
Towards a European language policy

Cap a una política lingüística europea

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En aquesta comunicació pretenc tractar els diferents factors que incideixen sobre l'actual diversitat lingüística europea i les possibilitats que les diferents línies de recerca tinguin una influència en les decisions que sobre política lingüística semblen improrrogables.

Els principals punts que hi seran tractats són:

1. Marc general actual

a. Reconeixement de la diversitat lingüística i cultural

b. Aspectes actuals de la política lingüística de la UE:

i. Oficialitat lingüística

ii. Suport per a l'aprenentatge d'idiomes i els intercanvis acadèmics; Any Europeu de les Llengües

iii. Suport per a una societat de la informació multilingüe: MLIS, e-Learning, e-Content, enginyeria lingüística...

iv. Suport —precar— per a la promoció de llengües regionals o minoritàries.

c. Previsibles efectes de la imminent ampliació de la UE cap a l'est.

d. Costos administratius del model lingüístic actual: interpretació i traducció.

e. Dèficit democràtic i de comunicació amb el ciutadà; la sensibilitat institucional per l'exclusió.

f. Explosió de l'ús de les TIC (tecnologies de la informació i la comunicació), i transformació de model econòmic i democràtic. Reptes lingüístics.

In this paper I intend to deal with the various factors that affect the present level of European language diversity and the prospects that several research projects have of influencing the decisions that can no longer be postponed.

The main points to be covered are the following:

1. Present general framework

Recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity

Current features of the EU's language policy.

Official languages

Support for language learning and educational exchanges; European Year of Languages

Support for a Multilingual Information Society: MLIS, e-Learning, e-Content, language engineering.

Precarious support for the promotion of regional or minority languages.

Foreseeable effects of the imminent eastward enlargement of the European Union.

Administrative costs of the present linguistic model: interpretation and translation.

The democratic and communication deficit with citizens; institutional sensitivity for exclusion.

Explosion in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and transformation of the economic and democratic paradigm. Linguistic challenges.

g. El tractament de la diversitat lingüística a les altres organitzacions europees:	Treatment of linguistic diversity in other European organisations:
i. El Consell d'Europa (règim intern, Carta europea, Conveni marc), i	Council of Europe (internal norms, European Charter, Framework Convention, and
ii. L'Organització per a la Seguretat i Cooperació a Europa (OSCE).	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
h. Diversitat de tractament de les llengües minoritzades als diferents estats; adhesions a la Carta europea de les llengües regionals o minoritàries	Varied policies towards minorised languages in member States: ratifications of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages
2. Recerques en curs: Estudi encarregat el 2001 pel Parlament Europeu, sobre el paper de la UE en el suport a les comunitats lingüístiques minoritzades. Estudi encarregat per la DG d'Educació i Cultura; avançament de resultats	2. On-going research: Projects commissioned in 2001 by the European Parliament, on the Role of the European Union in Supporting Minority or Lesser-Used Languages. Projects commissioned by DG Education and Culture; early results.
Conclusió	Conclusion
Estem en un moment de transició que ens ofereix als catalans una oportunitat històrica per incidir en la formulació d'una política lingüística europea.	We are now in a time of transition which offers Catalans an historic opportunity to have a say in formulating a European language policy.

1. Marc general actual

Com se sap, qualsevol política parteix d'una situació actual i pretén transformar-la. De vegades es tracta d'adequar una legislació antiga que ha quedat desbordada pels canvis socials. De vegades és un intent per part del legislatiu de posar ordre (legal) en un àmbit nou que no ha estat mai regulat. Però sempre revela una visió política o, si hom vol, ideològica de la realitat, i un model de la societat que el legislador pretén assolir.

2. Present general framework

As is well known, any policy is based on an existing situation and attempts to transform it. It is sometimes a matter of updating old legislation which has been overtaken by social events. Sometimes it is an attempt on the part of the legislative to put into (legal) order a new field which has never been subject to regulation. But it always reveals a political or, to put it another way, an ideological vision of reality, and a model of society which the legislator aims to attain.

It will soon become clear that up to now the language policies of the Union clearly reflect the sum of the individual and usually monolingual language policies of each of the Union's member States. Only Ireland, Belgium and, since it joined in 1995, Finland, have more than a single official language, and their joint weight in the Union is puny compared to that of any single of the larger members: the United Kingdom, Germany, France or Italy. In addition, the official, or constitutional, languages of Belgium and Finland are all official languages of the Union, because the smaller official language happens to be the only official language of a neighbouring kin-state which also belongs to the Union.

Reconeixement de la diversitat lingüística i cultural

Recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity

EU institutions pay growing attention to linguistic diversity, though the term has not (yet) been incorporated into the Treaties as a direct object. It is mentioned, in actual fact, in article 149,¹ which defines the Union's educational policy:

"Article 149.1. The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity."

For its part the European Council underlined the importance of linguistic diversity at Cannes, in June 1995 (in discussing issues related to internal affairs).

Thus we take note that the Community must respect the cultural and diversity of the member States. In this regard let us ask ourselves whether it is possible to respect this diversity without actually doing anything about it. The Council has argued¹ that Article 149 makes it clear that "the responsibility for [...] cultural and linguistic diversity lies with the Member States", but this is an attempt to deny that the Union has any responsibility of contributing to support for regional or minority languages. The Presidency Conclusions to the Nice European Council Meeting (December 2000), regarding the Charter of Fundamental Rights, may be a break with this earlier position, and are perhaps a hopeful sign for the future,² for the Charter refers (Article 22) to linguistic diversity as having to be protected by the Union, and certainly does not draw the line at the member State level.

