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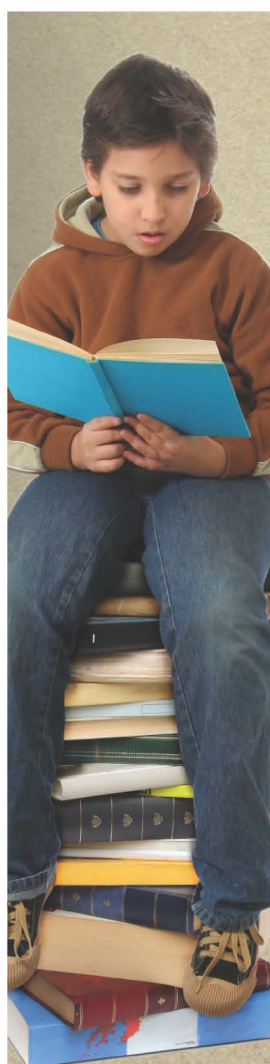
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**ENDANGERED LANGUAGES  
AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY  
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

NOTE

EN DE FR

2013







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**CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

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**NOTE**

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education.

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Original: EN  
Translations: DE, FR

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Manuscript completed in March 2013.  
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DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES  
POLICY DEPARTMENT B: STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

# ENDANGERED LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

NOTE

## **Abstract**

In the context of the rich diversity of languages that exist in Europe, this paper considers the possible implications of the disappearance of some of these languages and considers what steps need be planned to safeguard their existence and their future.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**CRSS** Constitutional, regional and smaller state languages

**EBLUL** European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages

**EU** the European Union

**FUEN** Federal Union of European Nationalities

**LLP** Lifelong language learning programme

**MELT** Multilingual language transmission

**NGO** Non-governmental organisation

**NPLD** Network for Promoting Linguistic Diversity

**RML** Regional and minority languages

**SUC** Sami University College



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'A language is in danger when its speakers cease to use it. Use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains and cease to pass it from one generation to the next. That is, there are no new speakers, adults or children' (UNESCO,2003).

Languages are one of, if not the greatest development of the human race. As well as a means of communication, they also encompass a wide range of values and beliefs and are a window on many different ways of looking at the world. In this context, this paper considers those languages in Europe which are under threat or are considered to be endangered.

The European Council's Resolution of the 21 November 2008 on a European strategy for multilingualism notes that:

'-linguistic and cultural diversity is part and parcel of the European identity; it is at once a shared heritage, a wealth, a challenge and an asset for Europe.'

It also states that 'the promotion of less widely used European languages represents an important contribution to multilingualism (Council Resolution of 21 Nov 2008 on a European Strategy for Multilingualism).

It is widely agreed that languages are an extremely rich part of Europe's cultural heritage. Languages express identity and provide a link for speakers of a language with their past, present and future. Embedded within languages there is a great deal of knowledge about the world and the human experience. When languages become extinct, this knowledge is lost.

Bi and multilingualism is regarded as an asset in terms of creativity and innovation. The cognitive skills of people who are able to speak more than one language fluently are recognised. Research shows that they are more adept at dealing with more divergent thinking, creativity and the sensitivities of communicative. (Baker, 2011)

Between six and seven thousand languages are spoken in the world today (Ethnologue). 97% of the world's people speak about 4% of the world's languages and, conversely, about 96% of the world's languages are spoken by 3% of the world's people (Bernard 1996). Only 3% of the world's languages are indigenous to Europe. According to the *Atlas of the World's Languages* (UNESCO), there are 128 languages within the European Union that are considered to be endangered. All languages that are treated as a separate language, and not a dialect, have their own ISO- Code.

With the development of the concept of the nation state in the modern era and the emphasis on having a more uniform culture across a state, greater emphasis was placed on developing a common language and a common culture which would assist in the process of assimilation. Policies were also developed within the sphere of education, in particular, to support this objective. This policy development had a particularly detrimental effect on all languages which were not adopted as state languages.

Over the past half century, the process of globalisation has also seen a more generic culture being promoted on the world stage with the English language being a predominant driver in this context. Many lesser used languages have found it difficult to compete and survive on this stage.

A range of minority languages are able to show that they have additional economic value in terms of employment opportunities and also in real economic terms. However, many endangered languages are in deprived rural areas, often with poor transport links. Speakers of many of these endangered languages don't believe that their languages have status or economic value, and, as a result, do not pass their language on to the next generation. This lack of intergenerational transmission is one of the most obvious facets of languages which are endangered.

During the 1990s, UNESCO published the *Red Book of Endangered Languages* which collected a comprehensive list of the world's endangered languages. This was later replaced by the *Atlas of the World's languages in Danger*. In 2002/03, UNESCO asked an international group of ad hoc experts to develop a framework for classifying the vitality of a language. This framework lists 7 levels of vitality; five of these levels deal with languages which are endangered. These classifications were: safe; stable yet threatened; vulnerable; definitely endangered; severely endangered; critically endangered; extinct.

The same group also listed nine factors which characterised a language's overall linguistic situation. These included such factors as levels of intergenerational transmission, absolute number of speakers and trends in existing language domains.

Within the European Union there are many languages spoken. There are 23 officially recognised languages which are the working languages of the Union. There are more than 60 indigenous regional and minority languages with five of these being recognised as being semi official (Catalan, Galician, Basque, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh). All other languages have no official status in the EU.

The EU, although it has limited influence because educational and language policies are the responsibility of individual Member States, notes that it is committed to safeguarding linguistic diversity and promoting knowledge of languages.

The accepted terms used to classify languages which are indigenous to Europe, but which are not state languages within a particular state, are the terms regional or minority languages. This is the term used by the Council of Europe in its *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. These languages fall broadly into four categories, which are: **autochthonous** languages which are indigenous but not state languages; **autochthonous and cross border**, which are indigenous and exist in more than one state, but are not state languages; **cross border languages** which exist as a state language in one state and a minority language in another; and **non territorial languages** such as Roma.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) is a European treaty adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe to protect and promote historical regional and minority languages in Europe. The Charter provides a large number of different actions which states can take to protect and promote regional and minority languages. There are two levels of protection—all signatories are required to apply the lower level of protection to qualifying languages. Signatories may also further declare that a qualifying language or languages will benefit from the higher level of protection, which lists a range of actions. From this list, states must agree to undertake at least 35 actions. The Charter doesn't deal specifically with languages under the heading endangered languages but many of the endangered languages of Europe fall into the category of receiving the lower levels of protection.

