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January 2025 Presentation

European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism (ECSPM)

OUR IDENTITY

- We are a European **civil society** (the space that exists as an intermediary between governmental organisations and the private sector)
- We are a **platform** (our political agenda being to promote languages spoken in Europe)
- We work to ensure that, in today's globalised world, **multilingualism** is protected and promoted in Europe and beyond, that it is treated as an asset and a commitment of the European Union.

PROFILE OF OUR ORGANISATION

- We are structured as **an umbrella organisation** for institutions, which have been endorsed as full members:
 - Twenty (22) of these are academic/university centres, researching and supporting bi-/multilingualism in society and in education forming our **CURUM** constituency – one of these being a community of organisations with over 30 branches across Europe, Asia and North America.
 - Four (4) of them are European and international networks for the teaching, learning and testing of languages (**ALTE**, **EDiLiC** , **ICC-Languages**, **FIPLV**) with hundreds of members each
 - Four (4) are European networks for the promotion and support of European national, regional and minority languages (**EFNIL**, **FUEN** , **NPLD** , **Sprachenrat Saar**)
 - Two are European associations related to the arts (**LAF** and **EARights**)
- We have also **signed partnerships** with the following institutions:
 - **CCERBAL** at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute (OLBI) of the University of Ottawa
 - **ECML** and are an active member of their Professional Network Forum (PNF)
 - **CRACKER** (a federation of European projects and organisations working on technologies for a multilingual Europe)
 - **LLL** (The Lifelong Learning Platform) a European Civil Society Platform for Education

OUTREACH

- We are committed to actions which result to greater linguistic justice and language equality, driving for change in attitudes towards languages and the monolingual ethos of communication in society and in its institutions – especially education.
- Currently our members and partners **represent more than 200 institutions** that are concerned with covering all issues concerned with language rights, language education and the use of languages in society. Our members **reach out to thousands of beneficiaries**.

OUR FUNCTION

- We are a leading **European social and academic platform** making it possible to share of ideas, policies, research, and good practices with stakeholders across Europe.
- We also collectively advocate actions which aim to ensure that **all languages spoken in Europe** – national, regional, minority and migrant languages – are understood as essential communication and cultural resources, as core aspects of people’s personal and social identity, and as instruments through which we pass on knowledge but also construct it.
- As an **NGO**, we function independently of the European Commission, by which we were launched in 2009 and mandated. As of 2016, we operate under Danish law – as our Secretariat is in Copenhagen – but we are enrolled in the Commission’s Transparency Registry.

OUR MISSION

- Our mission is to carry out and to disseminate research and practices based on the view that multilingualism is an asset for European economic, social, cultural development, as well as a facilitator for intellectual growth, social, and personal development.

“MULTILINGUALISM IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION”

ECSPM's concerns

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- We research and take action to promote:
 - Individual multi-/plurilingualism
 - Social multilingualism
 - Institutional multilingualism

CONCEPTS AND VIEWS UNDERLYING OUR WORK

- ECSPM recognises the importance of both:
 - **Multilingualism** – the view of individual languages as real entities that co-exist autonomously, *parallel* to one another in societies, communities and individuals.
 - **Plurilingualism** – the view of languages as interconnected with one another, forming speakers’ semiotic repertoires and used resources for productive communication.
- ECSPM also recognises that:
 - Languages are the products of human agency, developed over time in relation to geographic, socio-political, and cultural forces, and have a materiality for their speakers who have strong loyalties to and treasure their ‘own’ language, with which they closely identify and do not want to see ‘weakened’ or to experience their language rights violated.
 - It is important to understand the boundaries between different languages as permeable, and that the complexity of the linguistic repertoires we have developed in today’s multilingual world is real – meaning that it is essential to take advantage of it and to practice plurilingually – rather than to learn an ‘international’ language perfectly and use it in all domains, causing the displacement of other languages and the right of thousands of people to be educated and to use languages they feel most comfortable in.