The European Parliament is fully aware of the significance of the new **European Charter**; while the Commission relates the issue of diversity to that of "regional or minority languages".³ Again, the Committee of the Regions has recently expressed an Opinion on the issue, and "*deems that language permeates all aspects of people's lives*".⁴ We shall return to this issue later.

For its part, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on multilingualism as early as 1982, though at that time the main issue was the use of languages within the institutions of the European Community and did not extend beyond the official languages of these institutions, a subject we shall return to immediately:

1. Ref.: <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/oj/2001/ce23520010821en.html>; OJEC 2001/C 235 E/040; Question E-3948/00 by Pere Esteve to the Council; Subject: The Catalan language in the EU.
2. <http://db.consilium.eu.int/newsroom/main.cfm?LANG=1>: Presidency Conclusions. Nice European Council Meeting, 7, 8 & 9 December 2000: "2. The European Council welcomes the joint proclamation, by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, combining in a single text the civil, political, economic, social and societal rights hitherto laid down in a variety of international, European or national sources." Text of Charter: http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/unit/charte/pdf/texte_en.pdf, <http://db.consilium.eu.int/df/default.asp?lang=en>
3. <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/langmin.html>: "**Respect for linguistic and cultural diversity is one of the cornerstones of the European Union, now enshrined in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, which states «The Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.» On the initiative of the European Parliament, which has adopted a series of resolutions on this subject, the European Union has taken action to safeguard and promote the regional and minority languages of Europe.**"
4. Thus "Linguistic issues ... should be present in all areas of policy formulation and implementation". Its Opinion on the "Promotion and Protection of Regional and Minority Languages" of 13.6.20014 calls upon the European Commission to respect Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights by including specific provisions for linguistic diversity in all the EU's policies and programmes. It also urges the Commission to "take immediate action to ensure that minority (lesser used) and regional languages are included in the activities of all current European Union programmes". http://www.cor.eu.int/presentation/down/avis_39plen/CdR86_2001fin/cdr86-2001_fin_ac_en.doc

Resolució sobre el multilingüisme a la Comunitat Europea, de 14 d'octubre de 1982:⁵

1 Confirma inequívocament que les llengües oficials i de treball en les institucions comunitàries són el danès, l'holandès, l'anglès, el francès, l'alemany, el grec i l'italià;

2 Confirma la regla que hi ha d'haver una absoluta igualtat entre les llengües comunitàries, de manera passiva o activa, oralment o per escrit, a totes les reunions del Parlament i de les seves institucions...

Resolution on the multilingualism of the European Community, adopted on October 14 1982:⁶

1 Unequivocally affirms that the official languages and the working languages of the Community institutions are Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek and Italian;

2 Confirms the rule that there is to be absolute equality between the Community languages, whether used actively or passively, in writing or orally, at all meetings of Parliament and its bodies...

The stage is therefore set for consideration of the actual policies of the Union in the field of languages.

Aspectes actuals de la política lingüística de la UE

Oficialitat lingüística

Current features of the EU's language policy

Official languages

The European Union was founded in 1957 as the European Economic Community with just four official languages (German, French, Italian and Dutch); Luxembourgish was not even an official language in its own country until 1984. To these were added Danish and English (1973), Greek (1980), Spanish and Portuguese (1986) and Finnish and Swedish (1995). It now has 15 member States, and fully 11 official and working languages.⁷

No legal distinction is made between "official" and "working" languages, despite occasional claims we sometimes read to the contrary: only Regulation No. 1 defines this issue. The model is thus that of "integral multilingualism".

Irish is an interesting case. Ireland's accession treaty and all Union treaties since then state that they are to be published in Irish, alongside the other (official) languages.⁸ This has led to some other important Union documents being officially available in Irish.

The number of official and working languages is increasingly hard to manage, yet there has long been resistance to the idea of reducing it: we have already referred to the 1982 European Parliament Resolution on multilingualism. When the French Presidency of the Union proposed at the end of 1994 that there be only five working languages the proposal had to be quickly withdrawn. The five were to be French, German, English, Italian and Spanish. Statement by Mr Lamassoure, French Minister for European Affairs, on replacing the 11 official languages of the European Union with five working languages (December 1994). The Parliament rejected this idea, in a Resolution on the use of the official languages in the institutions of the EU,⁹ which came only a few months after a similar Resolution had been adopted.

5. <http://troc.es/ciemen/mercator/UE19-CT.HTM>

6. <http://troc.es/ciemen/mercator/UE19-GB.HTM>

7. Dates found at http://www.inta.gatech.edu/eucenter/resources/eu_timeline.html

8. Article S of the Treaty of Maastricht: "This Treaty, drawn up in a single original in the Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, **Irish**, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish languages, the text in each of these languages being equally authentic, shall be deposited ..."

9. <http://www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator/UE24-GB.HTM>

Nevertheless, the enlargement process will foreseeably incorporate countries with new official languages. In the first tranche, these will be Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Polish and Slovenian. It remains to be seen whether in the negotiations on Cyprus, Turkish will also become an official language; the Union at one stage offered this to the breakaway Turkish Cypriot authorities, as part of their attempt to lure them into reunification. In a second phase, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Lithuanian, Roumanian, Slovakian are on the cards...

Can this number of official and working languages be coped with? We shall return to this question at the end.

What is clear right now, however, is that *in practice* the internal use of working languages is by no means equal. On the contrary, English and French apparently account for over 98% of all internal use, oral and/or written.

