

Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism

**Policy Recommendations for the Promotion
of Multilingualism in the European Union**

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Brussels, 09 June 2011

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I Executive Summary

The Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism was launched by the European Commission in October 2009. At the inaugural meeting, Commissioner Leonard Orban emphasised the substantial contribution of the policy for multilingualism to the realisation of wider EU goals (such as bringing Europe closer to its citizens) and the strengthening of the pan-European identity in harmony with the national and regional identities. At the same time, he underlined the strong existing links between multilingualism, language skills and the creation of new jobs and wealth, which we understand to be central to the EU 2020 strategy.

Commissioner Orban called upon the Platform to consult with civil society across the EU in order to submit a set of initial proposals to influence thinking at EU, Member State and regional level, and to help designing the financial instruments for the new generation of funding programmes (2014-2020). He also called for fresh research to be conducted in areas of particular interest and for good practice to be captured for knowledge sharing.

This paper, put together by the 29 members of the Civil Society Platform (see Appendix III, the Members List) contains the initial set of recommendations, which Commissioner Orban asked for. The work is based on responses received from citizens of the majority of EU Member States to a number of detailed questionnaires and thus emanates from the heart of European civil society.

Working groups were formed to conduct the research and identify some of the key challenges facing policy makers and practitioners in four key areas: (1) Language Policy and Planning, (2) Language Education, (3) Linguistic Diversity/Social Cohesion, and (4) Translation and Terminology. In our view it is clear that, since 2008, much progress has been made and there is a broad recognition that the richness of languages and cultures in the EU is potentially a huge asset if nurtured and built upon. At present, there is a widespread support among EU civil society for linguistic diversity and multilingualism.

The recommendations of this report are directed principally at the European Commission, Member States and Regional Administrations. However, there are also a number of recommendations for action that can be taken forward by the Platform itself.

In spite of the potential of linguistic abilities for economic growth and a broad EU recognition of language diversity, there are still gaps in EU language policy. Where policy exists, there is often a divide between policy and practice, with some countries and regions demonstrating a stronger commitment to multilingualism than others. Europe needs to develop a language policy that monitors language use and ensures that languages are treated equally. Structurally, it needs a permanent Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism to act as an instrument of dialogue between the EU policy level on the one side and the national, regional and local language policy levels and social reality on the other side.

In order for the language teaching and learning to be more effective throughout Europe, **plurilingual education** (i.e. mother tongue plus two) should become the norm, content-based language learning should be introduced more widely and informal learning outside the classroom created or developed.

From the perspective of cultural diversity and social inclusion, the learning support to immigrants should be strengthened for integration and social cohesion purposes. Public services across Europe should improve their own language skills to be able to offer adequate services to newcomers.

Translation is not to be understood as a second best option after multilingualism. It can make existing texts cross linguistic and cultural borders and is therefore an essential tool for communication and understanding as well as for the preservation and accessibility of the common European literary heritage. Working conditions for translators should be substantially improved, sound degree programmes implemented and opportunities for mobility developed.

In order for these targets to be achieved, awareness for multilingualism should be raised among policy makers, educationalists and parents throughout Europe.

As a network of networks in the field of languages, the Civil Society Platform is particularly well placed to conduct some of the further research outlined in this paper and to facilitate knowledge sharing across Europe. Therefore, it constitutes a necessary structural measure to ensure the effective promotion of multilingualism and linguistic diversity, and to facilitate continued dialogue between the EU Commission, Member States and Civil Society.

The ongoing EC-funded **poliglotti4.eu** project, to which nine of the CSP members have committed, is intended to set up a Language Observatory designed to capture good practice and to conduct research in the following areas: local and regional provision of adult language training; language policy and practice in public services; early language learning. The Platform should be extended in the future to include organisations from the fields of technical translation and social services.

Recommendations – Headlines

*[In brackets – the institutions/levels to which the recommendations are addressed.
EU: European level; MS: Member States level]*

1. Language Policy and Planning

- 1.1. Develop a substantive and coherent EU language plan promoting equality and use of all European languages. The plan should set targets and timelines and act to implement the rights and obligations set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights; it should work towards linguistic equality. *(EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions)*
- 1.2. Create good conditions for practical work. The following structural measures are suggested: permanent platform of EU-level language NGOs and a legal basis. *(EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions)*
- 1.3. Set up a European Language Observatory to collect data and act as a watchdog for language use in the EU, monitor numbers of speakers, the implementation of legislation, teaching provision, courses, etc. *(EU and poliglotti.eu)*
- 1.4. Develop direct support for endangered languages. *(EU)*
- 1.5. Develop a Language Ombudsman function *(EU)* and work towards an EU Linguistic Diversity Directive to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of language. *(EU)*

2. Linguistic Diversity and Social Inclusion

- 2.1. Foster development of EU, national and regional language projects and initiatives to enhance the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, such as migrants, school dropouts, illiterate and senior citizens, disabled people. *(EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions)*
- 2.2. Foster a bottom-up approach to foreign language learning and multilingualism promotion programmes, and encourage the participation of civil society (NGOs, trade unions, foundations, grassroots movements, etc.) at community level. *(EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions)*
- 2.3. Teach intercultural competencies as an integral part of language learning in preschools and schools to create an inclusive society and to combat xenophobia and discrimination. Member States should incorporate teaching intercultural and multilingual competences in their regular preschool and school curricula starting at a very young age. *(EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions)*
- 2.4. Organise awareness raising activities on multilingualism with participation of civil society, schools, media, etc. *(Regional jurisdictions)*
- 2.5. Further develop the rights of citizens to receive interpretation and translation in legal settings and public and social services, i.e. hospitals. *(MS, regional jurisdictions)*

3. Education

3.1. Conduct further research to inform policy

- 3.1.1. Carry out research on language education pedagogy from a plurilingual perspective. *(EU and national level)*
- 3.1.2. Research the propaedeutic qualities of various languages to discover which second language is most likely to encourage subsequent language-learning. *(EU and National level, and projects by members of the Platform; Platform role to investigate and disseminate best practice in this area)*
- 3.1.3. Pursue research on the impact of language testing in all varieties on plurilingual language tuition (i.e. mother tongue plus two), teaching tools and teacher training and development. *(EU and national level, and projects by members of the Platform; Platform role to investigate and disseminate best practice in this area)*