Eighteen countries in Europe have signed and ratified the Charter, three have signed but haven't ratified as yet; a number of states haven't signed the Charter. The Charter itself is an important international instrument to safeguard regional and minority languages. The Committee of Experts, which advises the Council of Europe, notes that many states still lack a structured approach to language preservation and promotion. The Council of Europe recommends that states should develop long term and structured strategies in order to safeguard minority languages.

Over the past thirty years, the European Union has promoted a range of strategies to support the learning of languages and linguistic diversity. In 1983 the European Union established an Action Line for the Promotion and Safeguard of Minority and Regional Languages and Culture. By 1998, this Action Line provided 3,350,305€ directly for projects related to minority languages. This support had a significant networking effect and it was a catalyst in promoting the sharing of expertise and good practise. This budget line was suppressed in 2001 after the judgement of the European Court of Justice (1998). Following this, the EU has decided to apply a mainstreaming strategy instead of setting up a separate programme. At the time, it was requested that the EU should review its spending on RML's as part of this new development. In 2008, a report to the Culture and Education Committee of the European Parliament noted, in the context of the Lifelong Learning Programme, that: 'Investment in minority languages has been much lower.'

In 2011 the Committee of Regions noted in a Policy recommendation that there is a need for:

'a specific policy on linguistic minorities that is adequately funded and underpinned by a firmer legal basis;'

Linguistic diversity and language learning has been significantly promoted in the context of multilingualism in Europe over the past decade. Regional and minority languages have also been promoted in this context. Following a request from the European Parliament, the Commission launched a feasibility study on the possible creation of a European Agency for Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity. The European Commission's response was that it preferred to see networks being established and funding for three network which deal with RML's has been provided almost continuously since 2008. These include the NPLD, FUEN and Mercator research networks.

At present, the EU has placed its main emphasis, in the context of multilingualism and the generation of new ideas and policy suggestions, on the establishment of the Civil Society platform on Multilingualism.

Some Member States, mainly at regional governmental level, have developed well structured strategic plans for the promotion and safeguarding of their languages. This is especially developed in the regions of Spain and the UK. The Irish Government has also developed a 20 year strategy for the promotion of the use of the Irish language. Most of these strategies, however, have been developed in the context of the stronger RML's. In some member states there are a range of minority languages, some of which may be endangered. Member States should attempt to ensure that there is an element of a parity of support between different linguistic minority groups within their jurisdiction.

A number of innovative ideas have been developed to promote endangered and minority languages over the past decades. These include project within communities as diverse as the Sami communities and the communities on the Isle of Mann and in Wales. One

particularly successful project was the MELT project, co funded by the EU, which supported the development of expertise in the preschool sector in the learning of minority languages.

Endangered languages face many challenges. The digital age, especially, can be both a challenge but also an opportunity. META-NET (2012) notes, that those minority languages, which are quite highly developed, such as the Basque and Catalan languages, are in a high risk category, in terms of their future sustainability. But there also opportunities, as language communities can help each other by using their languages as the language of social media.

Economic growth and employment will, understandably, be the focus of the EU over the coming years. Linking the issue of endangered languages to this agenda is not always easy. However, when languages die, they, in general, disappear for ever. In order to put weight behind its rhetoric with regards to linguistic diversity, the EU needs to look in detail at the practical support it's able to provide for endangered language communities within the remit it has in this area.

## Key findings

### Policy Recommendations

Consideration should be given to ensuring **specific funding for endangered language communities** if they are to survive. Support should be provided with the process of developing a policy framework for the promotion of endangered languages within the overall context of linguistic diversity.

The Council of Europe should be asked to **consider the possibility of including specific clauses within the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages with regard to endangered languages**. The European Union could also encourage those Members of the Union who have as yet not signed the Charter to do so, and to encourage all members who have signed, to ratify the Charter.

As part of the European Union's emphasis on sharing good practice, all member states should be **encouraged to produce national strategic plans** for the promotion of endangered languages based on the high quality good practice which is already available within a number of language communities in Europe. The European Union should advise member states that similar support should be given within the state to each endangered or minority language community. In terms of setting European wide priorities for language revitalisation, the main focus should be on language transmission in the home and the learning of endangered languages within the educational system. **Robust educational policies are required** to promote the learning and use of endangered languages.

**Better collaborative action is required between the key actors** in the area of providing support for endangered languages. Existing networks at a European level need to be enhanced and sufficiently funded in order to be effective and efficient in this context.

Specific attention needs to be given to the support that technology can provide. Many of the endangered languages communities are small in numbers and can be increasingly dispersed. **Technology and social media can provide easily accessible means of communication** for these language groups both as a means of individual communication but also as an effective way of group communication. European Research and Development funding could be very impactful in this area

Endangered language communities need to be **empowered to promote their own languages**. There is a great deal of knowledge and expertise available in this area and this should be utilised. Particular emphasis should be placed on increasing the use of endangered languages by young people. In order to do this, these language communities must have the resources to show and **persuade their young people that their languages are useful, relevant and desirable**.





## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. '(The Union)... shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced' (Treaty of European Union, Article 3).

One of the objectives of the European Union has been to preserve and promote the cultural and linguistic heritage which exists in Europe today. An important part of this heritage are the languages spoken in Europe and the promotion of the learning of languages and multilingualism has had a prominent place within the policy priorities of the European Union. Many of the languages spoken across Europe are spoken either at a regional level or by minorities and a number of these languages face a very uncertain future. Attempting to protect these languages has also been the subject of a number of European and international policies over the past decades.

In this context, the Council of Europe, through the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and also the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has also supported the promotion of minority language usage. UNESCO, on the international stage, has also developed a framework which determines the vitality of a language. This framework assists in the process of identifying those languages which are at greatest risk in order to assist in the process of policy developments, identification of needs and appropriate safeguarding measures.