Moreover, some official services are not offered in all 11 languages. Thus whereas the Europa portal is (<http://europa.eu.int/>), those of the Regional Funds (www.inforegio.org) or the Research and Development website (www.cordis.lu) are only in five languages: once more the infamous combination of French, German, English, Italian and Spanish. To be true, they do give access to the official forms in the 11 languages.

Suport per a l'aprenentatge d'idiomes i els intercanvis acadèmics; Any Europeu de les Llengües

Support for language learning and educational exchanges; European Year of Languages

A second area of policy consists of the encouragement of the learning of other European languages by citizens of the Union, through article 149. A considerable proportion of the Union's citizens still only speak a single language. Many millions of Euros are devoted to this activity, which supports the development of teaching methods and material, language teacher training, and language courses for students. The policy is placed firmly in the hands of the DG for Education and Culture. It refers to all levels of education, though principally to secondary and higher education. The DG has a website which explains the objectives and contents of the main action for this promotion, **the Lingua Action**, within the Socrates programme:¹⁰

Segons la web (i tradueixo —significativament— al català) ...

la **promoció de l'ensenyament i l'aprenentatge de llengües** és un dels objectius del programa SÒCRATES 2 en general, i de les accions Erasmus, Comenius i Grundtvig en particular.

La nova acció Lingua dona suport a aquestes accions a través de mesures destinades a:

- * Fomentar i recolzar la diversitat lingüística a la Unió.
- * Contribuir a millorar la qualitat de l'ensenyament i l'aprenentatge de llengües.
- * Promoure l'accés a oportunitats de formació lingüística permanent adequades a les necessitats de cada individu.¹¹

The **promotion of language teaching and learning** is an objective of the SOCRATES 2 programme as a whole, and of the Erasmus, Comenius and Grundtvig actions in particular.

The new Lingua Action supports these actions through measures designed to:

- * Encourage and support linguistic diversity throughout the Union.
- * Contribute to an improvement in the quality of language teaching and learning.
- * Promote access to lifelong language learning opportunities appropriate to each individual's needs.

10. Source: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages/actions/lingua2.html>.

11. Font: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages/es/actions/lingua2.html>.

L'ensenyament de llengües abraça l'ensenyament i l'aprenentatge, com a llengües estrangeres, de totes les *llengües oficials de la Comunitat*, a més de l'irlandès i el luxemburguès.

També podran rebre subvencions les llengües nacionals dels països de l'AELC/EEE i dels països candidats a l'adhesió participants en aquest programa.

Al llarg d'aquest programa es presta especial atenció al desenvolupament de competències en les *llengües oficials de la Comunitat menys difoses i menys ensenyades* (les llengües 'LWULT', o "Less widely used and less taught").

Language teaching covers the teaching and learning, as foreign languages, of all of the *official Community languages* as well as Irish and Luxembourgish.

The national languages of the EFTA/EEA countries and of the pre-accession countries participating in this programme are also eligible.

Throughout the programme, particular attention is paid to the development of skills in the *less widely used and less taught official Community languages* (the 'LWULT' languages)."

As you will have seen, **the Lingua Action**, within the Socrates programme did not and still does not include the so-called regional or minority languages, other than Irish and Lëtzebuergesch.¹² The latter two languages are included on the grounds that they are official throughout the territory of the respective member States, a criterion carefully chosen so as to exclude languages such as Basque, Sardinian, Welsh or Galician, which are spoken on an everyday basis by at least as many European citizens, and (in the case of Catalan) considerably more. This state of affairs continues in Socrates II (2000-2006).

You will also have noticed that, given that English has taken over as the main foreign language taught in schools, and the other larger languages – German, French and Spanish – enjoy widespread institutional support and produce commercially viable material, preferential treatment is given to the development of skills in the *less widely used and less taught official*¹³ Community languages (listed elsewhere as being Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Greek, Portuguese and Swedish). The Lingua Action¹⁴ also includes languages such as Icelandic and Norwegian, official languages of States in the European Economic Area with smaller numbers of speakers – and probably also of learners – than Catalan.

2001 is a special year, as you know, because it was designated **European Year of Languages**¹⁵ by both the Council of Europe (whose idea it was) and the European Union. It is worth devoting some attention to this action, designed to last one year, though there has apparently been some talk of extending its actions.

The Union Decision to designate 2001 as the "European Year of Languages" (EYL) states in Article 1 that "[...] *measures will cover the official languages of the Community, together with Irish, Lëtzebuergesch, and other languages in line with those identified by the Member States for the purposes of implementing this Decision*". There is a tacit understanding that the Spanish state included Catalan in the "other languages" category, despite the absence of any formal statement to the effect. However, as far as Catalan is concerned, this apparent

12. Lingua home page: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages/actions/lingua2.html>

13. The term 'official' for the eligible less taught languages was introduced into the new Lingua programme, so as to underline the exclusion of minority and regional languages from the language programme of the EU.

14. <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/lingua.html>

15. Decision No 1934/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17.7.2000 on the European Year of Languages 2001. OJEC L 232, 14.9.2000 p. 1–5.

Text: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/lif/dat/2000/en_300D1934.html. Other websites: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages.html>, <http://www.eurolang2001.org/eyl/index.htm>, <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages/actions/year2001.html>, <http://www.eurolang2001.org/eyl/forum/forum.asp?LANG=EN>. Included are the data from the Special Eurobarometer survey 54 'Europeans and Languages'

inclusion certainly made no mark in the results of the first Call for Proposals, though several of the 43 accepted projects did indeed give a place to minority languages (including an Asturian project).¹⁶ I have yet to see the results of the second call.