3.2. Policy and practice

- 3.2.1. Create a forum for strategic review of language learning policies to disseminate best practice examples throughout the Member States. *(EU; strong role for Platform)*
- 3.2.2. Develop a proactive framework to establish stronger relationships between non-formal and formal education systems. *(National; Platform can intermediate between its members and interested parties such as NGOs)*
- 3.2.3. Raise awareness amongst European institutions and citizens of the benefits of multilingualism for social cohesion, academic success and economic growth. *(EU and general; strong role for the Platform)*

3.3. Facilitation and sharing of best practices

- 3.3.1. Develop a network of early language learning teachers and disseminate appropriate methodologies for adult language learning. *(National and EU level)*
- 3.3.2. Improve learning facilities for marginalised groups and people with lower education level. *(National level; Platform role for best practice)*
- 3.3.3. Produce bi- and multilingual school textbooks. *(MS)*

4. Translation and terminology

4.1. Promotion of equal exchange between countries and cultures

- 4.1.1. Increase the number of translations from less widely-used languages (LWULs) into other LWULs. *(EU)*
- 4.1.2. Promote literary translations of LWULs into English and other dominant languages as well as into other LWULs. *(EU and Member States)*
- 4.1.3. Set up European publishing offices with a strong cultural role in Europe and thirds countries. *(EU)*
- 4.1.4. Better inform and support authors to participate in cultural events across Europe and third countries. *(EU, MS, regional jurisdictions)*

4.2. Enhance the role of literary translators

- 4.2.1. Any support programme for literary translation in the future EU Culture Programme should be focused both on the dissemination of works and on translation quality; moreover, translations of non-fiction should receive equal support. *(EU)*
- 4.2.2. Intensify the cultural visibility of literary translators *(EU and Member States)*

- 4.2.3. Ensure a better legal protection of translators as authors. *(EU and Member States)*
- 4.3. Education and Training
 - 4.3.1. Create literary translation degree programmes across Europe *(MS)*
 - 4.3.2. Promote mobility and international exchange of translation students and teachers as well as professional training courses for (young) translators *(EU and MS)*
 - 4.3.3. Intensify the cultural visibility of literary translators *(EU and MS)*
 - 4.3.4. Render the translation centres eligible to apply for structural support from the EC. *(EU)*
 - 4.3.5. Ensure a better legal protection of translators as authors. *(EU and MS)*
- 4.4. Translations in Theatre and Performing Arts
 - 4.4.1. Financial support should be granted for translations including online content and super titling and subtitling activities *(EU and MS)*
 - 4.4.2. Dissemination of information about national and EU assistance schemes for translation amongst the public and in particular the European professionals. *(EU and MS)*
 - 4.4.3. The existing EU culture programmes should be extended to performing arts and theatre to request financial support for translation. *(EU)*
- 4.5. Research and Development of Translation Technologies
 - 4.5.1. A database that connects national platforms of existing translations of theatre plays should be implemented to promote multilingual content. *(EU)*
 - 4.5.2. Subtitling of films should be promoted across Europe and subtitlers, whose creative work is protected by copyright, should be supported especially in smaller linguistic areas. *(MS, regional jurisdictions)*
- 4.6. Language and Technology Infrastructures
 - 4.6.1. Development and support of the implementation of standardised methodology allowing the national language infrastructures to be mutually compatible. *(EU and Member States)*
 - 4.6.2. A strategy for the coordination of terminology development and maintenance should be developed at EU level. Support should be granted to pilot projects to be launched in a number of professional sectors.

II Short Version (Summary of Findings and Recommendations)

1 Language Policy and Planning

“(The Union) ... shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe’s cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced”.

(Treaty on European Union, Article 3¹)

“Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.”

(Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 21.1)

The European Union has set out to be a space for living together in which respect for ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity prevails and which guarantees that citizens can exercise their European citizenship on equal terms, without feeling excluded in any way, either as individuals or as a collective. It would not be beneficial if, in the framework of Union citizenship, some of the languages and cultures that define the different communities and people of Europe were to be marginalised or even threatened with extinction. Nonetheless, this is the risk we are facing at the moment partly as a result of a fragmented language policy in the EU.

Language policy has wider societal implications, which are not always fully appreciated. Much has been written about the “democratic deficit”² of the European Union and one of the aims of the Treaty of Lisbon, in force since December 2009, is to address this problem. All EU institutions are now committed to “bringing Europe closer to the citizens” and among EU civil society, there is of course widespread support for linguistic diversity and multilingualism, and for the measures being taken by the EU institutions and Member States to promote it.

However, there is also some concern that multilingualism may now be undermined by the dominance of only a few stronger languages. Language uniformity is the cultural equivalent of a monopoly in the commercial sphere.³ Both contravene basic EU principles – those of multilingualism and that of fair competition, respectively.

One of the key challenges facing the EU is how to balance the needs of efficient and effective communication with the equally vital need to protect and promote cultural and linguistic diversity. How can unity be both balanced with diversity, and made subject to basic EU non-discrimination principles?

A particular concern in the findings came from lesser-used and smaller state language speakers over the recent decline in support in real terms from the EU for their languages and whether this support will be reinstated.

EU language policy has thus far been ad-hoc and based on the official status of Member State languages. However, the subsidiarity principle has prevented the emergence of an EU level language policy such as exists in some Member States or their regions, for example Ireland or Catalonia.⁴

At the EU level, language use is set out in the treaties, which stipulate that all the official languages of Member States are “official languages and working languages” of the EU, conferring a right to use them in all EU proceedings.

The Civil Society Platform considers that the time is opportune to review policy in this important area, to approach the language question systematically and to take positive EU action in favour of multilingualism and linguistic diversity.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0013:0046:EN:PDF>

² Chopin and Macek (2010).

³ A. Lukacs, Economic Aspects of Language Inequality (2007).