ECSPM'S ENGAGEMENT

ACTIONS, PROJECTS, EVENTS



BESSIE DENDRINOS, ECSPM PRESIDENT

PARTICIPATION & CREATION

- We regularly participate in the European Education Summit to understand, discuss and recommend multilingualism policy priorities proposed by the European Commission.
- In 2018 we inaugurated the **Cluster of University Research Units for Multilingualism (CURUM)** and have since been expanding this alliance, which is the first of its kind in Europe. The CURUM is a communal space for research, the results of which can contribute to the development of a European Education Area by 2025, taking forward the European Council's mandate, comprised of proposals including the improvement of the teaching/learning of languages to ensure Europeans' multilingual habitus and awareness raising regarding Europe's shared linguistic and cultural heritage.
- Since 2016, ECSPM is a member of the **Professional Network Forum (PNF)** of the Council of Europe's European Centre of Modern Languages (ECML) which meets once a year at ECML's headquarters in Graz to exchange information with the other partners, to support the work of and provide counsel to ECML concerning its activities.
- In 2022 we became members of the **Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)**, consenting to the Agreement on reforming research assessment – a venture supported by the European University Association, Science Europe, and by about 700 organisations from over 40 countries.

PROJECTS Part 1

- We provided support to the ECML project on “Mediation in Teaching and Assessment”, completed in 2022 but still disseminating results across Europe.
- We were a partner institution of the European Language Equality (ELE) project, which involved the development of a strategic agenda and roadmap to develop full digital language equality in Europe by 2030.
 - European Parliament resolution “Language equality in the digital age”, have found a striking imbalance in terms of support through language technologies and issue a call to action
 - ELE research findings show that there are still significant language barriers that hamper communication and the free flow of information across the EU. Multilingualism is a key cultural cornerstone of Europe and signifies what it means to be and to feel European. Many studies and resolutions, as noted in the recent EP resolution “Language equality in the digital age”, have found a striking imbalance in terms of support through language technologies and issue a call to action
 - Connection with the European Language Grid (ELG), which constitutes **one** Platform for all European Language Technologies: tools & services, language resources, organisations.

PROJECTS Part 2

- In 2023 ECSPM became members of CoARA [Multilingualism WG](#), along with representatives of 28 European universities, organisations and associations concerned with making multilingualism a positive indicator for the assessment of scientific research and publications, teaching and learning in universities.
- In 2022, the ECSPM was invited to take part in a research project involving eight universities in Europe, Africa and S. America. The project was led by the University of Strasbourg. Functioning as the coordinating institution of Action 2 of the project entitled “Le multi-/plurilinguisme dynamique, terreau de l’excellence inclusive dans l’enseignement supérieur” (MUDExI), ECSPM carried out “A Case Study on Linguistic Mediation in Higher Education” (Étude de cas sur la médiation linguistique dans l’enseignement supérieur). The project started in January 2023 and was completed in June 2024.
 - For a brief report of the Case Study on mediation, please click [here](#).
 - Dissemination of the Case Study results continues. For a presentation of the investigation’s conclusions and implications, please click [here](#).

POLITICAL ACTION

- We have prepared the “**Declaration for Multilingualism in HE**”, which appears in 30 European languages (accessed [here](#)) and has been uploaded in English on the “change.org” platform as **a petition** to make HEIs multilingual spaces. Having reached more than 1,600 signatures, we continue to seek the support of academics from across Europe and beyond.



ECSPM EVENTS

RESEARCH DISSEMINATION AT ANNUAL SYMPOSIA 2017-2014

At our annual symposia, our invited speakers have included distinguished scholars from many European countries, but also from many other parts of the world including: Africa, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, New Zealand, Singapore, and the USA.

Annual symposia 2017-2020

- **2017** “BEYOND LANGUAGE BARRIERS” hosted by the Hellenic Open University, in Greece, it addressed the following themes a) the social, aesthetic and linguistic literacies for the creative participation in European societies of displaced populations and people in adversity; b) the role of translation, technology and linguistic resources for the safeguarding of multilingualism in Europe.
- **2018** “PARADIGM SHIFT IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION” hosted by the Technical University of Darmstadt, in Germany, it to discuss how we can best change not only in the way languages are taught and learnt in formal educational settings, by resorting to a new language didactics paradigm, but also in the way that language teachers are prepared at universities and professional development centres.
- **2019** “MEDIATING CHALLENGES: Mediating images, languages & language pedagogy” hosted by the University of Reading, in England, it focused on mediation as a critical aspect of communication in multilingual and multicultural educational settings, and as a crucial competence involving vision, creativity and language skills.
- **2020** “LINGUISTIC & CULTURAL (SUPER)DIVERSITY AT WORK” hosted by the University of Tilburg, in the Netherlands, it dealt with the role of technology, digital resources and practices for multilingualism, and with concerns with linguistic justice, support to minority and regional languages, as well as speakers’ linguistic rights. Multilingual policy in education was also one of the symposium focal points – hence the keynote presentation and the lively panel discussion on the issue.