Nevertheless, the European Year encouraged initiatives at the local level. As an example, on September 26, **European Day of Languages**, there were a fair number of public lectures in Catalonia, as well as the launching of balloons with bilingual messages attached to them; and the Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician versions of the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference For Language* were presented in Madrid.

The EYL website¹⁷ is only in the 11 official languages, and the forum has recorded considerable resentment from speakers of other European languages, particularly Catalan, on this score, as well as because of the complete omission of all but the official languages from the Eurobarometer (no. 54) survey on languages which is cited on the website.¹⁸ Furthermore, for a time it was impossible to identify, in a special section on the website, poems written in anything other than an official EU language, a limitation that the organisers were quick to amend: though only two contributors, from Valencia, have taken advantage of the site to post their poems in any language other than the official EU languages.

The website offers a lot of information regarding language learning: electronic and on-line learning resources, electronic dictionaries, information about courses, etc. A reference to the Consorci per a la Normalització Lingüística¹⁹ is included.

Suport per a una societat de la informació multilingüe: MLIS, e-Learning, e-Content, enginyeria lingüística...

Support for a Multilingual Information Society: MLIS, e-Learning, e-Content, language engineering...

The Community tried for some years to develop automatic translation systems in order to speed up the vast amount of translating that has to be done within the Union's institutions: Council, Commission, Parliament and Court of Justice.

The various institutions have developed terminology databases: TIS (the Council's database), EURODICAUTOM (the Commission's database) and EUTERPE (*Exploitation unifiée de la terminologie au Parlement européen*, which started in 1991). According to a European Parliament source,²⁰ there is now a joint project to bring together all the databases in the Union's institutions by 2002.

Machine-assisted systems and, in general, human language technology, have been supported by several of the Union's research & development framework programmes. These were succeeded by the **Multilingual Information Society programme (MLIS)**, a multi-annual programme designed to promote linguistic diversity in the information society. This programme was discontinued in 1999. It was not limited to official languages, and among projects involving minority languages was the **MELIN** project (Minority European Languages Information Network),²¹ designed to put Irish, Welsh, Catalan and Basque dictionaries and language resources on the Internet and to provide links to them through a website. The project was singled out in an evaluation report.²² Another project, **DART**,²³ developed a browser initially

16. For a list of chosen projects in the first call, see <http://www.iulm.it/progettiael.htm>.

17. <http://www.eurolang2001.org/>

18. Special Eurobarometer survey 54 'Europeans and Languages': <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages.html>.
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/epo/eb/eb54/eb54.html>

19. <http://www.cpnl.org/>

20. http://www.europarl.eu.int/language/default_es.htm

21. <http://www.ite.ie/melin.htm>, <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/cyc/melin/index1.htm>

22. ECOTEC evaluation report: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/el/com/pdf/2001/com2001_0276el01.pdf

23. <http://www.eblul.org/dart/pages/en/defaulten.htm>

in Breton, Irish, Welsh and Scots Gaelic, using existing software. It incorporated specific terminological databases and established procedures for the localisation of the browser.

The *Final Evaluation report*²⁴ of the MLIS programme, states that “*There is a cultural/political rationale to support minority languages and their continued use in the EU. ICT can help in this respect [...]. This rationale is especially important given policies towards closer integration and the enlargement of the EU*” (p. 48).

Support —precari— per a la promoció de llengües regionals o minoritàries

Precarious support for the promotion of regional or minority languages

Budget line B3-1006 was established at the insistence of the European Parliament in 1983, and maintained in 1999 and 2000 (through B3-1000) as a pilot scheme to support the promotion of ‘lesser used languages and cultures’. The amount budgeted increased from 100,000 ECU in 1983 to €3.5 M in 1993, and remained fairly stable up to 1998.

Thanks to this financial support the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages (EBLUL)²⁵ was set up. Later, after the EP’s 1986 Kuipers Resolution, so too was **Mercator**,²⁶ a network of three research and documentation centres which strives to provide reliable, objective information about minority languages in the EU: **Mercator-Education** at the Fryske Akademy (Ljouwert, Fryslân); **Mercator-Legislation** at CIEMEN (Barcelona, Catalonia); and **Mercator-Media** at the University of Wales Aberystwyth (Wales). They are linked electronically, meet regularly, and offer a joint home page on the Internet.

However, the last Call for Proposals was published in September 2000²⁷ on account of the inexistence of a Programme, and in the light of the European Court of Justice Judgment C-106/96 of 12th May 1998.²⁸

Up until then the European Parliament had been very active in defending such languages. Indeed the Parliament has adopted at least five resolutions on the subject over the years.²⁹

As to the prospects of a pluriannual Programme —which was christened “Archipelago” early Commission drafts— the Commission itself seems to have backtracked, as can be inferred

24. *Final Report of the Multilingual Information Society Programme (MLIS) Evaluation Study*. Written by ECOTEC, Research & Consulting Limited, Brussels. http://europa.eu.int/comm/information_society/evaluation/pdf/report1mlis_en.pdf

25. <http://www.eblul.org>

26. www.mercator-central.org

27. For general information: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/langmin.html>. Last call published in the *OJEC* on 16.9.2000 (ref. EAC/19/00): <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/mercator/formul2000/callen.pdf>. Summary: http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgc/aides/forms/eac06_en.htm. EBLUL published a helpful guide for these Calls. On its website, at <http://www.eblul.org/ia/funding.htm> the publication *How to Promote Regional or Minority Languages With the Help of the European Union*, a practical guide to applying for a grant, is available.