⁴ See for example: <http://www.gencat.cat/temes/eng/llengua.htm#seccio4>

Recommendations

[In brackets – the institutions to which the recommendations are addressed]

- 1.1 Develop a substantive and coherent EU language plan promoting equality and use of all European languages. The plan should set targets and timelines and act to implement the rights and obligations set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and together work towards making a reality of the statement that ‘all European languages are equal’. (EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions)**

The plan should:

- a) Be comprehensive and inclusive, taking account of the true extent of multilingualism and language-learning in Europe and recognising that the benefits of a multilingual society can only be realised by having plurilingual individuals within it.⁵
- b) Citizen-centred, taking into account the wishes and needs of citizens in economic, social, educational, cultural and religious spheres as well as the needs of the wider society.
- c) Linked with other policies and objectives (e.g. policies for economic competitiveness and social cohesion) and not only of interest to linguists or educationalists.
- d) Cover all areas of language planning, i.e. (a) status (rules and regulations), (b) corpus (creation of descriptive data, corpuses, tools such as dictionaries, terminology etc., (c) acquisition (learning of languages, including L1, L2 and LF), and use (planning opportunities to use each language).

Concerning corpus planning a project is required for the development of good quality (electronic) dictionaries from any European language to any other. Certainly if we build on the idea of personal adoptive languages,⁶ it is of the utmost importance to guarantee direct access to the vocabulary of these languages for all learners and (foreign) users of that language without a need for an intermediate language, which in most cases will be English. Corpus-planning activities should aim at the creation and completion of a fully-fledged multilingual language infrastructure. This aim goes beyond the responsibility of individual language communities and countries and therefore needs a European approach

Such a language plan should be designed to protect and promote all European languages.

- 1.2 Creation of Good Conditions for Practical Work: Structural Measures (EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions)**

Favorable conditions need to be created, within which the EU can continue to work for the promotion of multilingualism and linguistic diversity. The following structural measures are suggested:

- a) **Permanent Platform of EU-level language NGOs:** At Plenary in 2004, the European Parliament voted that there should be an Agency for Linguistic Diversity. Many members of this sub-group support this decision. However, the Platform notes the Commission’s subsequent fact-finding mission and recommendation that networks would be a way forward. The Platform thinks that a simple network is not adequate, but that it would be beneficial to create a permanent platform of network organisations (network of networks) as an instrument of dialogue between the European policy level and the local, regional and national language policy level on

⁵ The proposed language policy must not be limited to plurilingualism (the faculty of citizens express themselves in more languages), but also pay due attention to corpus planning and the multilingualism of the technical infrastructure.

⁶ For the *personal adoptive language proposal* see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/archive/doc/maalouf/report_en.pdf

the one side and social reality on the other side. Both the European institutions and the EU Member States could support improved collaborative work between key actors and stakeholder including associations, regional authorities and NGOs. This may be done through supporting existing agencies and associations. The three principal EU institutions – the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission – should work together to develop and implement a working forum for regular strategic review of language policies to ensure better liaison between all levels involved in the formulation of language policy and to help thus disseminate examples of best practice in language planning and policy across Europe.

This flexible and “soft” structure/network could become, with some financial support from the European Commission, the virtual laboratory for the ‘linguistic vision’ and one of its outputs could be to produce a feasibility study and business plan to develop and implement an Agency.

- b) **Legal Basis:** the creation of a legal basis that allows the EU to give structural financial support to network organisations in the field of language and culture and to interact with them as their interlocutors that represent civil society in the domains of culture and language. These organisations should perform preparatory work, such as dedicated policy-oriented research, formulation of proposals, dissemination of results, and awareness raising.

1.3 Linguistic Observatory (*EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions*)

Set up a European linguistic observatory dealing with all European languages in regular use by a community, whether territorial or diaspora. It would be responsible for collecting data, acting as a watchdog of language use throughout Member States, monitoring numbers of speakers, implementing legislation, teaching provision, courses, and so on. The data that the Language Observatory would gather would enable evidence-based language policies.

1.4 Direct support for endangered languages (*EU*)

Change the Community language programmes’ criterion in order to facilitate access to EU language project funding for communities speaking endangered languages, and furthermore for the establishment of a specific fund for these languages from the existing budget. There needs to be administrative simplification over grant applications proportionate to grant size, a change of criteria for pre-funding, and a lowering or preferably a removal of thresholds for grants to make it easier for small NGOs from endangered language communities to apply.⁷

In addition, it urges the Commission to support, through its programmes, the European level NGOs and other organisations, initiatives and activities, who work to develop and promote lesser-used languages and linguistic diversity.

1.5 Language Ombudsman (*EU*)

A language ombudsman, either as a new stand-alone office or attached to the EU Ombudsman office, could act as a one-stop-shop on all issues over language use and possible discrimination, similar to that in Canada and Ireland.

The Platform accepts that the EU’s linguistic complexity is far greater than that of Canada or Ireland. The proposal would therefore need more detailed consideration as to its feasibility in the EU context.

⁷

In order to deal with the problem of endangerment the sub-group recommends the establishment of a specific budget line or action fund for endangered language projects from the existing budget that can be used to safeguard and to help regenerate them. A similar fund has been set up by UNESCO as part of its global Convention for the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

1.6 Linguistic Diversity Directive

With the coming into force of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, any discrimination based on language or on membership of a national minority is now prohibited. This group calls on the EU to work towards an EU Directive on the respect for linguistic diversity and the prohibition, preferably the abolition, of discrimination on the grounds of language.

2 Linguistic Diversity and Social Inclusion: Summary of findings

According to the European Commission, **“languages are a basic element for Europeans who wish to work, study and live together”⁸** and languages are at the core of the idea of unity in diversity that characterizes the EU.

At the launch of the civil society platform to promote multilingualism through intercultural dialogue, the former EU Commissioner for Multilingualism, Leonard Orban, said: *“The importance of languages in the pursuit of social cohesion and overcoming barriers to integration cannot be overstated”*.

European societies are multicultural and multilingual. The multilingualism that already prevails in some countries and regions is increasing further due to the high number of migrants and the EU principle of free movement of citizens. In this context and according to other sources of information, such as the conclusions of the latest Eurobarometer⁹ on language use and competence in Europe¹⁰, there is still a lot of work to do to foster multilingualism and its social inclusion perspective.

There are a number of less-favored social groups for whom the learning of languages will not be a goal in itself, but will be an instrument within a more far-reaching objective: social empowerment of these groups, assuring competences which allow full participation and integration in society. Important target groups within policies aiming at social inclusion/cohesion will be:

- Migrants;
- People with a communicative handicap (deaf, blind, dyslectic persons...);
- Elderly people¹¹;
- People affected by relations between mayor and minority languages¹²;
- Citizens with low motivation due to their special economic or social situation, and/or low schooling, especially (functionally) illiterate persons;

These groups offer a number of peculiarities, which constitute additional obstacles in approaching them and motivating them for (language) learning¹³. Furthermore, these indicative target groups are not exclusive among each other. This makes

⁸ <http://europa.eu/languages/>

⁹ Special Eurobarometer 243/ Wave 64.3 – TNS Opinion & Social “Europeans and their Languages”- February 2006: http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/doc631_en.pdf

¹⁰ Keeping in mind that Eurobarometer statistics are based on self-reporting and not on any objective testing.

