



ECSPM EVENT 3: PROCEEDINGS REPORT

1. Introduction: Hosting and participation

The third ECSPM assembly took place in Darmstadt, Germany, on 26-27 September 2018, kindly hosted by the Technical University of Darmstadt (TUD), at the initiative of Professor Britta Hufeisen, the delegate of our member organisation (The Division of Multilingualism of the Institute of Linguistics and Literary Studies of TUD). Prof. Hufeisen was able to allocate funds for this event, so as to cover the accommodation of all speakers, the travel expenses of those that could not secure funding from their institutions, and also offer coffee during breaks and a light lunch the first day. Securing this funding is deeply appreciated.

The members organisations represent at the General Assembly and/or the Symposium were the following:

- ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe): Represented by Beate Zeidler instead of the official delegate, Graham Seed
- CeLM (Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism, University of Reading, UK): Represented by Jeanine Treffers-Daller instead of the official delegates, Ludovica Serratrice and Theo Marinis
- Center for Multilingualism (Universität Konstanz, DE): Represented by Theo Marinis and at the symposium by Ramona Baumgartner and Frank Fuchshuber instead of Tanja Rinker
- EARights (European Artists' Rights): Represented by Guðrún Gísladóttir
- EFNIL (European Federation of National Institutions for Language): Represented by Bessie Dendrinis
- FIPLV (International Federation of Language Teacher Associations): Represented by Terry Lamb
- ICC (The International Language Association): Represented by Ellinor Haase
- Institute of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Division of Multilingualism, Technische Universität Darmstadt, DE: Represented by Britta Hufeisen
- MERCATOR European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, Fryske Akademy: Represented by Jelske Dijkstra instead of the official delegate, Cor van der Meer

Partner organisations present were:

- ECML (European Centre of Modern Languages of the Council of Europe): Represented by Terry Lamb rather than the official delegate Sarah Breslin
- OLBI (Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute) of the University of Ottawa, represented by Nikolay Slavkov, Director of CCERBAL (Canadian Centre for Research and Studies on Bilingualism and Language Planning)

Also present at the Symposium were the following individuals:

- MEITS (Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies) project represented by Linda Fisher (Reader in Languages Education, Magdalene College, University of Cambridge, as a representative of the MEITS project with which ECSPM is considering collaboration) who was also an observer at the General Assembly
- MultiTED (Multilingualism and Teacher Education) project represented by Antje Hansen & Tobias Schroeder, academic staff at the Institute of Intercultural Education, University of Hamburg, DE

The member organisations not represented either at the Symposium or the General Assembly were:

- The Babylon Centre for the Study of Superdiversity, University of Tilburg, NL
- EEU Europa Esperanto Unio



- FUEN Federal Union of European Nationalities
- LAF Literature Across Frontiers
- NPLD Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity

2. Issues discussed during the ECSPM General Assembly

Following the Symposium which, according to all speakers and other participants (approximately 40 people) was very successful, the assembly discussed the following issues:

- 1) A letter to the European Ombudsman's office, which has launched a public consultation on the language policy of the EU institutions, bodies and agencies with a view "to promote discussion on how the EU institutions can best communicate with the public in a manner which reflects an acceptable balance between the need to respect and support linguistic diversity, on the one hand, and administrative and budgetary constraints, on the other hand" (a text which is to be found at the following address: <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/correspondence/en/99005>). Actually, this issue had been brought to the attention of ECSPM members before the Symposium.

The letter to the European Ombudsman the ECSPM President B.D. proposed, would basically be in support of the project that the ECSPM partner, the "Cracking the Language Barrier Network", have submitted for funding as part of the EU Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, under the title "Language Technologies for Multilingual Europe: Towards a Human Language Project" (<http://www.cracking-the-language-barrier.eu/sria/>). The aim of this project is in accordance with the European Parliament's resolution of 11 September 2018 on language equality in the digital age (2018/2028(INI)) and it aims to facilitate the development of a multilingual Digital Single Market in the EU. The project submitted is described here <http://www.cracking-the-language-barrier.eu/wp-content/uploads/SRIA-V1.0-final.pdf> and the proposal of supporting it was accepted by everyone, except Ms Beate Zeidler, an ad hoc representative of ALTE, who voiced her concern about funding such a project and promised to write in support of her position.¹ However, since she was the only person to disagree (was not even the legal representative of ALTE but an ad hoc substitute for the ALTE delegate who was unable to be present at this event) the motion passed by majority vote.