28. <http://curia.eu.int/jurisp/cgi-bin/gettext.pl?lang=en&num=80019487C19960106&doc=T&ouvert=T&seance=ARRET>

29. the Resolution on a Community Charter of Regional Languages and Cultures and on a Charter of Rights of Ethnic Minorities of October 16th 1981 (Rapporteur: Arfé. Ref. A1-965/80. Published *OJEC* C 287, 9.11.81, p. 57. <http://www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator/UE18-GB.HTM>), that of February 11th 1983 on measures in favour of minority languages and cultures (Rapporteur: Arfé. Ref. A1-1254/82. Published *OJEC* C 68, 14.3.83, p. 103-104. <http://www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator/UE20-GB.HTM> in Mercator data base; and Minority Electronic Resources (MINELRES): <http://www.riga.lv/minelres/eu/re830211.htm>), that of October 30th 1987 on the languages and cultures of regional and ethnic minorities in the European Community (Rapporteur: Kuipers. Ref. A2-0150/87. Published *OJEC* C 318, 30.11.87, p.160-164. <http://www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator/UE21-GB.HTM> and <http://www.riga.lv/minelres/eu/re871030.htm>), that of December 11th 1990 on the situation of languages of the Community and the Catalan language (Rapporteur: Reding. Published *OJEC* C 19, 28.1.91, p. 42. <http://www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator/UE16-GB.HTM>), and that of February 9th 1994 on linguistic minorities in the European Community (Rapporteur: Killilea. Ref. A3-0042/94, Report of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media on Linguistic and Cultural Minorities in the European Community. Resolution published *OJEC* C 61, 28.2.94, p. 110. <http://www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator/UE23-GB.HTM> and <http://www.riga.lv/minelres/eu/re940209.htm>).

Summaries of each Resolution: <http://www.eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2000-016.htm>.

by its reply³⁰ to question E-0478/00 put to it by the Galician MEP Daniel Varela Suanzes-Carpegna on the

“elaboració per part de la Comissió Europea d’una proposta de base legal per al programa d’acció en favor de les llengües minoritàries o regionals de la UE”.

“preparation by the European Commission of the proposed legal basis for the Archipelago action programme on the minority and regional languages of the EU”.

This means that it is very likely that in 2002, for the first time since 1983, no specific budgetary provision will be made (other than the A-line support for EBLUL and Mercator) for the promotion of lesser-used languages, though several other programmes – such as e-Content, regional funds and Leonardo da Vinci – are open to such projects.

The Commission has failed to present a proposal for a multiannual programme, despite the announcement made before the European Parliament in 1999 by the then Commissioner-designate responsible for Education and Culture, Viviane Reding,³¹ a person of proven commitment to the cause of minority languages. The reason may lie in several places: the Commission’s legal services may have expressed their opinion that such a programme should come under the scope of Article 151, which governs cultural matters and requires a unanimous vote on the part of the Council (an unlikely event, given the opposition of Greece and France and the misgivings of countries such as Spain). Secondly, the Council itself has also expressed its opinion (equally mistaken in my view) that responsibility for linguistic and cultural diversity lies with the member States and not the Union. We have already referred to the Council’s reply to a question by MEP Pere Esteve in this regard, and shall return to this point later.

Previsibles efectos de la inminente ampliación de la UE cap a l’est

Foreseeable effects of the imminent eastward enlargement of the EU

It has already been stated that the Union has 11 official and working languages. This number is well-nigh unmanageable. The official languages of the first tranche of in-coming languages are Estonian, Slovenian, Hungarian, Czech, Polish and even, perhaps, Turkish (as an incentive to the Turkish Cypriots to end their unilateral secession and military occupation by the Turkish army in the north of the island). Thereafter it is likely that Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia and Malta will be queuing up. Each of these countries has its own official language.

The burgeoning number of languages involved make it almost certain that formulae will have to be found to distinguish between official, working and service languages.

An added factor will be the spectacular growth in the number of national minorities present in the new member States. In some – particularly Cyprus and Estonia – the issue is of considerable political importance. It would therefore not seem unreasonable to suppose that the Union will have an additional stimulus to regulate means of providing support to these languages.

30. Reply: http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/OM-Europarl?PROG=WQA&L=EN&PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+WQA+E-2000-0478+0+DOC+SGML+V0//EN&LEVEL=4&SAME_LEVEL=1, OJEC C 374 E , 28.12.2000, p. 82

31. “I intend to present to the Commission a proposal for a multiannual programme for the development of the European dimension in education through the learning, promotion and dissemination of regional and/or minority languages.” Viviane Reding, Commissioner-designate for Education and Culture, 2.9.99. DOC_EN\DV\380\380397EN.doc, PE 230.789/rev.II, pp. 20-21.

Costos administratius del model lingüístic actual: interpretació i traducció
Administrative costs of the present linguistic model: interpretation and translation

The EU devotes a large sum to managing linguistic diversity inside its own institutions: translations, interpretations and terminological research for its 11 official languages cost no less than €723M in 1999. This is only a small fraction of the Union's total budget, of course, but nevertheless it serves as a contrast to the pittance that over a period of 18 years (1983-2000) was granted for the support of "regional or minority languages".