¹¹ The elderly population is right now one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe. It is increasing every day mainly due to demographic changes, high life expectancies, good health system and low birth rates. They have special needs beyond handicap, illiteracy or migration with the need to be also to be included in a multilingual and multicultural society. Politics in general shall consider this target group proposing a general review to be adapted to the big changes an old society means to be prepared for the future. Now we have the opportunity to include this group also in multilingualism policies in order to give this target group more opportunities making from them and active group within the society, rather than a passive group, as it is consider right now by most of the population.

¹² Official languages, historical languages and those of local communities due to flows of population.

¹³ Many members of the above mentioned groups might have a low or defective competence level even in their own language, i.e poor writing ability and a negative school experience, and hence, will have low learning motivation.

things more complicated.¹⁴ Any policy aiming at successful social inclusion will have to find well-grounded creative ways to overcome these additional barriers.

Among these categories, **migrants** and people in mobility need special attention given the challenge their presence offers to social cohesion within our societies¹⁵. According to a survey published by Eurostat on 7 September 2010 on foreign residents in the EU¹⁶, there are 31.9 million foreign residents (6.4% of the total EU population) and this figure refers only to those registered, excluding all undocumented migrants. A third of those foreign residents are not technically foreign since they come from other EU member states. This means that two thirds of the foreign residents come from third countries¹⁷. However, a lack of language skills has hampered their integration as have the attitudes of some host societies towards them. This remains an obstacle today which needs to be addressed through improving migrants' language skills and developing inclusive multilingual societies, which value all languages and cultures equally.

The approach by states and NGOs to the ever increasing multilingualism of their societies is multifaceted. They usually start by providing multilingual guides of different services, most frequently used by foreigners and interpreters, but they also tend to stimulate learning the majority language of the host country as the best way to integrate into the host society.

Of the migrant groups we consulted, half of the respondents consider that public services – medical, social services, police, courts are not prepared to provide services to people who do not speak the majority language and who come from different cultural environments.

Most of the respondents think that the attention paid in their territories to the issue of multilingualism is insufficient. Increased training and educational initiatives should be carried out in order to promote multilingualism. Political and administrative actions should also be launched. Awareness raising and information campaigns are seen as important tools to enhance multilingualism.

Other findings to emerge concerned the role of third (vehicular) languages in different communication settings, particularly in migrants' interviews with public service personnel. For instance, public service staff may expect a person from Senegal to speak French (not Wolof as would probably be the case) and they will try to make do with a smattering of French rather than using a professional interpreter of the native tongue of the immigrant concerned.

Attention should also be paid to the media and the way in which they reflect the linguistic and cultural needs of minorities, and groups of a different background, especially migrants. Usually there is little reference to these needs and the media tends to show that communication "happens" smoothly, without linguistic or cultural barriers. In reality successful direct communication among people who speak different languages is not possible, unless there is someone who translates or interprets. Furthermore, media should show the real cultural diversity of the territory they cover, instead of showing a monolingual and/or mono-cultural situation more typical of past times and that has nothing to do with reality.

Integration of migrants through language learning should always take into account their linguistic and cultural background. Compulsory language courses often fail to do so, with the result that the acquired language skills are insufficient to meet the needs of everyday life. This lack of language skills not always attributable to their unwillingness to integrate tends to create an overall negative attitude towards immigrant languages and cultures. This in turn strengthens a deeply rooted

¹⁴ I.e. elderly migrants or elderly handicap people.

¹⁵ This group also face additional problems when living in countries or regions where several languages official, nor official or minority languages coexist in the same territory.

¹⁶ 129/2010 - 7 September 2010 Population of foreign citizens in the EU27 in 2009 - http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-07092010-AP/EN/3-07092010-AP-EN.PDF

¹⁷ Mainly Turkey, Morocco, Albania and Latin American countries.

hierarchy of languages in European societies, making social inclusion of migrants an even more difficult task.

The following quotation by Krumm qualifies this idea of hierarchy:

“Although it is often said rhetorically that all languages are equal, we know very well that they are not. We attribute different values to different languages. For example, most people in Western countries believe that languages such as English, French, German and Spanish are more important and more worth learning than, let us say, Polish or Hungarian. History, the economic power of certain countries, the number of native speakers and other factors play important roles in such perceptions. This is one of the reasons why the Turkish language is not offered in European schools curricula, even though it is the most frequently spoken second language in countries like Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany and Austria.”¹⁸

Migrants are often confronted with extra psychological problems, sometimes due to their feeling of “alienation” and of not belonging, in which cases the linguistic barrier acts as one of the stressors of what Achotegui has called the Ulysses syndrome.

Attention should be paid to the fact that multilingualism in the EU is made up not only of European official and non-official languages, but also of languages from non-EU countries or territories, such as Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, etc.

Cooperation with EU candidate states and with other EU-neighbouring countries would greatly benefit from language learning opportunities in those countries.

We should consider new, innovative and creative language-learning solutions to reach these specific groups through edutainment and the media, taking into account their specific linguistic backgrounds. In the same line, social inclusion policies at all levels should also focus on possible solutions offered by modern language and speech technologies.¹⁹

Recommendations

2.1 Foster development of EU, National and Regional language projects and initiatives to enhance the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups²⁰ (EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions):

- a) Through new EU programmes related to the promotion of multilingualism as well as through existing programmes in different policy fields²¹, but in a more explicit way.
- b) By creating tools (observatories, web sites etc.) for sharing good practice²² on multilingualism for social inclusion and promoting them, particularly in public and social services²³.
- c) By promoting specific academic multidisciplinary research on the topic of multilingualism and social inclusion at EU-level.²⁴

18 KRUMM, Hans-Jürgen: „Heterogeneity: multilingualism and democracy.“ In: *Utbildning & Demokrati* 13 (2004) 3, 61 – 77.
http://www.oru.se/Extern/Forskning/Forskningsmiljoer/HumUS/Utbildning_och_Demokrati/Tidskriften/2004/Nr_3/Krumm.pdf

19 E.g. development of speech-to-text systems and text-to-speech systems which would improve participation in the information society of handicapped people such as deaf, blind and dyslectic persons.