At a European Union level a number of initiatives have been launched since the event of the Year of Languages in 2001. In 2008, the European Council called for the development of a strategy for multilingualism which should include provision for 'linguistic and cultural diversity'. The European Commission responded by publishing, in 2011, an update on the Strategy for multilingualism first published in 2005.

In 2011, the Committee of the Regions of the European Union in its published opinion on 'protecting and developing historical linguistic minorities under the Lisbon Treaty, noted in the section on 'Measures needed', that it called ' on the Commission and the Council to take more of an account of the need for a specific policy on linguistic minorities that is adequately funded and underpinned by a firmer legal basis.'

Although the issue of minority and regional languages receives some attention in many of the initiatives developed by the European Union in the context of multilingualism, **the issue of languages which are endangered receives little specific attention and no measures are allocated to deal with this particular linguistic issue.**

Languages are essential for many aspects of everyone's lives and are most probably humankind's greatest development. Communicating ideas, aspirations and fears and questioning the world around us makes us the people we are. Languages form bonds, build teamwork and drive everyone's lives forward in a totally unique way. Languages are one of the most basic parts of people's identity. Languages are therefore very powerful but also very emotional tools. They are not only a means of communication, but they also have embedded within them many of the values, aspirations and the way of life of the speakers of these languages.

Between 6000 and 7000 languages are spoken in the world today, although it's difficult to give an exact number, as there is no agreed definition available of what is a language (as different from a dialect). It is also believed that at present at least 2000 of these languages have fewer than 1000 speakers. Asia has the highest number of living languages (Ethnologue 1996) with 2165 languages being noted. About 97% of the world's people speak 4% of the world's languages; and conversely, about 96% of the world's languages are spoken by about 3% of the world's people (Bernard, 1996).

Europe in comparison has far fewer living languages with 255 languages being noted. Europe's linguistic diversity, with 3% of the world's living languages, may suggest that dealing with languages at a European level should be a much simpler issue than in any other continent in the world.

Many of the 6000 to 7000 languages spoken in the world today are in danger of becoming extinct. These are languages 'where there is a significant probability of dying within the lifetime of the current generations' ( Baker, 2011). Those with fewer than 10,000 speakers are especially vulnerable. About half or even more of the world's languages are in the situation that they do not regenerate themselves. These languages are usually not transmitted within the family and also there is little or no backup within the education system to ensure that new generations of children speak the languages. It is very possible that within the next hundred years that there will be fewer than 1000 languages spoken in the world. The extinction rate for languages is much greater, it appears, than the extinction rate for biological species.

As the multiethnic empires of Europe evolved into the nation states of today, an increasing emphasis was placed on developing a more uniform and often centralised system for public administration. More emphasis was also placed on the creation of a more uniform 'national culture' through state policy. This model of the nation state also promoted the concept that a nation state should have a common language and history. Where this was not present it was often created through a new policy for language and education which promote the national language to the exclusion of all other languages present within the state. This meant that non state languages were either suppressed or ignored. This suppression led to high levels of assimilation over a period of time and many regional or minority languages became either extinct or endangered .This process gained pace as governments played an increasingly prevalent role in the daily life of nation states and the cultural and linguistic monopoly of the state became even stronger. However, many areas have seen a revival of interest in regional languages and cultures over the past century.

Over the past fifty or more years another process, which is referred to as globalisation, has begun. Increasingly the world's largest economies have opened their borders in favour of free trade and this trade has developed to include cultural as well as economic goods. Lifestyle, music, fashion and means of communication have become global and are often closely linked to the English language. State languages have also played an important role in this development. However, without state backing, regional and minority languages have found it difficult to find a foothold in this ever evolving scenario.

Language preservation is not easy, both at a practical and emotional level. When a language falls into a downward spiral of lack of usage, its speakers become demoralised and begin to feel that their language has no status within their community or region and then that it has little social or economic value. They then stop transferring the language to the next generation. However there are a number of success stories where languages have been revitalised. The ability to support and promote languages has developed considerably over the past fifty years.

## 1.2. Why retaining language diversity is important

Crystal (2000) suggests that there are five basic arguments why retaining language diversity is important and why language planning is needed.

- It is widely agreed that retaining ecological diversity is essential. Uniformity can endanger a species by providing inflexibility and inadaptability. The range of cross-fertilization becomes less, it is argued, as languages and cultures die and the testimony of human intellectual achievement is lessened. In the language of ecology, the strongest ecosystems are those that are the most diverse.
- Languages express identity. Identity concerns the shared characteristics of members of a group. Community or religion identity helps provide the security and status of a shared existence
- Languages are repositories of history. Languages provide a link with the past, a means to reach an archive of knowledge, ideas and beliefs from our heritage.' Every language is a living museum, a monument to every culture it has been a vehicle to' (Nettle and Romaine, 2000)
- Languages contribute to our sum of human knowledge. Inside every language is a vision of the past, present and future. A language contains a way of thinking and being, acting and doing. Language is also at the heart of education, culture and identity.
- Languages are interesting in themselves Crystal argues that language itself is important. He argues that the more languages there are to study, the more our understanding about the beauty of language grows.

In terms of the viability of a language, one of the key factors is its economic status. Many endangered languages are found in regions that are relatively sparsely populated, economically underdeveloped with poor rural road and transport systems and where there is a danger of a growing inequality between core and periphery within the country or region. However there is evidence to suggest that it is increasingly valuable to be bilingual. For some individuals, this is to gain employment and for others bilingualism may be of value in working locally for international or multinational corporations.

Bilingualism can certainly give a competitive edge in an increasing number of vocations. The case of Wales also demonstrates a salary advantage for bilinguals in some minority language areas. Henley and Jones (Henley and Jones, 2000) found that bilinguals were earning 8% to 10% more salary specifically for their bilingualism. They also suggest that the cognitive advantages of bilinguals provide extra human capital that then affects their salary. There is also an increasing understanding that there is a social value to bilingualism where bilinguals bring added value and stability to their communities.