Dèficit democràtic i de comunicació amb el ciutadà; la sensibilitat institucional per l'exclusió
The democratic and communication deficit with citizens; institutional sensitivity for exclusion

In the mid-1980s, as European economic and monetary convergence began to affect citizen's in their daily lives (for instance, the zero-deficit objective for public administrations led to serious cutbacks in public spending, and to the very cornerstones of the welfare society being shaken). The democratic deficit³² was related to lack of transparency in decision-making, lack of accountability of the executive before the general citizenry, and

"[...] current arguments about the democratic deficit in the EC/EU may be classified into three main groups, according to the legitimacy standards they use: standards based on the analogy with national institutions; standards derived from the democratic legitimacy of the member states; and standards of social justice.

Arguments in the first group tend to equate European institutions and national institutions, or to assume that the former will converge to the familiar model of parliamentary democracy. The analogy with national institutions leads, for example, to the claim that the European Parliament (EP) should have an independent power of legislative initiative because national parliaments are so empowered. According to the arguments in the second group, the legitimacy of the integration process proceeds from the democratic legitimacy of the member states. In this view, the veto power of each national government is the single most legitimating element of the integration process, while the shift to majority voting is the root cause of the legitimacy problem (Weiler 1991)."³³

32. See, for example, *The European Union. A Bibliography*, by Osvaldo Croci (Department of Political Science, Memorial University of Newfoundland), who lists a long bibliography, including works on "Democratic deficit and legitimacy" http://www.mun.ca/ceuep/policy_making.html#9.23

See also *Glossary of The European Union and European Communities (Acronyms, Initiatives, Institutions, Policies, Programmes and Terms)*, compiled by Derek Urwin, University of Aberdeen: <http://www.uta.fi/FAST/GC/eurgloss.html>. Democratic Deficit: "The claim that there is a lack of proper democratic and parliamentary supervision and accountability in EC decision-making procedures".

"Politicians began to take the issue of the democratic deficit seriously from 1992, when Danish voters failed to ratify 'The Treaty on European Union'; Leaders could no longer afford to continue to appear unaccountable." Essaybank.Co.Uk, *Democratic Deficit in the EU*, 2001-06-30, t "blank" <http://www.essaybank.co.uk/essays/2606.php> (20 September 2001).

Another definition is: "The growing gap between the power and authority of EU institutions", according to Michael J. Baun, *An Imperfect Union. The Maastricht Treaty and the New Politics of European Integration*. Boulder/Co., Oxford: Westview Press, 1996. (Series: The New Europe: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.): p. 86. See http://www.essaybank.co.uk/essays/2606.php#_ednref1.

The deficit does not just affect the public at large. The European Parliament also began complaining in the context of the Treaty of Maastricht. Thus we read in the FECL bulletin no. 20 (November 1993) <http://www.fecl.org/circular/2006.htm> of a July 15 1993 EP Resolution on cooperation in the field of justice and Internal affairs under the Treaty on European Union:

"There is and remains a large distance between the executive and supervisory power, i.e. a big democratic deficit", the report stresses.

Due to the wholly intergovernmental nature of the whole area it is, formally, the national parliaments which exercise supervision. Yet these parliaments can only call their own government representatives to account. They have no direct influence on the collective element of the decision-making process.

33. Weiler, Joseph (1991) "The Transformation of Europe," *Yale Law Journal* 100: 2403-2473.

"Finally, arguments relying on social standards are ostensibly about the democratic deficit, but in fact are driven by a different agenda: dissatisfaction with the slow pace of political integration, or concerns about the future of the national welfare state. According to these critics the EC/EU lacks legitimacy primarily because of its failure to provide social justice. By the social standards prevailing in the member states, the EC/EU is a "welfare laggard" and thus cannot count on the social acceptance enjoyed by the national welfare states (Majone 1998)."³⁴

A secondary element of the discussion on the democratic deficit of the Union may be the languages it uses in its relations with the Union's citizens. If this is so, then an increase in the number of languages used for such communication would bring the Union closer to millions of its citizens. This is no empty claim, for as the Committee of Regions reminded us earlier in this paper, "*language permeates all aspects of people's lives*".

Explosió de l'ús de les TIC (tecnologies de la informació i la comunicació), i transformació de model econòmic i democràtic. Reptes lingüístics

Explosion in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and transformation of the economic and democratic paradigm. Linguistic challenges

The worldwide introduction of low-cost systems of data-gathering, treatment, analysis, storage and transmission is having a growing effect upon modern society. The Internet acts not only as a vast library – part of which is of restricted access – but also as a huge marketplace for the exchange of services and products. Many are free, but many are beginning to compete with traditional commercial systems. Flight and hotel bookings, the purchase of books and pharmaceuticals, subscriptions to journals, newspapers and magazines, access to data banks, etc. are all available on-line, and traditional systems are gradually noticing the effects. As you know, some private airlines do all their booking outside the travel agency circuits, and Internet is perfectly in tune with their system.

The ready access to information of political relevance, as well as special channels to facilitate this (such as Democràcia Web³⁵ or the experiences in digital democracy in Welsh-speaking Wales) promises challenges to the present system of representative democracy, since the need for political intermediaries in some areas can be allayed, or at least attenuated, by using the Internet. In more general terms, the possibility of those in power exercising rigid censorship of the media, as typically occurs in a dictatorship, can be completely shattered by the use of the Internet, as we have seen with denunciations of the destruction of Colombian tribal settlements by oil prospecting companies, or the oppression of women in the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

These new opportunities may actually have an impact on the present economic and democratic paradigms, and it is no surprise that the Union has policies to keep abreast of developments, in the hope that the Union can at least partly bridge the gap separately Europe from the USA.