20 Migrants, school dropouts, illiterate citizens, senior citizens, disabled people (sign language and Braille) etc.

21 Programmes in the fields of culture, education, social inclusion, regional policy and EU neighbourhood and candidate country policy strategies.

22 Good practice examples: EULITA (<http://eulita.eu>) which aims at guaranteeing the supply of professional translation and interpreting services in the courts and in other legal settings.

The prize granted by the Spanish National Organisation for the Blind (ONCE) to the Dinastía Vivanco Museum in La Rioja (Spain) for their awareness of the needs of blind people, in terms of the use of accessible routes and Braille tagging of the exhibits, see:
<http://www.radiohara.com/2009/09/11/la-once-premia-a-bodegas-dinastia-vivanco/>

23 Including competitions and accreditation schemes for hospitals/police stations/tourist information centres etc.

2.2 To foster a bottom-up approach to foreign language learning and multilingualism promotion programmes, and encourage the participation of civil society (NGOs, trade unions, foundations, grassroots movements, associations, etc.) at community level. (EU, MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions)

Although the primary responsibility for providing educational and cultural services falls on member States (at different territorial levels where appropriate), cooperation from a multi-governance approach should be encouraged.²⁵

2.3 To teach intercultural competencies as an integral part of language learning in preschools and schools to create an inclusive society, to combat xenophobia and discrimination. (MS, autonomous and regional jurisdictions)

Member States should incorporate teaching intercultural and multilingual competences in their regular preschool and school curricula starting at a very young age.

School systems should specifically support and value languages and cultures brought to the classroom by every individual pupil.²⁶

2.4 At community level awareness raising activities on the issue of multilingualism²⁷ should be organized, with participation of all the parties concerned²⁸. (Regional jurisdictions)

In local communities a *bi-directional approach* should be applied with migrants attaining a good competence in the dominant language(s) of the host country and autochthonous people learning some basic words in migrants' home language(s), in order to stimulate reciprocal interest and creating better conditions for mutual understanding and respect.

2.5 To further develop the rights of citizens to receive interpretation and translation in legal settings and public and social services (i.e. hospitals)²⁹. (EU, National and regional jurisdictions)

Good quality interpretation and translation services require good training programmes, which could be addressed in particular, where appropriate, to the immigrants and their children.

3 Education

Summary of findings

Approaches to language education have been central to the discussion, with the term "education" being used broadly to cover not only formal education (public, state or private) in a classroom context or from a distance, but also non-formal and informal learning, including cultural activities and awareness raising which may occur through social practices and organized projects.

24 I.e. a particular multidisciplinary approach to multilingualism as a way of enhancing the protection of vulnerable groups could be to study the linguistic situation of groups of people –sometimes marginal in terms of figures– who do not command the majority language. I.e. Bevilacqua is studying the case of Italian elderly women in an area of Belgium who arrived as wives of Italian migrant workers in the 1950s and 1960s, working as housewives while their husbands worked outside, and never learned the local language. Many of them are widows now living in elderly nursery homes where they cannot communicate with the local staff without an interpreter.

25 I.e. in the región of Extremadura in Spain the regional government has decided to foster learning or Portuguese as third language, considering that it is a more important language for a región situated in the border with Portugal, and therefore more useful for its citizens to learn this language.

26 For instance through the creation of multilingual inclusive materials on the history and heritage of Europe to promote multilingualism as part of a wider curriculum that promotes social inclusion.

27 Language and culture fairs and other events where the value of all languages, including minority and migrants' languages, as an integral part of the EU cultural heritage should be emphasized.

28 Civil society, schools, media etc.

29 In line with the EU member States the European Parliament directive on the rights to interpretation and to translation in criminal proceedings (16th June 2010).

Initial research was conducted among the members of the working group in the following areas:

- Raising Awareness
- Methodology/Pedagogy
- Non-formal learning
- Less widely used languages
- Early Language Learning
- Language assessment
- Research
- Teacher Training
- Lifelong Learning

Best practice examples have been collected and are available in the appendix.

Following an initial analysis of the responses to the survey questionnaires, a number of key areas of concern to citizens became apparent. First, it seems that there is widespread support for multilingualism and for the measures being taken by the EU institutions and Member States to promote it. This is coupled with the sustained concern that Europe's linguistic diversity may be threatened by the dominance of English. Therefore, member institutions are determined to promote multilingualism more effectively. The problem needs to be addressed not only through policy but also through practical measures and incentives.

The Platform proposes to further promote successful programmes of bilingual and/or multilingual education and use them to build language education pedagogies for the development of plurilingual competences. The crucial target is to turn monolingual European schools into places where a single language of instruction no longer dominates, but where several languages are used as resources.

To support multilingualism through teaching and testing we need incentives

- a) For language programmes and testing to develop and assess literacies required in an increasingly globalised world, and for people to be tested and credited for the knowledge and competences they have in the less widely spoken and taught languages;
- b) To test and treat equally a variety of languages, in a comparable manner, in different social contexts;
- c) The development of multilingual approaches in language assessment so that people learn to make maximum use of all their linguistic resources;
- d) To further develop the role of alternative approaches to language assessment, such as portfolios and self-assessment;
- e) To help the calibration of language competence descriptors on the basis of the performance of test-takers across Europe, and thereby help make the CEFR even more useful. It is crucial that projects on alternative testing be encouraged throughout Europe. Issues to be addressed include the consequences of language testing for immigrants and for the host society, its impact on language pedagogy, teacher training and development, and the role of alternative approaches.

Another finding emerging from the research is that there is evidence that the learning of language(s) is often linked to social class and affluence. Our respondents' input provides some evidence that at present multilingualism is not as "democratic" as we would like to think and that systematic attempts should be made to give a taste of successful language-learning to far wider sections of the population.

Respondents also pointed out the need to recognise the intrinsic value of all languages in use in a community, whether territorially based or not. They drew attention to the need to challenge received wisdom and to base policy decisions on recent research findings.

