The Multilingualism policy of the European Commission

Challenges and perspectives

Teresa Condeço
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Europe is more multilingual by the day

- Enlargements of the European Union
- Greater mobility in the Single Market
- Ancient and new migratory flows
- Globalisation
CONTEXT

- 27 Member States
- 23 official languages
- more than 60 other EU autochthonous languages
- more than 450 spoken languages in EU
Multilingualism

- a tool for understanding and integration

- the co-existence of different language communities in one geographical area
Why learn languages?

• Languages are essential for the construction of Europe

• The promotion of linguistic diversity is one of the objectives of the European Union
Why learn languages?

A basic skill for all Europeans

–communication:
  • work, trade, study, travel

–understanding:
  • tolerance
  • solidarity
Key messages

- Learning languages provides people with many benefits: new career possibilities, self-fulfilment, deeper understanding of one’s own and others’ cultures.

- Learning languages can be accessible.
Key messages

– Learning one *lingua franca* alone is not enough.

– Mother tongue + two other languages for every citizen
Key messages

– widest possible range of languages in our schools, universities, adult education centres and enterprises.
Key messages

– Range should include:

• smaller as well as larger EU official languages

• ‘regional’, ‘minority’, as well as ‘national’ languages
Key messages

• migrant languages

• languages of trading partners
Why learn languages?

Introduction - Europeans and their languages

Languages most commonly used in the EU - %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Mother tongue</th>
<th>Foreign language</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why learn languages?

Introduction - Europeans and their languages

D48b-d Which languages do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation excluding your mother tongue?

- At least one language: 56%
- At least two languages: 28%
- At least three languages: 11%
- None: 44%
Why learn languages?

Introduction – Foreign languages taught on secondary education

- 85% English
- 25% French
- 17% German
Why learn languages?

For:
jobs and growth (Lisbon strategy

http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/index_en.htm

• tolerance and understanding
The founding stones

- European Year of Languages 2001
- Action plan “promoting language learning and linguistic diversity 2004-2006”
- A new framework strategy for multilingualism (2005)
The founding stones

Action Plan “promoting language learning and linguistic diversity 2004-2006”

• lifelong learning
• better language teaching
• building a language-friendly environment
Pre-primary and primary

At least two foreign languages from a very early age

For this:

– well-trained teachers
– schools with resources
– time on curriculum
Secondary and vocational

–Mastery of at least two foreign languages

–Aim: effective communicative ability

• not native speaker perfection
Higher Education

- Languages for all students - of all subjects
  - study abroad in a foreign language
  - gain a language qualification as part of degree
The language-friendly school

–A holistic approach, make connections between curricula for:
  • mother tongue
  • ‘foreign’ languages
  • language of instruction
  • languages of migrant communities
Language teacher training

-Language teachers:
  • play crucial role in building multilingual Europe
  • exemplify European values
Language-friendly communities

-A community where people:

• are aware of the many languages around them and open to this diversity

• are exposed to other languages
Language-friendly communities

• learn from the skills of migrants and others

• take every opportunity to speak and learn languages
The founding stones

A new framework strategy for multilingualism (2005)

• multilingual society
• multilingual economy
• multilingualism and citizens
Tools

• Funding programmes

• Cooperation with Member States

• Expert’s groups
Lifelong language learning

• Key Activity Languages:

Networks

😊good practices that serve to motivate language learners
On line consultation: factors for successful language learning:

• early start
• direct experience of the country of the target language
Motivation

And also:

• Adjusting teaching methods to learners’ needs and capabilities

• Use of multimedia in the classroom
Motivation

Important factor leading to good quality language teaching
Cooperation Member States

• First Ministerial Conference on Multilingualism

• Ministers of Education and Culture of Member States
Experts Groups

• High Level Group on Multilingualism

• Group of Intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue

• Business Forum
High Level Group Multilingualism

Independent experts:

- Languages and media
- Languages for business
- Interpretation and translation
- Research
- MOTIVATION
High Level Group Multilingualism

• Motivation is key to language learning

• Enhance motivation: n° 1 priority of language teaching at school

• Target new groups of learners
Group Intellectuals

• Chaired by writer Amin Maalouf

• Languages and intercultural dialogue

• Motivate European citizens to learn a "second mother tongue"
Group Intellectuals

- Languages in the dialogue of cultures: Keynote speech Maalouf
- 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue
Business Forum

• Language training for business employees
• Language management strategies within companies
• Enhancing the use of intercultural skills
New Communication 2008

WHY?

- More EU Member States
- More intra-European mobility
- More immigration from third countries
- More global competition
New Communication 2008

- Citizens need languages to study, work and travel abroad
- Companies need languages to be competitive
- Civil society needs languages for intercultural dialogue
New Communication 2008

• Reaffirm the basis of multilingualism policy in Europe

• Set areas for common work with Member States to foster multilingualism policy
A more comprehensive policy

• Member States endorse a comprehensive policy for multilingualism

• Mainstream multilingualism in relevant European policies
More information?

• Languages Portal: http://europa.eu/languages/
• Multilingualism policy: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages_en.html