The ability to communicate in several languages is a great benefit for individuals, organisations and companies. It enhances creativity, breaks cultural stereotypes, encourages thinking "outside the box", and can help develop innovative products and services. These are all qualities and activities that have real economic value. Bilinguals have advantages on certain thinking dimensions, particularly in divergent thinking, creativity, early metalinguistic awareness and communicative sensitivity (Baker, 2011) The research findings largely suggest that bilinguals are superior to monolinguals on divergent thinking tasks.



## 2. LANGUAGES IN EUROPE

- 2.1. How many languages are spoken in Europe today? What is the difference between a dialect and a language and what criteria should we use to differentiate between them? What are majority, minority, regional or endangered languages? These are questions which appear regularly while discussing regional or minority languages in particular.
- 2.2. It is usually noted by the European Union that between 40 and 50 million people in Europe speak the 60 regional or minority languages that exist within the EU. In terms of the numbers of speakers, regional and minority languages can vary quite substantially. The most widely used regional or minority language is Catalan, with between 7-10 million speakers in Spain, France and Sardinia. Catalan is therefore spoken by more people than many other languages which have the status of a majority language in Europe, and it is one of the 10 most widely spoken languages within EU. In this paper, however, the main focus is on endangered languages and the possible implications of their disappearance and what kind of measures could be put in place to prevent this from happening.
- 2.3. Within the European Union there are 128 endangered languages according to UNESCO. Twenty two of them are defined as vulnerable, including languages such as Basque and Welsh; 40 languages are considered as definitely endangered, including Karelian, Friulian and Sorbian. 41 languages are severely endangered, such as Kashubian, Scots, Sami and Breton. 10 languages are considered critically endangered, for example, Livonian and Cornish. 11 languages are considered to be extinct since 1950, and these include Mozarabic, Kemi Sami and Alderney French.
- 2.4. In general, endangered languages in Europe are included within the category of languages which are usually defined as minority or regional languages and there are of course many similarities between these languages within the same grouping. This paper doesn't deal with migrant languages which are spoken in Europe and which may also be in danger.



### 3. CLASSIFICATION OF LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE VITALITY AND ENDANGERMENT

- 3.1. *The Red Book of Endangered Languages* was published by UNESCO (1993) and it included a comprehensive list of the world's endangered languages. The main aim of the project was to systematically gather information on endangered languages, to strengthen research and the collection of materials. One crucial element, however, was missing from the Red Book, which was to work with the endangered-language communities toward language maintenance, development and, revitalization.
- 3.2. In 2001 UNESCO adopted **the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity** that recognized a relationship between biodiversity, cultural diversity, and linguistic diversity. In 2002 - 2003, UNESCO asked an international group of linguists to develop a framework for determining the vitality of a language in order to assist in policy development, identification of needs and appropriate safeguarding measures. The ad hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages published the paper "Language Vitality and Endangerment". In 2003 the first version of the *World Atlas of Languages in Danger* was published. The third updated edition was published in 2009. The languages included in the Atlas all suffer some level of endangerment.
- 3.3. UNESCO notes five levels of endangerment that may be distinguished with regard to intergenerational transmission, which is recognized as the cornerstone of a language's vitality (UNESCO, 2003).

**Safe** (5) if the language is spoken by all generations. The intergenerational transmission of the language is uninterrupted. Such languages are therefore not found in the Atlas and not shown in the database or publication.

**Stable yet threatened** (5-) if the language is spoken in most contexts by all generations with unbroken transmission, although multilingualism in the native language and one or more dominant languages has taken over certain contexts. Such languages are not usually in the Atlas, but in the future they may be.

**Vulnerable** (4) if most children or families of a particular community speak their parental language as a first language, even if only in the home.

**Definitely endangered** (3) if the language is no longer learned as the mother tongue or taught in the home. The youngest speakers are of the parental generation.

**Severely endangered** (2) if the language is spoken only by grandparents and older generations; the parental generation may still understand it but will not pass it on to their children.

**Critically endangered** (1) if the youngest speakers are of the great-grandparents' generation, and the language is not used every day. These older people may only partially remember it and have no partners for communication.

**Extinct** (0) if no one speaks or remembers the language over the last 50 years. When a language is extinct, no longer learns it as the first tongue, and that the last speaker to learn the language in that way has passed on within the last five decades.

3.4. The same Ad hoc high level group of linguists commissioned by UNESCO also identified (UNESCO, 2003) nine factors for characterizing a language's overall sociolinguistic situation. Of these factors, six factors can be used to evaluate a language's vitality and state of endangerment, two factors to assess language attitudes, and one factor to evaluate the urgency for documentation.

The nine factors for characterizing the overall sociolinguistic situation of a language are:

- Levels of intergenerational language transmission
- Absolute number of speakers
- Proportion of speakers within the total population
- Trends in Existing Language Domains
- Response to new domains and media
- Materials for language education and literacy
- Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use
- Community attitudes toward their own language
- Amount and quality of documentation

3.5. It is noted that endangered languages can also go through structural changes where the level of change is likely to be more dramatic than the normal rate of change and evolution seen in any language. This change will be very broad in influence and many aspects of the language itself will change simultaneously. Sometime this change can happen extremely quickly indeed.



## 4. LANGUAGE CATEGORIES FOR WEAKER LANGUAGES

Languages, in general, can be placed in different categories depending on their size and political and economic situation. When talking about languages that have a weaker position than the major languages in Europe, they can be referred to as either Constitutional, Regional and Smaller State languages (CRSS), Regional and Minority Languages (RML), Lesser Used languages, Autochthonous, Cross border and Non-territorial languages. Some of these are also classified as endangered languages. Many of these categories also overlap.

### 4.1. Member State, Constitutional and Regional Languages

When considering the legal position of lesser used languages within the European Union, it may be helpful, at a practical level, to categorise them into three levels of status:

- Official and working languages of the EU which are also spoken by a minority in an adjoining state, e.g. Swedish in Finland.
- Languages that have a degree of official recognition in the member states or in a part of the member state where they are spoken e.g. Catalan, Basque and Galician in Spain.
- Languages that have no official recognition at an EU level.

The three categories of languages are treated differently at a European Union level in terms of status and possible usage within European establishments.

### 4.2. Regional and Minority languages

The generally accepted definition of a regional or minority language in Europe is the one which is used in the international treaty supervised by the Council of Europe, the 'European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages no 148'. Here regional and minority languages are described as 'those traditionally used by part of the population of a state, but which are not official state language dialects, migrant languages or artificially created languages.'