The added value of non-formal learning was strongly underlined by all respondents. Non-formal learning can be regarded as situation-based learning as opposed to formal-learning, which happens in a classroom or academic context. Since the classroom situation is not exactly a natural environment for acquiring and using a foreign language, any other situation which is more natural contributes greatly to the learning process. Also with regard to the cultural aspect it was explained that languages and culture cannot be seen separately and this combination can be acquired best authentically.

Alternative approaches to language education need to be explored, both to increase motivation and effectiveness. Interesting initiatives include Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), the intercomprehension approach and the propedeutic approach. CLIL has been effective, although some have criticized it for being somewhat elitist and tending to promote English rather than multilingualism. Intercomprehension can allow a greater use of the mother tongue through the acquisition of receptive competence in one language group, e.g. French/Spanish/Italian/ Portuguese/ Romanian. The propedeutic approach is based on the language-learning skills transfer effect, i.e. the initial learning of a limited amount of an easier, more regular language, without exceptions, to give far more children a taste of success in language learning, thus raising language awareness and preparing for subsequent language learning.

The group underlined the usefulness of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The comparability of language levels simplifies the Europeanisation of the job market for which language competence is of relevance. It provides a basis for the recognition of language qualifications, is a tool for educational and occupational mobility, facilitates learning objectives and methods, and recognizes the importance of intercultural and plurilingual competences in language education.

The group stressed the importance of raising awareness of the benefits of early language learning, lifelong language learning, and informal and non-formal language learning. Early language learning *can* work, providing that the programme is designed in a way which is meaningful for children of different ages. It is increasingly recognised that language learning continues throughout life. There is research evidence that language is learnt best by many if it is *acquired* in informal or non-formal settings as well as being taught and studied.

Recommendations

3.1 Conduct further research in the following areas to inform policy

(EU and National Level)

Research on language education pedagogy from a plurilingual perspective at all levels. The Platform proposes to further promote successful programmes of bilingual and/or multilingual education and use them to build language education pedagogies for the development of plurilingual competences. Continuing research has a crucial part to play in this work.

(EU and National level; members of the Platform; platform role to investigate and disseminate best practice in this area)

Research the propaedeutic qualities of various languages to discover which second language is most likely to encourage subsequent language-learning. An innovative UK programme has been testing an alternative propedeutic approach since September 2006 (sections 4.2 and 6.4.1), and this may have implications for the order in which languages are learned.

(EU and National level, and projects by members of the Platform; Platform role to investigate and disseminate best practice in this area)

Further research on the impact of language testing in all varieties on plurilingual language tuition (i.e. mother tongue plus two), teaching tools and teacher training and development.

3.2 Policy and practice

The creation of a forum for regular strategic review of language learning policies, where the main EU institutions could work with civil society to help disseminate examples of best practice in language learning throughout the Member States - see the best practice examples from the Education sub group's report. *(EU; strong role for the Platform)*

Member States, supported by members of the Platform and other interested parties, should further develop a proactive framework to establish stronger relationships between non-formal education systems and formal education structures. *(National level; the Platform can intermediate between its members and interested parties such as NGOs)*

To promote international recognition at EU level for linguistic diversity by raising awareness amongst European institutions and citizens of the benefits of multilingualism and multiculturalism for social cohesion, economy and academic success. *(EU and general; strong role for the Platform)*

3.3 Facilitation and sharing of best practice

A network of early-language-learning teachers should be developed. There is still an urgent need to convince stakeholders about the benefits and advantages of early language learning. *(EU, national and regional level)*

Develop and disseminate appropriate methodologies for adult language learning, help with the funding of staff and teacher training and development, to the highest standards. *(EU and national level)*

Improve learning facilities for marginalized groups and those with a lower level of education. Systematic efforts are needed to give a taste of successful language-learning to far wider groups of Europe's population. This ties in well with the Europe 2020 priority of "reducing the dropout rate to 10% from the current 15%" (section 3.1) *(National level; Platform role for best practice)*

Production of bi- and multilingual school textbooks for other subjects. *(National and Regional level)*

4 Translation and terminology

Summary of findings

The world is changing at a rapid pace. The European Union continues to expand and the volume of international economic and cultural traffic increases daily. As globalisation inexorably marches on, the question arises as to how to preserve and disseminate local and national identities, and how best to promote linguistic diversity. To a large extent, the answer lies in language and thus in translation.

Translation is of crucial and of growing importance in the European Union for several reasons, one of which is very obvious: if we wish to communicate with the citizen, we must use the citizen's language. The EU has now 23 "official and working languages", and not even the most enthusiastic polyglot can be expected to master all of them. In addition, it is only through translation that Europe's imposing literary heritage can be made accessible to the vast majority of European citizens.

Translation can allow existing texts to cross linguistic and cultural borders – and at the same time transcend their own limits, because it endows them with new life and meaning. In his opening speech at the EC conference on translation in April 2009, the President of the EU Commission Barroso noted that "translation is more than ever an active process, transforming what it transfers, creating something new". This is of fundamental importance to the concept of intercultural dialogue, which

also has to be rethought as a dynamic process in which neither the 'content', nor the participants remain the same. Therefore, translation is not to be misunderstood as a second best option after multilingualism or polyglottism. Foreign language skills can never reach the level of one's mother tongue, nor will they have the same cultural and emotional value. Translation can make existing texts cross linguistic and cultural borders – and at the same time cross their own limits, because it endows them with new life and meaning.

There are many different types of translation. Each type has its own balance between identity/reproduction and difference/renewal. In technical translation, correct reference to the outside world is the only component that really counts. Language users and professionals cannot function optimally if they have no access to appropriate dictionaries and grammars applicable to the various domains that matter in our societies. The number of bi- or multilingual dictionaries increases dramatically with the number of languages involved. In the EU, with 23 official languages the number of bilingual dictionaries between them is 506, but if all the languages spoken in the EU, about 100, is considered this amounts to 9900. If all the worlds' languages were considered, the number would be 50 million. Linguists and engineers try to answer the question: if much is known about individual languages and the links between many of them, would it be possible to devise an efficient computer programme for the semi-automatic generation of such dictionaries. In fact, the recent successes with corpus-based automatic translation indicate that this is not unrealistic.