One aspect of these policies is linguistic, and the MLIS programme (1995-1999) was a largely successful attempt to stimulate programmes and methods to cope with multilingual environments.

34. Majone, Giandomenico (1998) "Europe's 'Democratic Deficit': The Question of Standards," *European Law Journal* 4: 5-28.

35. <http://www.democraciaweb.org>

El tractament de la diversitat lingüística a les altres organitzacions europees: el Consell d'Europa (règim intern, Carta europea, Conveni marc), i

Treatment of linguistic diversity in other European organisations: Council of Europe (internal norms, European Charter, Framework Convention, and

The Council of Europe, which has two official languages (English and French), has a fairly active policy regarding minority languages, expressed through European Treaties and a Recommendation. These are the **European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages**³⁶ (to which we shall return in a moment) and the **Framework Convention for National Minorities**,³⁷ though the latter deals with language policy standards to a much lesser extent; and the Parliamentary Assembly's 1998 Recommendation 1383 on linguistic diversity are both relevant to language policies.

The Council also has a European Centre on Racism and Intolerance, which ironically has focussed on Catalonia's language policies as if they somehow discriminated against non-Catalan-speaking schoolchildren, in spite of the Spanish Constitutional court's ruling that the education model in Catalonia was laudable in its aim of fostering integration.

I'Organització per a la Seguretat i Cooperació a Europa (OSCE)

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Though the OSCE is not related to the European Union, its efforts in the field of national minorities' rights are important, given that they affect several States that have applied as candidates in the EU enlargement process. The Union itself laid down requirements in this area in its conditions for accession, and is monitoring the issue closely in some of the countries. Cyprus is almost a case on its own, given the de facto division of sovereignty of the island at the present time.

The OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities is responsible for setting in motion the drafting of several sets of Recommendations regarding the rights of national minorities. Linguistic rights appear in some articles of The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities³⁸ (October 1996), and are central to the Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities³⁹ (February 1998).

Diversitat de tractament de les llengües minoritzades als diferents estats; adhésions a la Carta europea de les llengües regionals o minoritàries

Varied policies towards minorised languages in member States: ratifications of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages

This is not the place to present a survey of the language policies of each EU member state, of course. Suffice it to say that there is a common yardstick which allows us to compare the degrees of commitment to the cause of minority languages: the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages,⁴⁰ which the Council of Europe opened for signature on November 5 1992. It entered into force on March 1 1998, after five ratifications. On November 11 2001, it had been (a) signed and ratified by eight EU members (in order of ratification, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, United Kingdom, Spain, Austria); (b) signed but not yet ratified by three EU members (in order of signature: Luxembourg, France

36. Opened to signature on 5.11.92. <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Word/148.doc>

37. ETS 157: <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Word/157.doc>

38. <http://www.osce.org/hcnm/documents/recommendations/hague/index.php3>

39. <http://www.osce.org/hcnm/documents/recommendations/oslo/index.php3>

40. ETS 148: <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/EN/searchsig.asp?NT=148&CM=8&DF=02/07/01>

and Italy); and (c) not signed by Belgium, Greece, Ireland and Portugal. The Declarations of some of these states are at least as interesting as the detail of the commitments formalised (see annex). Some of the various reasons **Belgium, Greece, Ireland and Portugal** not having signed the Charter are disappearing over time. **Portugal** recently enacted a law recognising and protecting Mirandese. In the past, **Greece** firmly negated the existence of minorities other than the Muslims; but many feel that a recent European Court of Human Rights⁴¹ decision condemning the Greek authorities for having refused to register a cultural organisation of the Macedonian minority, and the rumpus caused by the Sotiris Bletsas case (about which questions have been asked in the European Parliament) may herald favourable policy changes. **Ireland** (and **Luxembourg**, which has not ratified the text) argue that Irish and Lëtzebuergesch are the first languages in both states, and not minority languages; and indeed both were exempted from the call on States to sign and ratify the Charter, made in the Committee of the Regions' recent Opinion on the Promotion and Protection of Regional and Minority Languages.⁴²

2. Recerques en curs: Estudi encarregat el 2001 pel Parlament Europeu, sobre el paper de la UE en el suport a les comunitats lingüístiques minoritzades. Estudi encarregat per la DG d'Educació i Cultura; avançament de resultats

2. On-going research: Projects commissioned in 2001 by the European Parliament, on the Role of the European Union in Supporting Minority or Lesser-Used Languages. Projects commissioned by DG Education and Culture; early results

There are at present at least two research Reports in the pipeline. One was commissioned by the European Parliament: The Role of the European Union in Supporting Minority or Lesser-Used Languages.⁴³ The contract was won by CIEMEN, and has been directed by myself. The second was commissioned by DG Education and Culture, and is coordinated by EBLUL.

