





<https://ecspm.org/>



## tilingual Societies


esearch Centre, UAM


# The ECSPM 10 year chronicle


Bessie Dendrinis, ECSPM President


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- 2009-2010: The “Civil Society Platform to promote Multilingualism” was launched by the European Commission to participate in structured dialogue regarding ‘multilingualism in practice’, as part of a larger political agenda for “bringing Europe closer to its citizens and strengthening a pan-European identity in harmony with national and regional identities”. The president appointed was Uwe Mohr, Director of studies the Goethe Institute in Brussels. He remained in office until 2014.
  - 2010-2011: The ‘Platform’, composed of 23 non-governmental European organisations that were concerned with languages, education, culture, publishing, translation, the media, and other civil society sectors, carried out the European Commission’s first mandate by developing a coherent framework for multilingual policy for the EU and delivered recommendations in the form of a written report.
  - June 2012: The ‘Platform’ was officially relaunched with a second mandate to provide feedback on the Erasmus+ programme, the Rethinking Education Strategy with an emphasis on language learning for professional growth and mobility in order “to enhance the social inclusion of citizens with disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as to promote linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue.”


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- 2012-2014: Originating from the work of the ‘Platform’, a two-year European-funded project, under the title “Poliglotti4.eu” was executed by 9 out of the 23 ‘Platform’ members. The aim was to produce an online Language Observatory capturing ‘good practices’ across Europe.
  - 2014: There was change of leadership for the ‘Platform’. Dendrinou was elected president, while there were changes in the Commission too: The Multilingualism Unit, which had mandated the ‘Platform’, was no longer an autonomous unit of the DG Education and Culture.
  - 2015: A small committee of the ‘Platform’ decided to change course and build on the past a new organisation with new mission and function. The ‘Platform’ was renamed “European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism” (ECSPM) and it reconsidered its role as it found its voice as a genuine civil society – not mandated by the Commission or any other supra-national or governmental body and certainly not by private organisations or by market forces. It was then that it was decided to drive towards becoming an NGO, with its own rules and priorities related to multilingualism issues and ways of operating.
  - 2016: The new organisation’s mission statement and the statutes were developed, the ECSPM logo was designed, and we applied to become a legal entity, operating under Danish law, since our secretariat was established in Copenhagen. At the same time we were called to enlist in the European Transparency Registry.

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- 2017: The ECSPM held the first General Assembly during which the first Executive Committee was elected, and we organised our first symposium entitled “Beyond Language Barriers”, hosted by the Hellenic Open University and supported by the School of Education of the NKUA.
  - 2018-2019: Developed the first version of our website and organised our second symposium entitled “Paradigm Shift in Language Education”, hosted by the Technical University of Darmstadt, in September 2018. while in March 2019 we organised and the third ECSPM symposium, entitled “Multilingual challenges: Mediating images, languages and language pedagogies” hosted by the Centre of Literacy and Multilingualism (CeLM) of the University of Reading and supported by the Universities of Cambridge, Westminster, and Cardiff.


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- Since then we have been organising symposia annually. They are hosted by a different university, in a different country each year. All our symposia have been valuable for a variety of reasons but the most notable one so far was the one hosted by the University of Strasbourg, in France, as it was supported by the Council of Europe and we had the Prime Minister of Iceland address the audience. You can find out about all this from the symposia webpage, which documents each year's symposia has detailed information of the speakers and the ppt presentations of their talks.
  - It has all the information about this year's symposium as well, including abstracts and speakers'/discussants' bios (https://ecspm.org/ecspm-2025-symposium-speakers-and-discussants/)
  - This webpage (to be found at: <https://ecspm.org/ecspm-events/conferences-symposia/>) is part of the EVENTS page where one can also find reports of our annual general assemblies and other events that take place annually.


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- 2018-2019 gave birth to the idea of bringing together university units researching multilingualism so as to manage knowledge on Multilingualism and Multilingualism Studies, enhance knowledge sharing and research collaboration, plus share good practices and new ideas. This is how-why CURUM was born: a unique alliance of cross-border institutions interested in languages and multi-/ but also plurilingual communication. As a matter of fact, in January 2020, our CURUM project was nominated and submitted its candidacy for the “The Jean Monnet Prize for European Integration”.
  - In years to come the CURUM, which started out with only a few institutions, grew and there is now a CURUM membership of 22 institutions, one of these being a community of organisations with over 30 branches across Europe, Asia and North America.
  - Please visit <https://ecspm.org/organisational-structure/the-curum-constituent/>

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- 2021-2022: As one of 52 partner institutions, ECSPM took part in the European Language Equality (ELE), a flagship EU project, the aim of which was to develop a strategic research, innovation and implementation agenda as well as a roadmap for achieving full digital language equality in Europe by 2030.
  - ECSPM collected information on 15 Minority, Regional and Lesser Used Languages spoken in Europe. The number of speakers, where these languages are spoken, the existence of any digital resources for these languages and more.

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- November 2022: We drafted the “ECSPM Declaration for Multilingualism in Higher Education”
  - 2021-2023 worked on developing guidelines and policies for multilingualism in HE
  - January 2023: Joined the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), which is a global coalition of research funding organisations, research performing organisations, national/regional assessment authorities and agencies, as well as associations of the above organisations, learned societies and other relevant organisations and became a member of the CoARA Multilingualism WG, with which we have been collaborating – organising events, surveys, and contributing to the realisation of its goals.
  - 2022-2024: ECSPM designed and carried out an Action of an AUF-funded project led by the University of Strasbourg and directed by Irini Tsamadou-Jacobberger. It was a case study on how university students mediate across languages and other semiotic modes with one another and for what purpose.



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- In connection with the 2024 symposium in Ghent, Belgium, the ExCom (<https://ecspm.org/organisational-structure/executive-committee/>) succeeded in holding a series of meetings with European Commission officials in Brussels and to consult on language issues of mutual interest and find out more about the upcoming call on European Teacher Academies. It was at these meeting that the idea for the Knowledge Hub on Translation, Interpretation.
  - The first event of 2025 was a Professional Development Forum for university language instructors, in the Ukraine
  - The most recent action was the ECSPM's successful effort to bring together a group of it members to collaborate on a proposal for an Erasmus+ Teacher Academy on developing life- and digital competences using a plurilingual action-oriented pedagogy.

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- For a brief presentation of the ECSPM, who we are, how we are organised, what our mission is, who is in our ExCom and our Multilingualism Expert Group, see the [ECSPM leaflet](#).
  - For our actions, events, news and more visit our website.