

A platform for strategic developments in EU multilingualism policy

The revitalised Civil Society Platform intends to continue the promotion of multilingual education and policy and the support of linguistic diversity within the EU to facilitate mobility and social inclusion.

Agreeing that the learning and use of different languages facilitates personal, social and professional growth, the platform sets out to pave the way for stakeholders to collaborate with the intent of proposing policies and practices which:

- ▶ exploit innovative ways for the development of language competences with a view to achieving the Barcelona objective of "mother tongue plus two" for every European citizen
- ▶ extend good practices linked with early language learning to other levels of education with special regard for vocational education and training, as well as to adult learning
- ▶ serve the elimination of linguistic barriers for the purposes of mobility particularly for disadvantaged groups
- ▶ might be included in a policy handbook regarding migrants' linguistic integration and social inclusion
- ▶ facilitate the exchange of information on accessible language learning resources
- ▶ expand opportunities for social and professional mobility through language acquisition
- ▶ explore the possibility of forming a language knowledge alliance
- ▶ explore how to best make full use of the new "Erasmus for All" programme.

Erasmus for All

Investing in Europe's education, training, and youth, "Erasmus for All" is the new EU programme that will replace the 2007-2013 Lifelong Learning Programme. "Erasmus for All" may bring together all the current EU and international schemes for education, training, youth and sport, and so replace seven existing programmes with one in order to increase efficiency, make it easier to apply for grants, and reduce duplication and fragmentation. It is to start in 2014.

Member organisations of the Civil Society Platform

- ▶ **ALTE** - Association of Language Testers in Europe
- ▶ **CEATL** - Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires
- ▶ **CMFE** - Community Media Forum Europe
- ▶ **Culturelink Network**
- ▶ **EAEA** - European Association for the Education of Adults
- ▶ **EAFIT** - European Association for Terminology
- ▶ **ECA** - European Council of Artists
- ▶ **ECSWE** - The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education
- ▶ **EEE-YFU** - European Educational Exchanges- Youth for Understanding
- ▶ **EEU** - Eŭropa Esperanto-Unio
- ▶ **EFIL** - European Federation for Intercultural Learning
- ▶ **EFNIL** - European Federation of National Institutions for Language
- ▶ **EfVET** - European Forum for Vocational Education and Training
- ▶ **ETC** - European Theatre Convention
- ▶ **EUNIC** - European Union National Institutes for Culture
- ▶ **EuroLang-ELEN** - European Language Equality Network
- ▶ **FAEY** - Fundación Academia Europea de Yuste
- ▶ **FEP** - Federation of European Publishers
- ▶ **FUEN** - Federal Union of European Nationalities
- ▶ **LAF** - Literature Across Frontiers
- ▶ **Mercator Network of Language Diversity Centres**
- ▶ **RECIT** - Réseau européen des centres internationaux de traduction littéraire

This leaflet is by courtesy of the European Federation of National Institutes for Language (EFNIL).

Compilation and design is the generous contribution of the Research Centre for Language Teaching, Testing and Assessment (RCeL) of the University of Athens, Greece.



CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM

to promote multilingualism

The voice of civil society in European language policy

The Civil Society Platform, launched in 2009, has been set up as a result of the Commission's Communication "Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment" (COM [2008] 566). It has involved stakeholders in discussion and exchange of practices with a view to promoting multilingualism in Europe.

The European Commission's multilingualism policy focuses on people: their ability to use several languages, to access culture and participate as active citizens, benefiting from better communication, wider employment and business opportunities. Through the platform, it aspires to help Europeans understand that the EU's linguistic diversity is an asset rather than a barrier and to find ways to manage intercultural dialogue.

Through an open call to independent non-governmental organisations working at European level, the platform was formed, consisting of 29 selected organisations, active in the promotion of linguistic diversity in formal and non-formal education, in culture, the media and other sectors of the civil society in Europe. The platform provided these member organisations with the opportunity to participate in a structured dialogue concerning multilingualism *in practice*.

The organisations, as basic stakeholders of civil society in Europe, worked together with a view to developing: (a) coherent plans to raise Europeans' awareness of the value and opportunities of the EU's linguistic diversity, (b) effective strategies which might make it possible for Europeans to improve the mastery of basic skills in at least two languages in addition to their own from a very early age (European Council decision, 2002), and (c) proposals to facilitate the mainstreaming of multilingualism in relevant EU programmes and policies.

The mandate of the Civil Society Platform terminated in July 2011, following the submission of its final report to the European Commission. The report can be found at:
http://www.poliglotti4.eu/docs/publications/CSPM%20Policy%20Recommendations_FULL%20VERSION.pdf

Multilingualism: an asset and a must for European integration

The promotion of multilingualism and intercultural dialogue is at the heart of the Civil Society Platform (CSP), re-launched in 2012, with a renewed spirit to continue working on multilingualism policies and to bring to light best practices for effective foreign language learning.

Success of the Civil Society Platform 2009-2011 encouraged its revitalisation for 2012-2014. The re-launch meeting was held in Brussels in June 2012. It was chaired by the Civil Society Platform President Uwe Mohr. Participants had the chance to discuss the new scope of the Civil Society Platform, agreeing on the platform's new objectives, methods of work and collaboration.

The decisions taken at this inaugural meeting were that the Civil Society Platform will follow strategic developments in EU multilingualism policies and play an active role in shaping them. It was also decided that the platform will function as a forum for the exchange of best practices in early and life-long language learning, in language teaching and learning within formal and non formal education settings, in language use by the media, institutions aiming at the dissemination of cultural achievements, as well as by translators and other civil society stakeholders.

The meeting also addressed two issues put forth by the European Commission, i.e. an extension of the platform to new associate partners to be selected with a view to bringing their know-how and input so as to enhance the platform's scope. Furthermore, a group of specialists in multilingualism studies will be called upon to serve as consultants to the platform, while partnerships will be sought with universities and with language and culture institutes active both in Europe and in non-EU countries.

CONTACT

The Multilingualism Policy Unit at the Directorate General for Education and Culture EAC-UNITE-A5@ec.europa.eu

Language competences in Europe: what people think and what they do

What Europeans think and what they actually do with regard to language learning is not so different after all!
The conclusions of European surveys seem to converge.

At the re-launch meeting of the platform, the results of two European projects were presented as having a direct bearing on the work which the platform has outlined for itself:

- ▶ Results of the 2012 Eurobarometer survey which recorded public opinion using a large sample of subjects from the different Member States of the EU. The data on "Europeans and their Languages" provide an empirical basis for what Europeans think about languages, language learning and other related issues.
- ▶ Results of the European survey on language competences, known as Surveylang — a project which *measured* the language competences of European school students. The findings have provided reliable information and hence comparable data on language learning and the language competences of young Europeans. Surveylang can be used as an indicator to measure progress towards the objectives of improving foreign language learning.

In advancing its aims, the Civil Society Platform will consider the results of other European projects, such as:

- ▶ Poliglotti4.eu, an interactive website with best practices in the fields of language policy and language learning.
- ▶ Language Rich Europe (LRE), a project whose aim is to provide a European Index on Multilingual Policies and Practices.
- ▶ The European Language Monitor (ELM), an instrument through which the European Federation of National Institutes for Language (EFNIL) aspires to provide empirical basis for national and European language policies.
- ▶ Language Dynamics and Management of Diversity (DYLAN), a multifaceted project which identifies the conditions under which Europe's linguistic diversity can be an asset rather than a drawback.