- 2) Another text on the agenda was the "Rethinking language education in schools": a report to the European Commission (https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/rethinking-language-report_en.pdf), with which we agreed that we are basically in sync.
- 3) In discussing the issues that came up during the Symposium regarding language teaching and learning in schools and encouraging classroom practices which allow the mixing of languages that students bring into the classroom, aiming at the development of learners' plurilingual competence, it was

¹ Ms Zeidler sent a message explaining her negative reaction to the *Human Language Project* which, in her words, "sets out to solve the task of providing ready translations for all languages in the European Union." This, she believes, is a massive project and reminds her of another very ambitious project, "Verbmobil" that "set out to provide translations between English, German and Japanese, in the subject area of hotel bookings and travel organization"... "cost the German taxpayer 116 million euros" but "did not develop into a tool that is actually in use." A long answer by B. Dendrinos explaining the totally different goals of this project did not convince Ms Zeidler, who continued by email to argue that the HLP is basically an "automatic translation project" that is likely to have no usable results.



pointed out that testing and assessment which has a very important washback effect on learning has been exclusively monoglossic or monolingual. Nikolay Slavkov, mentioned that in Canada there are attempts to develop bilingual tests and promised to send information, as did Beate Zeidler, who reported that in Tyrol (North Italy), a multilingual test has been developed and its aim is to evaluate workers' competence to work in different languages (or, in more than one language). Theo Marinis also mentioned that some bilingual vocabulary tests are being developed in the US and will send information. B.D. offered information about the Greek national foreign language exams – a multilingual examination suite that has from the start been using cross linguistic mediation test tasks and requested that the ECSPM collect information about other bi- or multilingual testing and assessment tools and instruments.

- 4) Apart from designing a policy document that may be based on the 2018 Symposium Conclusions, it was agreed that we record in this document research priorities, the outcomes of which would also allow the ECSPM to offer advice to the Directorate General on Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission, as well as to the DGs on Translation, on Communication Networks, Content & Technology, and the DG of Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. As research on multilingualism is one of the key priorities of the ECSPM, because it may provide the evidence needed when policies are being developed at European level, our agenda includes identifying research needs on multilingualism in Europe; bringing together researchers across Europe working on multilingualism to exchange knowledge and form research consortia to address these research needs; disseminate research outcomes to the DGs of the European Commission and advise the DGs on multilingualism in Europe; communicate research outcomes to the general public.
- 5) It was also agreed that we concur with the Bristol Policy Report (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/policybristol/PolicyBristol-report-35-Sept18-transnationalizing-modern-languages.pdf>) and support it.
- 6) The next point on the agenda was to discuss B.D.'s idea to have our next Symposium in the UK before its 'divorce' with the EU, in March 2019. Since everyone thought that this was a good idea, it was suggested that Prof. Jeanine Treffers-Daller consult with Prof. Ludovica Serratrice, Director of the Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism, University of Reading, if they would be willing to host the 2019 ECSPM Symposium. She agreed to this proposal and meeting participants agreed that the Symposium would be a 2-day event: Day 1: Multilingualism and the Arts, Day 2: Multilingualism and education, and Day 3: Multilingualism and translation. The General Assembly would take place on the third day.
- 7) On the subject of events, Ellinor Haase, Chair of the ICC, proposed that the ECSPM be present at the next ICC conference to take place in May 2019 in Berlin. The tentative title of the ICC (member organisation's) conference is "Teaching and learning languages in a multilingual world: Policy and practice". It was agreed that ECSPM members carry out a workshop or panel discussion at that conference. Any member wishing to propose a topic for this should do so by 15th October so that we can develop an abstract and see who's interested in participating.
- 8) Linda Fisher, representing the MEITS project² – promised to look into how the MEITS project and

² Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies (MEITS) is a major interdisciplinary research project funded under the AHRC Open World Research Initiative. Linguistic competence in more than one language – being



ECSPM might collaborate. Antje Hansen, on the other hand, coordinating the KoMBi of the University of Hamburg research project entitled “Multilingualism and Teacher Education” (MultiTED) and B.D. agreed on making an Agreement for Collaboration – the ECSPM functioning as consultants to the project.

- 9) The issue about the development and growth of the ECSPM was discussed, as well as how our organisation can make an impact. The suggestion was to regularly send our Conclusions-Recommendations to the various bodies in the EU, in collaboration with but also separately from our new partner: the “Life Long Learning Platform: Civil Society for Education” (LLLPE). The body was reminded that, recently the LLLPE drafted a Statement as a response to “the second package of measures for creating a European Education Area” – a statement to which the ECSPM contributed (and specifically to the part which constitutes a proposal on Teaching and Learning of Languages therein). Their Statement was sent to the European Parliament, the European Council and to the Commission. Still on the issue of our collaboration with the EU institutions and on the basis that we have permission for face-to-face meetings (given that we regularly update our profile in the EC transparency registry), it was pointed out that it is important to have some contacts in Brussels – as does the LLLPE that keeps an office there. We, on the other hand, can use the offices of our partner organisations who are situated in Brussels – such as for example the NLPD that have already hosted us for our Second Assembly in Brussels on 6 February 2017. It was not a General Assembly, but “our second assembly”.
- 10) In discussing further growth of the ECSPM, members of the assembly were informed that Greeklanglab, the Lab for the Greek Language and Multilingualism of the University of Thessaly, Greece, have applied and wish to become members. Membership was approved after an introduction to the work of the Lab and its Director who is already on the ECSPM multilingualism expert group.
- 11) The next point on the agenda was a vacancy on the Executive Committee, given that Johan van Hoorde, delegate of EFNIL, is likely to be taking over even more important responsibilities with EFNIL and would thus be unable to be active in the ECSPM. At this point, B.D. nominated Professor Britta Hufeisen and asked her if she accepts the nomination and she agreed though she would be able to start becoming active as of the new year, because of personal health issues. The members of the assembly were positive, while it was also agreed that Theo Marinis, who has taken on the role of the ECSPM University Research Centres Ambassador would also be on the ExCom.
- 12) The next point was finances and it was agreed that the low fee of 200 EURO annually not be raised as it is enough to cover web hosting, web content management, web design and web design management, upkeep of website features, promotion management for ECSPM activities, strategic planning and action for social media exposure. It was also brought to the attention to the assembly members that no fee was charged to members in 2017 and all expenses were covered personally by the General Secretary, Ms Guðrún Gísladóttir.
- 13) The final three points which were agreed upon were the following:
 - (a) All members should try to contribute to announcement of events relevant to our work via Guðrún