### 4.3. Autochthonous, cross border and non-territorial languages

Minority languages in Europe can also be divided into four other categories which are relevant to the discussion on weaker and endangered languages.

- **Autochthonous languages** are languages that originated in a specified place and were not brought to that place from elsewhere. Autochthonous languages are spoken usually within a part or parts of a member state, but are not the majority language of that state or even the region, for example Welsh in Wales.

- **Autochthonous languages which are also cross border** are languages which are not the main state language, for example Basque in Spain but are also spoken across the border in another member state, where they are not the main state language there either e.g. Basque in France, and North Sami in Sweden and Finland.
- **Cross border languages** are languages spoken by a minority language group in one member state, but the language exists also in another state. The cross-border language is often the majority language in the neighbouring state.

The report Euromosaic III (2004) which considered the linguistic situation of the member states that joined 2004 notes

‘There are not many autochthonous linguistic minorities in the new Member States, unlike in the EU15 Member States. Most of the present regional or minority language groups are due to population movement and border changes, and can rarely be pinned down to a single moment in time..... In the EU12 Member States there were fewer linguistic minorities in border areas, consistent with the presence of several languages having no kin states. Another distinct feature in the new Member States is the traditional establishment of large minority language groups in capital cities like Budapest and Prague’.

There are issues here regarding the levels of support that can be expected from kin states and also that languages can develop and evolve in time when they exist in a state with another majority language. In this context, it is possible to question whether cross border languages can, in reality, be classed as endangered languages.

The fourth category is **the non-territorial languages** such as Roma and Yiddish. Romani is incontestably the most widespread non-territorial language in the world. It is sometimes treated as seven languages; Carpathian Romani, Kalo Finnish Romani, Baltic Romani, Balkan Romani, Sinte Romani, Welsh Romani and Vlach (‘Vlax’) Romani, but the Romani dialects preserve a remarkable degree of unity, which has led to the current treatment of Romani as a single language. Both Roma and Yiddish are included as endangered languages in the Atlas, and these languages receive little support from European or member state sources (Suominen, 2009).

## 5. THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL'S CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

- 5.1. As already noted, the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is another international instrument which can be used to measure the vitality of a minority or regional language community. This Charter can also be used as a tool to measure a member state's commitment to the promotion of RMLs.
- 5.2. By today, the generally accepted definition of a regional or minority language in Europe is the one which is used in the international treaty supervised by the Council of Europe, the 'European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages no 148'. Here regional and minority languages are described as 'those traditionally used by part of the population of a state, but which are not official state language dialects, migrant languages or artificially created languages.' It is mainly up to the states to inform what languages should be included into the Charter. That's also one of the reasons that the Committee of Experts still continues to discuss with some of the states which languages should be included. The same discussion was also ongoing in 2007.
- 5.3. To date, eighteen EU member states have ratified the Charter; three member states have signed but not ratified the Charter (France, Italy and Malta) and nine member states have not agreed to sign it.
- 5.4. Some of the languages are included in both the World Atlas and in the Charter, while others are only included in one or the other. Within each state, many of these languages will very often meet similar problems and challenges, and the need for the protection and the safeguarding of these languages and the recommendations on how to promote these languages will follow a similar rationale.
- 5.5. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe (2012) on the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* No 148 produced a report in 2012 which covers the years 2010 and 2011. The conclusion from this report is that many member states lack a structured approach to the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages. In the Secretary General's report it is noted that the Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe highly recommends that states should develop long-term and structured strategies for promoting and safeguarding the minority languages. The experts also note that the implementation of an action plan might need the creation, by Member States, of specific budget lines to support this planning process.

An interesting recommendation in the report was that it would be beneficial, in the context of promoting the minority languages, to inform the majority language group about the situation of the minority language(s) within the State.

In the Charter there is a specific emphasis on education and language learning. The lack of provision of education, from pre-school to higher education, within minority language communities, is often noted within the reporting procedure. In some states the only possibility of learning the minority language within the education system is as a 'foreign' language subject as it's not taught as a mother tongue. The report notes that developing

the provision of bilingual education would support and promote minority languages and also that more emphasis should be placed on the development of suitable teacher training courses to aid the place of minority languages in school.

Concerning the media sector, the Committee of Experts noted that the time-slots, time-schedules and financial support available for radio and television programmes in minority languages needs to be improved. In many minority areas there is also a lack of printed media and, for some languages, further work needs to be undertaken on the standardization of the printed version of the language.

Other recommendations within the experts report noted that cultural and languages bodies for the minority languages should be established to promote awareness and tolerance for regional or minority languages. The Committee was also concerned that some of the thresholds which had been established below which no provision would be available, has been placed too high in some member states. It was noted that in some states the threshold had risen to 20 % before there could be representations or acknowledgement of bilingualism within local or regional government.

## 6. THE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

- 6.1. In the context of subsidiarity, the primary responsibility for minority and regional languages rest with the member states of the EU. However the EU has a role in terms of supporting the states in the promotion of RML's. The international community in general has noted the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity and that its preservation being an issue which deserves protection and support. Linguistic diversity is therefore viewed in the context of language rights but it is also seen as a cultural asset for the EU. The EU has in place a range of legal documentation and pronouncements that make this clear.
- 6.2. The latest legal documentation is the *Lisbon Treaty* that was signed in 2007 and entered into force in 2009. In the Treaty Article 2:3 it states that the EU 'shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced. *'The consolidated version of the Treaty Establishing the European Community (2012), article 167* which states that 'the Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. And that the community shall take cultural aspects into account in its actions under other provisions of the Treaties, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures' .
- 6.3. The *Charter of Fundamental Rights for the European Union, article 21 and 22* state that 'any discrimination based on any grounds such as...language...membership of a national minority... shall be prohibited' and ' the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity'.