Annual symposia 2021-2023

- **2021** “MULTILINGUALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)” hosted by the University of Konstanz, in Germany, and the European Reform University Alliance (ERUA), it focused on the role of English in HE, linked to the internationalisation and commercialisation of European universities.
- **2022** “LANGUAGE(S) AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN EUROPEAN HE” hosted by the University for Foreigners in Siena, Italy, it focused on explicit and implicit policies of HE institutions, as well as multilingualism, academic literacies and the linguistic construction of academic knowledge in European universities.
- **2023** “THE SOCIAL ROLE OF HE: Developing the civil society’s awareness and impacting policies on the role of multilingualism in education” hosted by the University of Strasbourg, France and supported by the Education Department of Council of Europe, it focused on HE as producer of knowledge, and its important role in democratic societies through increasing access to quality education for all, on raising awareness about issues of social importance, on helping transform societies for sustainable development through technology transfer and practical application of knowledge and ideas, and on engaging with the community at local and transnational levels in pursuit of human and social development.

2024 EVENTS

- **2024 Seminar & Workshop:** “MULTILINGUALISM IN RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT IN HEIs” hosted by the Centre for Multilingualism, University of Konstanz, Germany in collaboration with the CoARA Multilingualism Work Group (WG) members. Held on 4-5 April 2024, it brought together scholars working in language studies and multilingualism, academics and researchers from other fields of study, as well as technology and publishing professionals to discuss issues related to the generation of valid and reliable criteria for the assessment of multi-/plurilingual teaching, research, and academic publishing.
- **2024 ECSPM Symposium:** “PLURILANGUAGING IN MULTILINGUAL EDUCATIONAL SPACES” hosted by the University of Ghent, Belgium, 22-23 May 2024, the central notion of the event being *plurilinguaging*, understood as the enactment of plurilingualism that is defined and described in the CEFR CV (Council of Europe, 2020). Like the notion of translanguaging, it refers to language users involved in a process of meaning-making, using all the linguistic and semiotic resources they have in their repertoire, rather than trying to decide which ‘language’ to use in which social context. The symposium brought together a group of distinguished academics, but also educators and other language professionals who shared, discussed, and presented their views and experiences, but also raised questions and pointed to those queries that need to be investigated.

2025 EVENTS

- **2025 Professional Development Forum** on “LINGUISTIC MEDIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS” is hosted and co-organised by the Faculty of Linguistics, National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”. For the programme and more information, click [here](#).
- **2025 ECSPM Symposium** on “ACTIONS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES” will be hosted by the Multilingualism, Discourse, and Communication Research Center (MIRCo) of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM), 15-16 May 2025. It will build on insights from the [EquiLing research project](#), as well as on the outcomes of previous ECSPM symposia, and will go beyond critical analysis of the management of multilingualism in lower and higher education which presently exacerbates social inequality. Also, this event will give ECSPM members an opportunity to discuss the new projects which it is undertaking. More information: [here](#).

STRENGTHENING ECSPM'S CONSULTANCY ROLE

- The ECSPM has begun working more closely with the European Commission and specifically:
 - the **Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC)**, which “aims to support and stimulate the development of competences, the learning mobility of individuals, mutual learning through increased cross border cooperation and involvement of stakeholders, as well as policy reform in Member States and partner countries around the world” and in particular with:
 - the Schools and Multilingualism Unit, responsible for the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies
 - the Higher Education Unit, supporting higher education initiatives
 - the **Directorate-General for Interpretation**, especially with:
 - the Sector for inter-institutional relations and Outreach
 - the Sector dealing with Resources and Corporate Services (Strategic Planning and Reporting, Internal Control and Language Technologies)
 - the Knowledge Centre on Interpretation

2024-2025 WORK GROUPS

- In view of ECSPM's collaboration with CoARA on the one hand, and with the European Commission on the other, three (3) new ECSPM Work Groups have been formed to:
 1. Continue working on **institutionalising multilingualism in higher education**, as well as in research and publishing – the latter two in collaboration with the CoARA multilingualism WG.
 2. Prepare a proposal for an **Erasmus+ Teacher Academy** and participate in the programme's consortium
 3. Design and develop the ECSPM **Knowledge Hub dedicated to Translation, Interpretation and Cross-lingual Communication**, which we are aiming to link to the Knowledge Centre for Interpretation and Translation of the European Commission.

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