

High-level Conference

The Current Challenges for Minority Languages in today's complex societies

Brussels, 9th November 2017

-By invitation only-

Challenges that minority languages face in today's complex societies are many and varied. Among these challenges, three broad ideas, which are hot topics in the current European debates, can be highlighted: the **challenge of migration and mobility** in minority languages; the role of **languages as a catalyzer for the economy**; and **languages and education**.

The relevance of the issue of language in the general immigrant integration debates has become most evident in the proliferation of language measures applied by nation-states in order for people to enter, reside, reunite or naturalize, which place upon prospective immigrants increasingly complex formal demands on the knowledge of the national language. These debates, however, have often overlooked the existence of minority languages apart from the majority language spoken at state level. These languages co-exist with some degree of (co)officialdom with the state language.

While the idea of promotion, protection and respect of linguistic diversity remains in the current EU political rhetoric on languages, the actual policies adopt a market-oriented approach, which considers languages as mere commodities for economic growth, competitiveness jobs. Over the last few years, the European Commission has fully embraced linguistic neoliberalism as its policy on multilingualism –defined as the exclusive focus on language skills for market-oriented purposes.

In the education field, English is becoming the vehicular language in higher education in an increasing number of non-anglophone countries. To this concept of EMI -English Medium of Instruction- we must add the increase of secondary schools adopting English not only as a subject in schooling but also as a vehicular language, the so-called CLIL methodology (Content and Language Integrated Learning). These concepts tend to replace the local languages in both compulsory and higher education. The predominance of English has major political, economic and cultural implications for all languages in general, and more so for regional and minority languages, as science is increasingly becoming a monolingual domain in English.

The core idea of this High-level Conference -coorganised by the **Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity** and the **Centre Maurits Coppieters**- is to identify those elements around which public policy intervention is needed in order to ensure that a minority language is revitalized and that their speakers use it on a daily basis. The conference shall focus on the balance between the roles of national governments and the awareness and regulations at European levels to take more into account smaller state and regional languages in their policy planning.

Venue: Bergen Theatre at **Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre (Avenue du Boulevard 17, Brussels)*

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

08h30-09h00	Registration Open	
09h00-09h15	Welcome words	
	Sietske Poepjes, <i>Chair of Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity</i> Josep-Maria Terricabras, <i>MEP & Co-chair of the Intergroup on Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages at the European Parliament</i>	
09h15-09h30	Opening remarks	
	Michael Teutsch, <i>DG Education, Culture, Youth and Sports. European Commission</i>	
09h30-10h30	Keynote speech	
	Jarmo Lainio <i>Stockholm University</i>	<i>New challenges for language policies ahead, but old ones not solved</i>
10h30-11h00	Coffee break	
11h00-12h15	Panel discussion I: The challenge of migration and mobility in minority languages	
	Moderator	Vicent Climent-Ferrando <i>Government of Catalonia</i>
	Panelists	Catrin Wyn Edwards <i>Aberystwyth University</i> <i>The integration of migrants in Wales: challenges and opportunities</i>
		Håkan Casares Berg <i>Galician Culture Council</i> <i>Vitality of the Galician language and migration</i>
		Marta Fuxà Vidal <i>Government of Balearic Islands</i> <i>Language policy in the context of a great demographic transformation</i>
12h15-13h15	Lunch break	

13h15-14h30	Panel discussion II: The role of languages as a catalyzer of the economy									
	Moderator	Antonia Luciani Centre Maurits Coppieters								
	Panelists	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Sabrina Rasom General Commune of Fassa</td> <td><i>Regions with minority languages as an added value for tourism: a proposal of collaboration</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Estibaliz Alkorta Government of the Basque Country</td> <td><i>The impact of Basque language on the cultural industry</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dafydd Trystan Welsh National College</td> <td><i>The value of the Welsh pound?</i></td> </tr> </table>	Sabrina Rasom General Commune of Fassa	<i>Regions with minority languages as an added value for tourism: a proposal of collaboration</i>	Estibaliz Alkorta Government of the Basque Country	<i>The impact of Basque language on the cultural industry</i>	Dafydd Trystan Welsh National College	<i>The value of the Welsh pound?</i>		
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14h30-14h45	Coffee break									
14h45-16h30	Panel discussion III: Languages and education									
	Moderator	Alex Riemersma Government of Friesland								
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16h30	Closing remarks									
	Gregorio Ferreiro, Vice-Chair of the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity Josep Huguet, Member of the Advisory Scientific Council of the Centre Maurits Coppieters									

***Interpretation services provided from/to English, French and Spanish*