### 6.4. Funding for RML

In 1983, the EU established the *'Action Line for the Promotion and Safeguard of Minority and Regional Languages and Cultures*, with the intention of providing funding for the promotion of all RMLs which included endangered languages. After the judgment of the European Court of Justice in 1998, this budget line was suppressed in 2002 due to it not having a legal basis. Attempts since then to establish a legal basis as required by EU law have failed. Following this ruling there has been no specific funding targeted towards RMLs. The funding for RML's, between 1983 and 2000 grew from 100,000 euro to nearly 4m euro a year and provided funding for EBLUL and the Mercator Centres and also provided support for projects which were beneficial for RMLs. Therefore, although the ruling of The European Court of Justice in 1998 had nothing to do specifically with the budget line for RMLs its effect was far reaching on the support provided for these language communities.

Following the demise of this budget line, RML communities have had to apply for funding from within the main stream. Whilst this does open the door on a much larger potential sources of funding, the competition for this funding is far greater and the tasks associated with submitting such an application may well be beyond the scope and reach of small language communities, especially in terms of the match funding of project work. Also, the

EU now requires a guarantee against this funding in many contexts. Being able to do provide a guarantee for large sums may be very problematic in the context of endangered languages.

Since 2007, when new opportunities were provided for all language groups to apply for funding, it does not appear that equal access to these funds has been provided, especially for the smaller language communities. It would appear that little or no work has been undertaken to assess the impact of these new funding arrangements on these languages. This has led to very few applications being received at EU level from RML communities and the only successful bids came for funding which targeted networking within language groups such as the work undertaken by the NPLD and FUEN, and some associated research work undertaken by the Mercator Centres. The Fryske Akademy, however, was successful in receiving a biannual grant for a project on Multilingual Language Transmission in early year settings. No funding or structural arrangements have been put in place to allow for small scale projects to provide assistance for small communities of RML speakers in order to assist them with the practical promotion of their languages. This is especially true of endangered language communities in Europe. In 2008, a report to the Culture and Education Committee of the European Parliament noted, in the context of the Lifelong Learning Programme, that: 'Investment in minority languages has been much lower.'

In 2011 the Committee of Regions noted in a Policy recommendation that there is a need for: 'a specific policy on linguistic minorities that is adequately funded and underpinned by a firmer legal basis;'

6.5. During the past decade, the EU has promoted a number of initiatives which have been targeted towards the promotion of languages, multilingualism and linguistic diversity. 2001 was designated *The European Year of Languages* which had as its objective, the encouragement of linguistic diversity. Following the Year of Languages, the European Parliament adopted measures to promote linguistic diversity and language learning. In 2002, the meeting of the European Council held in Barcelona called for action 'to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from an early age. From this came the concept of 'mother tongue plus two'

6.6. In 2001, at the end of the European Year of Languages, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution recommending measures to promote linguistic diversity and language learning. In July 2003, The European Commission adopted the Action Plan *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity*

6.7. In 2003, the European Parliament authorised a legislative initiative report with recommendations to the Commission on European regional and lesser-used languages – the languages of minorities in the EU – in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity (2003/2057(INI)), for practical measures such as a legal act to establish a multi-annual programme for linguistic diversity and the establishment of concrete financial measures to promote projects. The rapporteur was Michl Ebner. This report calls on the European Commission to act on eight specific areas which include:

'Calls on the Commission to provide scientifically based criteria for a definition of a minority or regional language for the purpose of the possible programme for linguistic diversity'

6.8. In 2005, the Report on a *New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism* was published. The strategy noted that: 'The European Union is founded on 'unity in diversity': diversity of cultures, customs and beliefs - and of languages. Besides the 21 official languages of the Union, there are 60 or so other indigenous languages and scores of non-indigenous languages spoken by migrant communities.' 'It is this diversity that makes the European Union what it is: not a 'melting pot' in which differences are rendered down, but a common home in which diversity is celebrated, and where our many mother tongues are a source of wealth and a bridge to greater solidarity and mutual understanding'

It also noted that: 'The Commission's multilingualism policy has three aims:

- to encourage language learning and promoting linguistic diversity in society;
- to promote a healthy multilingual economy, and
- to give citizens access to European Union legislation, procedures and information in their own languages.'

Within the strategy document it was reported that: 'Following a request from the European Parliament, the Commission in 2004 launched a feasibility study on the possible creation of a European Agency for Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity. The study concludes that there are unmet needs in this field, and proposes two options: creating an agency or setting up a European network of 'Language Diversity Centres'. The Commission believes that a network would be the most appropriate next step and, where possible, should build on existing structures; it will examine the possibility of financing it on a multi-annual basis through the proposed Lifelong Learning programme.' From these comments came the possibility of funding networks such as NPLD and FUEN, although in fact both networks had already been funded by the EU.

In 2007, the Commission of the European Communities published a report by the High Level Group on Multilingualism. This group noted that it believed that 'Regional and minority languages had experienced a remarkable revival' The group also noted that they' shared the view that the revitalization, maintenance, further development, and long term survival of Europe's regional and minority languages should continue to be a matter of European concern, and they welcomed the fact that that Community support would continue to be available for networks and platforms dedicated to this aim'

Interestingly the group also concluded that 'further research should be conducted into educational and management practices in bilingual communities with a view to assessing their potential for application in other situations'

In view of the recent report '*Key data on Teaching Languages in School in Europe, 2012*' this could be a valuable suggestion.

6.9. In November 2008, the Council of the European Union passed a resolution on a European Strategy for Multilingualism. It noted that it considered that:

- 'linguistic and cultural diversity is part and parcel of the European identity; it is at once a shared heritage, a wealth, a challenge and an asset for Europe
- the promotion of less widely used European languages represents an important contribution to multilingualism,



- significant efforts should still be made to promote language learning and to value the cultural aspects of linguistic diversity at all levels of education and training, while also improving information on the variety of European languages and their dissemination across the world

6.10. In 2008, the Commission also published a report called *'Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment'* The report noted that: 'The main objective is therefore to raise awareness of the value and opportunities of the EU's linguistic diversity and encourage the removal of barriers to intercultural dialogue. It also noted its intention to establish a new discussion platform which would consider further the issues related to multilingualism and language learning: 'It will create a platform with the media, cultural organisations and other civil society stakeholders to discuss and exchange practices to promote multilingualism for intercultural dialogue.