Literary translation, in the broadest sense, is much more about interpretation, and is present in almost all forms of cultural exchange. It constitutes our common intercultural infrastructure, and as such should not be left in the care of national governments alone. Literary translation is a grand European responsibility (see the European Cultural Convention of 1954). Therefore, the European Commission should be endowed with legislative authority in this field to address the Member States on the fact that it is not only a national responsibility. Because of its 'infrastructural' role, literary translation (including but not limited to books, text-based works, theatre translation, and film translation) requires a separate budget in the Culture Programme, as stipulated in point 4B of the Council's Multilingualism Resolution, which mentions the possibility of a "specific assistance programme for translation."

Recommendations

4.1 Promotion of equal exchange between countries and cultures

The predominance of English as a source language is overwhelming. In nearly all countries, more than 60% of all book translations are from English, whereas the number of translations into English is limited to only about 3% of all books published in that language. This distorts reality. (EU)

In order to correct the imbalance, the EU should encourage and help Member States to implement new initiatives, collect data about the books being published, including data about translations (source language, name of the translator). The data needs to be updated and widely disseminated. (EU)

The number of translations from less widely-used languages (LWULs) into other LWULs is very small. (EU)

Concrete measures on national and EU level should be taken to promote literary translations of less widely-used languages (LWULs) into English and other dominant languages as well as into other LWULs. An example of best practice in this area is Literature Across Frontiers (LAF), a European platform for literary exchange, translation and policy debate, which has been working for ten years to promote literatures written in less widely-used languages and encourage their translation by organizing a range of cooperation initiatives, including collective stands at international book fairs, publishing the trilingual online review *Transcript* (www.transcript-review.org) and conducting policy research and surveys, as well as

analyzing data about the publishing of translations across Europe (see report *Publishing Translations in Europe: Trends 1990-2005*). (EU and Member States)

In order to facilitate the circulation of books, EC support should be increased, with an emphasis on LWULs, and on translation from and into non-European languages. (EC)

Additional promotion of a joint European presence at international book fairs by means of support for common stands is needed. An example of such practice is the EU Prize for Literature – a project which is jointly organised by the EC and representatives of the whole book chain (publishers, booksellers and authors) and which is actively promoted at the international book fairs (Frankfurt Book Fair, London Book Fair) where all the involved parties are present. EUPL promotes the translation and circulation of literary works. As the consortium selected by the Commission to coordinate the initiative, the European Booksellers Federation (EBF), the European Writers' Council (EWC) and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) are jointly responsible for the setting up of the national juries and the practical organisation of the award ceremony. (EC)

The setting up of European publishing offices with a strong cultural role in Europe and third countries is needed. (EC)

Authors should be better informed and further supported to participate in cultural events in Europe and third countries. (Member States)

4.2 The role of literary translators

Literary translators are important bearers of culture, but the invisibility of their work gives them a very weak market position. As a result, the translators' income fails to correspond to their level of education, to their creative efforts or to the amount of time they invest in their work (cf. CEATL's 'Compared Income of Literary Translators in Europe', 2008). Because of this, translation quality, therefore the quality of the image we have of other cultures, is under enormous pressure. (EC)

The European Commission should take its own cultural responsibility in fighting the 'collateral damage' of its own free competition rules. Any support programme for literary translation in the future EU Culture Programme should be focused both on the dissemination of works and on translation quality; moreover, translations of non-fiction should receive equal support. (EC)

Initiatives should be taken to intensify the cultural visibility of literary translators. (EC and Member States)

According to the Berne Convention, signed by all European countries, literary translations have to be considered as original works. This needs to be highlighted. Translation quality strongly depends on the working conditions of the translator. (EC and Member States)

Measures should be taken to ensure a better legal protection of the translator as author. UNESCO'S Nairobi Declaration can serve as a basis. (EC and Member States)

National and European authorities should protect the future of creativity and creative content by protecting the rights of authors. (EC and Member States)

There should be an appropriate balance between authors' and publishers' rights as equal contracting partners. (Member States)

4.3.1 Education and Training

There are very few legitimate and sound degree programmes for literary translation in Europe. No centralized information exists and no common criteria have been formulated at European level. Very often literary translation is confined to being a minor subject for general translation students. With the creation of literary translation degree programmes, the courses need to be taught by lecturers who are experienced as literary translators. (EC and Member States)

The international exchange of students and teachers, and of information should be encouraged. *(EC and Member States)*

Member States should fulfil the obligations laid down in the European Cultural Convention. Translation training should start in early high-school, and be linked to both language and literature/culture classes. *(Member States)*

Mobility is essential to translators. It can be combined with a programme offering experienced translators the option of refresher courses and 'on-the-job training'. A relatively modest but highly effective way of achieving this is the translation centre system. On an annual basis, the RECIT centres accommodate some 1000 translators in residence and involve more than 10.000 participants in events around literary translation, like translation workshops and conferences. *(EC and Member States)*

The translators' centres should be eligible to apply for structural support from the Commission. *(EC)*

Mobility grants should be made available to translators from all European countries, and to those translating from European languages. Some centres, like the Amsterdam Translators' House, do have a budget for travel grants for foreign translators in residence, but most centres do not. Besides, the Dutch and Flemish foundations for literature give travel grants to translators from their own countries who visit a foreign translators' centre, an example which, given the financial situation of literary translators, is worth following both on a national and a European level. *(EC and Member States)*

The founding of new translators' centres in countries that do not have any yet should be encouraged, in compliance with the Council's Multilingualism Resolution, 4Ac: "develop the possibilities for and quality of training in translation." *(EC and Member States)*

Many publishers, especially from countries with a restricted linguistic distribution, lack a professional training that would enable them to acquire a better understanding of the complexities of the business and to spread best practices in their respective countries. *(EC and Member States)*

Pan-European training courses should be set up, based on exchange programmes such as Erasmus, in order to develop specific qualifications for the European publishing sector. *(EC)*

The training of publishers in foreign languages should be supported through professional experiences abroad. *(EC and Member States)*

4.4 Translations in Theatre and Performing Arts

Theatre and performing arts are essential media in Europe's cultural environment to facilitate access to cultural contents, resources and expressions beyond linguistic barriers.

Linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue must be promoted by including financial support for translations in the field of theatre and performing arts. *(EC and Member States)*

Assistance schemes in the field of translation should be extended to cultural and creative online content and surtitling activities (human and technology) of performing arts works. *(EC and Member States)*

The public, and in particular European professionals, must be better informed about national and European assistance schemes for the translation of literary texts, including cultural and creative content online, surtitling of performing art works and subtitling of audiovisual works and films. *(EC and Member States)*

In the framework of the European Culture Programme, only publishing houses are eligible to request financial support for translation. *(EC and Member States)*

The existing European culture programmes should be extended to performing arts and theatre to request financial support for translation. (EC)

4.5 Research and Development of Translation Technologies

Over the last years translation technologies have been introduced and European citizens have become gradually familiar with translated forms. In the arts and culture, simultaneous translation or surtitling of live performances has become a standard tool to facilitate the circulation of work in a foreign language. However, this method can only be regarded as the beginning of multilingual presentations on European stages. Research needs to be reinforced to develop innovative ways of integrating language diversity during live performances. (EC and Member States)

The performing arts sector needs to be identified as an area of application for future research programmes in the application and development of translation technologies across EU languages taking into consideration the entire chain of the creation process with the aim to improve user friendly output formats for different target groups (content creator or content consumer) and also to provide necessary training and education programs to apply these technologies. (EC and Member States)

There is no European database that connects individual national databases of existing translations of theatre plays. (EC and Member States)

The EC should support a database that connects national platforms on a European level, regrouping existing works and allowing access to the work of translators and interpreters in order to promote multilingual content. (EC)

Subtitling is preferable to dubbing because it makes people aware of multilingualism. This was also the conclusion of an EC consultation in 2007, to which the majority of respondents agreed that subtitling 'conveys authentic language'.

Subtitling of films should be promoted, especially in countries where 'dubbing' predominates, such as France, Germany, and Spain. (EC and Member States)

Subtitlers, whose creative work is protected by copyright, should be supported, particularly in smaller linguistic areas. (EC and Member States)

4.6 Language and Technology infrastructures

The phrase *Language infrastructures* was launched in a report submitted in 1992 to the European Commission³⁰ by language and technology experts. It identified the vast collection of language data that should be available 'at the finger tips' of users, private, professional or machines. Users are authors and speakers, editors, translators and interpreters, teachers and students, and machines processing language data. The 'fingertips' materialised into computer keyboards connected to the internet. Language data are monolingual and multilingual, spoken and written corpuses in the first place, and dictionaries, terminology collections, grammatical and syntactical data. (EC)

Much of the proposals of the 1992 report is realised today, as every internet user experiences. The spell checker is probably the most frequently used application of the symbiosis of language data and digital technology, but the tool may well drop a place, once latest generation web machine translation tools perform better and become available for increasing numbers of language pairs. Web translation technology will eventually allow every internet user to access data written in any language and have it presented in her or his own language. These and several other language tools will soon be used daily by all the internet users.

30 Language Infrastructures, also referred to as the 'Danzin' report after the expert committee chairman; submitted to the Language Engineering programme and the Multilingual Action Plan, DG INFSO, 1992

Because of the huge number of internet users, several billion in the second decade of this millennium, significant developments in the domains of language infrastructures and language technology applications, will have a vast cultural impact supported by large numbers of linguists and striving industries reaping the economic benefits. Productivity and the diversity and volume of the services provided by traditional and new generation language professionals will increase significantly. Europe and the EU Member States should be at the forefront of these developments. Their citizens and organisations are the main beneficiaries both culturally and economically. European actors lost the initiative in these fields to other world actors, but they should be stimulated to regain what was lost by focused and voluntary actions.

The EC should support the development and maintenance of the *multilingual* infrastructures for the languages of the EU. *(EC)*

The EC promotes that all Member States develop and maintain the language infrastructures for their *own languages*. Together with the Member States' actors concerned the EU should develop and support the implementation of standardised methodology allowing the national developments to be mutually compatible. *(EC and Member States)*

Terminology infrastructures are of particular concern to the EC and the Member States because they are a precondition for the good performance of all professionals within their disciplines and beyond. Although term representations generally differ from one language to another, the basic concepts show substantial compatibility across languages and states, within the professional sectors. The EC should develop a strategy for the coordination at the European scale of terminology development and maintenance, building upon the efforts which have already been undertaken by the national and international professional organisations, in some disciplines since centuries. Support should be given to pilot projects to be launched in a number of professional sectors. *(EC and Member States)*

The internet has become the normal working environment for the European professional actors and the actors in the other continents. And many persons depend on internet for their private activities as well. The internet being essentially a huge language and media communication facilitator, an ever larger language technology toolset will be available for the internet users.. Machine translation tools on the internet, allowing every user to access data available in any language and presenting the results of translation in his or her own language, is the ultimate dream of the users. Europe should redefine its strategy in this field to regain the leadership it had in the past. This claim is justified by Europe's economic strength and the many languages used daily on the European continent. *(EC and Member States)*

Conclusions

The analysis and recommendations presented above represent the initial findings of the four working groups set up by the Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism, based on consultation with Civil Society in most EU countries. The recommendations are directed principally at the European Commission, Member States, and Regional administrations. However, there are also a number of recommendations for action which can be taken forward by the Platform itself, should it be continued.

Indeed, one of the key recommendations of the Working Group on Policy is that the Platform is a necessary structural measure to ensure the effective promotion of multilingualism and linguistic diversity, and to facilitate continued dialogue between the Commission, Members States and Civil Society. As a network of networks in the languages field, the Platform is also particularly well placed to conduct some of the further research outlined in this paper and to facilitate knowledge sharing across the EU. Indeed there is already a commitment by some of the members of the platform, through the EC-funded "poliglotti4.eu"-project, to set up a multilingualism

observatory to capture good practice, and to conduct further research in the following areas:

- Local and regional provision of adult language training
- Language policy and practice in public services
- Early language learning

We are grateful to the Commission for giving Civil Society this opportunity to have its voice heard and look forward to seeing some of our recommendations put into practice at all levels.

We strongly recommend that the Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism be continued for at least three years as a continuous network of civil society organizations working in the field of multilingualism. The platform should be dynamic and open to new members, encouraging a broader approach to the issues discussed, and inviting organizations from the fields of technical translation and social services on board. The findings of the project “poliglotti4.eu”, which has recently been launched by 9 of our members, should be fed into platform discussions, thereby connecting the two initiatives. By joining forces the participating Civil Society organizations will have a major impact in developing forward-looking solutions and innovative approaches towards a more multilingual, diverse and international Europe, supporting multilingual education and raising awareness of the key issues among citizens.