly as an electronic platform, functioning as an on- and off-line forum for the exchange of views, the discussion of issues, for the drafting of language and language education policy documents and the development of research proposals and the execution of project work.



Objectives

- › The ECSPM is also a structure for fostering popular and civic ownership of the concept of multi- and plurilingualism.
- › Having functioned in the past in an advisory capacity to the European Commission, it will continue to function as such with a view to ensuring that
 - › Europe's linguistic and cultural wealth is viewed and treated as an asset for Europe
 - › research in related fields is funded
 - › education for plurilingual and intercultural competences is available for everyone



What does the ECSPM do?

- › It **voices** the concerns of Europe's civil society, promoting multilingualism in all aspects of social life, by way of focusing on people, and on their ability to use a variety of semiotic resources to access education, social affairs and culture, so as to participate as active citizens in Europe, shaping its making.
- › It **drafts** policy documents with which to advise the European Commission, individual Member States and the Council of Europe, as well as to provide counsel on how to implement relevant policies effectively.
- › It **creates** opportunities for intercultural dialogue, but also for theoretically informed discussions on issues of multilingualism and superdiversity led by the Multilingualism Expert Group (who they are <http://ecspm.org/organisational-structure/multilingualism-expert-group/>)
- › It **initiates** and **participates** in projects and research undertaken by academic and non-academic institutions and associations in Europe and beyond.



What are ECSPM activities?

- › Understanding multilingualism as a means to cultural development, a product of quality education and a route to conviviality, the ECSPM sets out to be involved in research and project work having to do with multilingualism in the fields represented by its member organizations.
- › It is envisaged mainly as an electronic platform that constitutes a repository for policies, projects and multilingualism activities.
- › It operates as an on- and off-line forum for the exchange of views, the discussion of issues, for the drafting of language and language education policy documents and the development of research proposals and the execution of project work.
- › It organizes assemblies alongside events such as symposia and conferences.
- › In 2017 it organized a Symposium in Athens, entitled “Beyond language barriers” (focusing on language education for/with refugees and on translation for a Europe without language barriers).



Whom do we work with?

- › The ECSPM is open to all European and international organisations actively working to:
 - advocate a more inclusive language policy and to manage linguistic diversity across and within society
 - promote multilingualism and plurilingualism in educational and other social institutions, as well as in the public space, the arts and the media
 - support human translation in all languages spoken in the European countries
 - encourage research into bi-, tri- and multilingualism
 - embrace language technologies, such as automated translation, as imminently important for the elimination of language barriers between people and nations, enabling a truly multilingual Europe
 - Encourage multilingual citizenry



Who are our members?

Networks each one of which is made up of at least 15 European associations

- › **ALTE** – Association of Language Testers in Europe
- › **Babylon** – Center for the Study of Superdiversity, NL
- › **CeLM** – Center for Literacy and Multilingualism, Uni of Reading, UK
- › **Center for Multilingualism** – Universität Konstanz, DE
- › **EAR** – European Artists' Rights
- › **EEU** – Europa Esperanto Unio
- › **EFNIL** – European Federation of National Institutions for Language
- › **FIPLV** – International Federation of Language Teacher Associations
- › **FUEN** – Federal Union of European Nationalities
- › **Greeklanglab** – Laboratory for Research for the Greek Language and Multilingualism
- › **ICC** – The International Language Association
- › **Institute of Linguistics & Literary Studies, Division of Multilingualism** Technische Universität Darmstadt, DE
- › **LAF** – Literature Across Frontiers
- › **Mercator** – European Network of Language Diversity Centres
- › **NPLD** – Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity



Who are our partners?

So far, our partners are:

- › **The European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe**
- › **“Cracking the Language Barrier”**
- › **LLLP - Lifelong Learning Platform** - European Civil Society for Education
- › **OLBI** - Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa, Canada



The CURUM constituent

The ECSPM honours the interrelationship between civil society, academia and social action, by generating the **C**luster of **U**niversity **R**esearch **U**nits focusing on **M**ultilingualism (CURUM) and related issues such as language learning, teaching and assessment, as well as language in society/the public space. There are 6 university units which are members/partners presently and more are soon to join. The overriding goal is to attempt to bring together European and international research into multilingualism from different disciplines.

- › - The Babylon Center for the Study of Superdiversity, University of Tilburg, NL
- › - The Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism, University of Reading, UK
- › - The Center for Multilingualism, Universität Konstanz, DE
- › - The Division of Multilingualism, Institute of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Technische Universität Darmstadt, DE
- › - GreekLangLab, Laboratory for Research for the Greek Language and Multilingualism, University of Thessaly, GR
- › - Mercator, European Network of Language Diversity Centres
- › - The Multilingualism Research Group, University of Tübingen
- › - OLBI - Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa, CA



What next?

- › We hope to:
 - hold our next symposium in late March 2019, in the UK, we are open to suggestions
 - have it for 2 days on different themes:
 - Day 1 - the arts & translation
 - Day 2 - language education
 - involve more stakeholders, researchers and grassroots educators



Vielen Dank, dass Sie heute zu uns gekommen sind

Thank you for being here with us

Σας ευχαριστούμε για την παρουσία σας

Kærar þakkir fyrir að vera hér með okkur

Tack för att ni är här med oss

Many thanks also for the generous support of Technische Universität Darmstadt