6.11. In 2008 European Parliament also published *'Multilingualism: Between Policy Objectives and Implementation'* The main focus of the study was on assessing how member states and other stakeholders of the European Union have supported policies aimed at promoting language learning and cultural diversity over the period 2004 to 2008. The study was undertaken in the context of the Commission Communication 'Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006' and the 'European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages' of the Council of Europe. In the conclusions of the study, many particularly salient points are raised. The report notes that: 'There is a lot of interest, support and demand for preserving minority languages and promoting linguistic diversity'

It also raises another issue, which is relevant today as it was in 2008, especially in the context of the new budget proposals for education for the period 2014-20:

'Multilingualism and linguistic diversity are sometimes conflicting policy agendas. Language learning policy has tended to be influenced by 'harder' priorities like economic competitiveness and labour market mobility, and linguistic diversity policies by 'softer' issues like inclusion and human rights. Multilingualism policy has been more highly prioritized than linguistic diversity policy in terms of concrete actions.'

Another important point the report made is:

'The actions of the European Parliament reflect a consistent and persistent effort to mainstream minority language protection and linguistic diversity support. Since the late 1970's the European Parliament has issued a series of communications and resolutions that call for the Commission to take action in order to promote the use of minority languages and to review all Community legislation or practices which discriminate against minority languages. However, a major problem is that none of these initiatives are binding upon the Member States.'

In the context of funding, the report notes:

'The main EU funding mechanisms for languages are the 'education and training programmes' including the second phases of the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes and the new Lifelong Learning Programme. Much of the funding has supported language learning initiatives. Investment in minority languages has been much lower. EU



Funding to support languages and promote linguistic diversity has shown a downward trend in recent years.'

## **6.12. The Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism**

The *Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism* was established 2009 by the European Commission to consider multilingualism and language diversity from a broad perspective, from education, linguistic diversity, translation to terminology and language planning and policy. The members in the platform consisted almost entirely of NGOs, and the platform was not open to regional or national authorities. In 2011, the Platform published a report on 'Policy recommendations for *the Promotion of Multilingualism in the European Union*. Within the Platforms recommendations, they note the importance of promoting endangered languages and what relevant actions could be undertaken to support endangered languages. One key area is noted, which is to develop a European language plan to promote equality and usage of Europe's languages including endangered languages. Their recommendation is that the plan should: be comprehensive and inclusive; be citizen-centered; link with other policies and objectives; prioritise support for endangered languages and should pay due attention to corpus planning. The report points out the necessity to make it easier for small NGOs from endangered language communities to apply for EU-funding. As a way forward, one of the sub-groups 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.

**6.13.** In September 2011, the Committee of the Regions agreed and published an Opinion on 'Protecting and developing historical linguistic minorities under the Lisbon Treaty'. In the final clause of its opinion the Committee of Regions: 'calls, finally, on the Commission and the Council to take more account of the need for a specific policy on linguistic minorities that is adequately funded and underpinned by a firmer legal basis'. This final paragraph sums up well the requirements for all regional and minority languages within the European Union, and all the languages which are endangered within this group of languages.



## 7. SUPPORT PROVIDED BY MEMBER STATES

- 7.1. Some Member States of EU have developed their own strategic approaches to regional and minority languages which exist within their own jurisdiction. However there is no consistency of support and approach within and between member states and the differences of support for the protection and support of regional and minority languages can be very large. It is very difficult to evaluate the level of protection, support and promotion provided of RMLs within individual member states as very little data is available. NPLD has recently commissioned a comparative study of language strategies that have been developed by states and regional governments across Europe. Very often, however, the picture within a linguistic community can be very diverse with many actors taking part and structures being continuously reviewed before they have an opportunity to bed down and become active.
- 7.2. Some member states have a longer tradition than most of providing both legal and financial support for CRSS languages. Ireland and Finland, who both gained independence at the beginning of the last century, have a tradition since then of language promotion.
- 7.3. In general, support for RMLs has evolved over the past thirty or forty years. This was initially driven by a grass roots revival whose aims and ideals in time have been adopted by some member states and more specifically by devolved administrations. Many states have shown their commitment to the protection and promotion of regional and minority Languages by introducing legislation which deals with either language rights or the provision of services in those Languages.
- 7.4. Well designed and well executed language policies can obviously have a great impact on the future of a minority language. Very often the planning for the protection of minority languages is undertaken by regional governments where the powers to deal with language issues have been devolved to those jurisdictions. Noted below is a selection of these plans
- Criterios para la normalización del uso del euskera en las administraciones públicas (Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2007)
  - Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw A Living Language: A Language for Living (Welsh Government, 2011)
  - 20-year strategy for the Irish language (Irish Government, 2010)
  - Plan general de normalización lingüística del catalán en las Islas Baleares (2009)
  - National Gaelic Language Plan II (Scotland, 2011)
  - Plan xeral de normalización da lingua galega (Xunta de Galicia, 2008)

Within these documents there is often an:

- Identifiable policy cycle
- Clear and consistent objectives
- Evidence-based policy development
- Setting of targets and timetable for delivery
- Close evaluation and monitoring of programmes

- Annual Reports on the operation of the Strategy
  - An understanding that a good language strategy should be cost-effective as well as efficient
  - Sensitivity to political considerations in terms of majority acceptance of the language strategy
- 7.5. Some of the most extensive language legislation in Europe has been enacted at a regional level in the UK and in Spain. The measures put in place to protect and promote Catalan, Basque and Galician in Spain and Welsh in the UK have been substantial. These measures have often been in high prestige domains and they have managed at least to slow down if not reverse the patterns of long term decline.
- 7.6. In general, this support is at its strongest in the context of the larger minority language groups. The smaller language groups find it more difficult to gather political and financial support. There are also numerous examples of the slow erosion of some well protected languages.
- 7.7. In line with the principle of subsidiary, primary responsibility for supporting regional or minority languages would have to remain at a member state or regional level. It can be argued, however, that the European Union has an overarching responsibility for all the languages that are spoken in Europe which are part of the small but rich heritage of linguistic diversity that exist in Europe today. This rich heritage receives a great deal of support in terms of rhetoric, but this is not quite so obvious in terms of its practical application. The numbers of languages in question here are quite small when compared to the world stage and therefore it should be possible to provide adequate support and assistance for those languages.