multilingual – sits at the heart of the study of modern languages and literatures, distinguishing it from cognate disciplines. Through six interlocking research strands we investigate how the insights gained from stepping outside a single language, culture and mode of thought are vital to individuals and societies.



who will immediately post the texts on our Announcement page of our website, and/or on ECSPM Twitter and Facebook.

- (b) To think further on our promotion of the ECSPM but especially about the CURUM constituent, and to reflect upon our lobbying policy.
- (c) To go slowly and carefully about recruitment. The CURUM units to be approached at this point are i) the Multilingualism Centre of the University of Oslo; ii) the Bilingualism Centre of the Department of Swedish and Multilingualism of the University of Stockholm and the multilingualism unit in the University of Lund.

3. Follow up

As a result of a productive event in Darmstadt, the following has ensued:

- 1) The attempt by the to develop an “ECSPM Policy and Research Statement” for official EU and EC bodies, based on the conclusions that were drawn at the Symposium has been successful. It has been sent for comments to the Symposium participants and it will be finalised, on the basis of their comments by the end of October. Once all ECSPM members and partners have had their say, it will be sent to the European bodies that have the power to legislate, to make recommendations to the European Council, the European Parliament, and the EU member states.
- 2) The delegates of the projects below who had been invited and attended our symposium have responded positively to some form of collaboration which remains to be defined:
 - A. Dr Linda Fisher, of the MEITS project (“Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies”) of the University of Cambridge, UK.
 - B. Ms Antje Hansen & Dr. Tobias Schroeder, involved with the “The Multilingualism and Teacher Education” project, being executed at the Institute of Intercultural Education, COMBI, University of Hamburg, DE.
- 3) The Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism (CeLM) of the University of Reading, UK, has accepted the proposal of the ECSPM to host our next event. It will take place in March – on the 21st and 22nd of March, symbolically just before Brexit. The event will be supported by other UK academic and research institutions dealing with issues of multilingualism.
- 4) Members of the ECSPM (especially the CURUM constituent) have been asked to contribute with a series of 4-5 brief papers on issues of multilingualism, language education and teacher development at the ICC 26th annual conference, to take place 3-5 May 2019 in Berlin. The theme of the conference is “Teaching and Learning Languages in the Multilingual World: Policy and Practice.”
- 5) Members of the ECSPM (especially the CURUM constituent) have also been asked to contribute with a series of 4-5 brief papers on issues of multilingualism and language teaching/learning, at the Fifth Saarbrückecken Conference on Foreign Language Teaching, to take place 29-31 October 2019 in Germany, in Saarbrückecken. The title is “The Magic of Language – Productivity in Linguistics and Language Teaching” (Die Magie der Sprache – Produktivität in Linguistik und Fremdsprachenunterricht / La magie de la langue – la productivité dans la linguistique et dans l’enseignement des langues étrangères).
- 6) Dr. Bärbel Kühn, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Senior Researcher and Sprachenrat Bremen e.V., die Vorsitzende, approached B.D. digitally saying that the Language Council of Bremen is considering



**EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY
PLATFORM FOR MULTILINGUALISM**
Email: multilingualism@ecspm.org

the possibility of becoming a member of the ECSPM. The Language Council of Bremen is a very active international organisation, the aim of which is “to broaden the basis and opportunities for influence by involving other Bremen-based institutions interested in language learning and to intensify the dialogue with all stakeholders from politics, society, science, education and training from Bremen, Bremerhaven and the Northwest region. In this dialogue, the Linguistic Council also wants to disseminate knowledge about the lifelong process of individual development of multilingualism.” For more information visit their website www.sprachenrat.bremen.de. Their ‘nomination’ was seconded by Britta Hufeisen and supported by Ellinor Haase. Consequently a membership form has been sent to the Language Council of Bremen, and if they have submitted it by the time the event in Reading takes place, the ECSPM General Assembly will officially accept the membership.

- 7) ECSPM members have been asked to contribute to a European survey about Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), as part of a European project called CATAPULT (Computer-Assisted Training and Platforms to Upskill LSP Teachers). This is a 3-year Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership, co-funded by the ERASMUS+ programme. Its website (under construction) is <http://catapult-project.eu>.

18 October 2018

Having the consent of the General Assembly participants who are official delegates of ECSPM member or partner organisations, this Event Report is signed below by:

Guðrún Gísladóttir

Bessie Dendrinis