The first was specifically required to try and find a way round the blockage caused by the lack of a pluriannual programme, in the context of the European Court of Justice sentence we have referred to above. Though it has yet to be published, and thus discretion is required, we can say that the greater part of the Report is devoted to the situation of the minority language communities in seven Member States of the EU: Greece (EL), Spain (ES), Finland (FI), France (FR), Ireland (IR), Luxembourg (LU) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK). It is argued that no proclamation of linguistic and cultural diversity as a valuable resource that has to be respected and promoted, can exclude regional and minority languages, under the pretence that their protection is the sole responsibility of member States (see above).⁴⁴ Nor do we believe that such a programme should come specifically,

41. In July 1998, the European Court of Human Rights found that Greece had violated article 11 (freedom of association) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) because the Greek courts had not allowed the establishment of the association "Home of Macedonian Civilization" in 1990: <http://www.hrw.org/worldreport99/europe/greece.html>. Text of Judgment (10.7.98) in Sidiropoulos and Others v. Greece case: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/Hudoc2doc2/HEJUD/199902/sidiropoulos%20and%20others.jud%20batj.doc>

42. 13 June 2001. http://www.cor.eu.int/presentation/down/avis_39plen/CdR86_2001fin/cdr86-2001_fin_ac_en.doc

43. European Parliament contract IV/2000/13/02

44. Així, en resposta preliminar de 7 de maig de 2001 a l'eurodiputat Pere Esteve, el Consell va dir que malgrat reconèixer "totalment" la riquesa de la diversitat lingüística de la Comunitat, considera que la responsabilitat per a la diversitat lingüística i cultural és a les mans dels estats. Pregunta escrita E-3948/00, OJEC C235 E/36-37, 21.8.2001.

Thus the Council's "preliminary answer", unpublished on October 30th 2001, (http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/OM-Europarl?PROG=WQA&L=EN&PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+WQA+E-2000-3948-N+0+DOC+WORD+V0//EN&LEVEL=4&SAME_LEVEL=1), to a question put to it by MEP Pere Esteve (Ref. E-3948/00, OJEC C235 E/36-37, 21.8.2001), states that "While fully acknowledging the richness of the linguistic diversity of the Community (including the Catalan language), the Council considers, as is clear from the above as well as in the formulation of Article 149 of the EC Treaty and indeed in the principle of subsidiarity in general, that the responsibility for that cultural and linguistic diversity lies with the Member States".

or even principally, under the terms of “culture” (article 151, which requires an unanimous vote on the part of member states in order to become official Union policy). Article 149, governing the Union’s responsibilities in the field of education, seems a much more likely candidate, as the Commission stated three years ago in its reply to written question 2139/98.⁴⁵ What is today Article 149 – in the framework of which require a qualified majority, but not unanimity – has, in our view, been misread and misinterpreted in the past, and the issue of subsidiarity by no means closes the door to Union action in this field.

The second report was commissioned by the DG for Education and Culture at about the same time (the end of 2000), again because of the crisis provoked by the Court of Justice Judgment C-106/96 of 12th May 1998,⁴⁶ and the suspension of the budget line at the end of 2000. In this case, commissioner Viviane Reding had already hinted at such a possibility. The orientation of the work in progress is, however, more academic, and concentrates on trying to delimit the priorities that minority language communities have in the way of support for projects. It also devotes attention to ways of measuring – or at least estimating – the cost-effectiveness of different policies. The final report is expected at the end of the year. It will contain fairly precise recommendations to guide the Commission in its future actions to support minority languages, and it may well include proposals to highlight the possibilities that such projects already have, on paper, in existing programmes (regional, educational, etc.) as well as proposals of usually small changes in other existing programmes which exclude such languages at present.

Conclusió

Estem en un moment de transició que ens ofereix als catalans una oportunitat històrica per incidir en la formulació d’una política lingüística europea.

Conclusion

We are now at a time of transition which offers Catalans an historic opportunity to have a say in formulating a European language policy.

The time is ripe for an improvement in the Union’s treatment of Europe’s “regional or minority” languages. The crisis in the model of integral multilingualism, further strained by the coming enlargement of the Union, and the considerable increase in potential hotspots related to national minorities in countries such as Estonia and Cyprus, make it more likely that a new model will be sought. It might well guarantee the interpretation of a larger number of languages than at present, into a smaller number of languages. It might well extend further than the official languages of the member States, and include official members in these States, so as to embrace Catalan, Basque, Frisian, Welsh and other languages, on demand. A conceptual jump would be made, to bring the Union’s institutions closer to millions of its citizens:

“One wonders if a distinction might be agreed between internal working languages and languages of service to Europe’s citizens. Internal working languages could

45. Written question [E-2139/98](http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/OM-Europarl?PROG=WQ&L=EN&PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-1998-2139+0+DOC+SGML+V0//EN&LEVEL=3) by Friedhelm Frischenschlager (ELDR) to the Commission (13.7.98). <http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/OM-Europarl?PROG=WQ&L=EN&PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-1998-2139+0+DOC+SGML+V0//EN&LEVEL=3>.

Answer given by Mrs Cresson on behalf of the Commission (23.9.98): http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/OM-Europarl?PROG=WQA&L=EN&PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+WQA+E-1998-2139+0+DOC+SGML+V0//EN&LEVEL=4&SAME_LEVEL=1. OC J 50, 22.2.99 (p. 130): [...]Article 126 of the EC Treaty stipulates that “the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education... while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity”. Community action must also be aimed at “developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States”. In effect the Commission’s action in support of regional and minority languages is based on this article.

46. <http://curia.eu.int/jurisp/cgi-bin/gettext.pl?lang=en&num=80019487C19960106&doc=T&ouvert=T&seance=ARRET>

be restricted for most but not all purposes to two or three languages. Languages of service should include not only all existing official and working languages but also most of those we now call “regional”, “minority” or “lesser used”.⁴⁷

We believe that the concept of “language of service” could be a big step forward in responding to linguistic diversity in the European Union.

47. Ó Riagáin, Dónall “The European Union and Lesser Used Languages”, *MOST Journal on Multicultural Societies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2001. ISSN 1564-4901. © UNESCO, 2001. <http://www.unesco.org/most/vl3n1ria.htm>