## 8. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE PLANNING

- 8.1. In the context of providing support and encouragement for languages which are endangered, it is important to remember that much work has already been undertaken with regard to identifying the areas within the language planning or management process which require specific attention. A language is endangered when it is on the path to extinction as there are no new speakers of the language. If these languages are to be retained, it is a recognized fact that these linguistic communities require immediate policy intervention and that impactful language planning strategies are needed at a local, national and, ideally, at a European level.
- 8.2. Traditionally, holistic language planning usually involves three inter-dependent and integrated approaches (Cooper, 1989; Kloss and Verdoodt, 1969). The three elements are **status planning**, **acquisition planning** and **corpus planning**. In Wales, another category has been added which is **usage or opportunity planning** (Baker, 2008). All these elements are interconnecting; for example, Grenoble and Whitley (2006) indicate that what happens in the family is affected by government policy and vice versa.
- 8.3. The most basic element in language planning to ensure the survival of a language is **acquisition planning**. Within every community, but especially within minority or endangered language communities, the intergenerational transmission of a language from parents to children and language learning in the minority language or bilingual education is an essential foundation for language survival.
- 8.4. **Status planning** is more political, by nature, where there are more attempts to gain recognition and functions for a language. By entering new domains of usage, such as in the media or a wider range of printed material, or in social media, a language may be secured and revitalized.
- 8.5. **Corpus planning** is often an important element of dealing with the revitalization of an endangered language as it deals with the linguistic standardization of a language and ensures that a modernized vocabulary is used and that terminology is standardized and developed for evolving subject areas.
- 8.6. However, to be truly effective support for an endangered language has also to be part of a wider economic, social and political process which is sensitive to regional and area differences and traditions.
- 8.7. One of the main challenges facing endangered language communities in Europe is how to survive in the digital age and how to take advantage of the opportunities that social media provide for promoting language use in a meaningful context. META-NET (META-NET, 2012) notes in a study undertaken in 2012 that 'in the digital age, multilingual Europe and its linguistic heritage are facing challenges but many possibilities and opportunities. Even the minority languages which have invested most in language technology support, such as Basque and Catalan were classed as 'high risk' in terms of the future. In their assessment they looked at automatic translation, speech interaction, text analysis and the availability of language resources. If Basque and Catalan are in the high risk category, where does that

leave the other minority language? The use of social media has already been identified by many minority language communities as a means of promoting the practical use of their language as this resource is freely available. But again the status of the language plays an important part in whether speakers of endangered languages will have the confidence and the linguistic competences to be able to use their language in its written form, despite the fact that the language often used in social media is not the standardised language and is closer to the oral form. . Further research needs to be undertaken in the context of the use of social media made by speakers of regional and minority languages and an assessment made regarding which domains are particularly productive for the promotion of the use of these languages. This could be an area of study where the European Union could provide useful and productive support and guidance for endangered language communities and could build and develop the expertise and interest which already exists in many of these communities in this particular sphere of development. Specific attention could also be given to use Research and Development funds to develop ICT tools to help standardise languages and therefore support the process of developing spell checkers, voice recognition and machine translation tools in endangered languages.

- 8.8. The contribution of the 'Culture' and 'Media' Programmes of the EU for supporting minority languages has been minor, although they do appear to have had a positive effect in disseminating cultural works from minority languages to a wider audience.

## **9. WHAT EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE CAN BE DISSEMINATED AND WHY?**

### **9.1. MELT**

The MELT project was a two-year Comenius Multilateral Project co-funded by the EU's LLP. The project proposal is a result of cooperation between regions on the pre-school period within the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD). The MELT project explicitly takes the CRSS languages as a starting point for its activities. The project provides practical guidance on how to structure an early pre-school immersion language learning strategy in the contexts of minority and endangered languages. The CRSS language communities through this project functioned as natural laboratory for promoting the development of a multicultural and multilingual society. The MELT project (2009-2011), its products and the cooperation between the members, showed that it is totally possible for children to be able to grow up in a minority language and become multilingual.

### **9.2. Sami communities**

The INTERREG IVA programs are divided into regional groups and the INTERREG IVA North has a subgroup Sapmi – 'borderless development' which is one of the prioritized areas in the program. Some of the projects that have been developed under this subheading are also connected to language transmission and maintenance. In the Sami communities they work more and more over the national borders, to promote the Sami languages and traditions. Sami University College (SUC) is a Sami-language academic institution that was founded in 1989 with the aim of meeting the need for education among the Sami people. The development of the Sami University College originates from Sami society's need for its own research and higher education institution and has an indigenous perspective to its courses of study, research and communication. The Sami language is at the core of the activities of SUC. The University College is a multilingual institution, although the main language is Northern Sami. On a daily basis workers and students also use other Sami languages and several other major languages.

Ovttas was an INTERREG 4a project between two municipalities on the border region, Tana (Norway) and Utsjoki (Finland). The aim was to build up common Sami preschool and school curriculum and to establish continuous cooperation between the municipalities

### **9.3. Bunscoill Ghaelgagh (Isle of Mann,UK)**

The Manx Gaelic School, or Bunscoill Ghaelgagh in Manx, is a primary school where the children learn every subject through Manx Gaelic. Teaching through the medium of Manx was established initially in the year 2000, with one class of ten 4 year old pupils in an English medium school. This class by now has grown into an entire Manx medium school. The children quickly become fluent in the Manx Language and also enjoy the benefits of a bi-lingual education and a learning environment which offers a good insight to Manx culture and music.

Working together with the school is the Manx playgroup organisation Moinjer Veggey (Manx for Little People). This was established in 1996 and operates five groups in the Island. These provide an introduction for pre-school children who learn the language through songs and rhymes. Many of the children at the playgroups later take up places at the Bunscoill.

#### **9.4. Resource tool kit for local communities**

The aim of the pack is to provide a framework for small language communities to plan for the promotion and the increased usage of Welsh within their own locality. The toolkit explains how to form an action group and then what information and data should be collected about the community in which they live. Once this exercise has been undertaken, an assessment is made of the strength and weaknesses of the language within the area and which domains would benefit from additional support. An action plan is then devised using the framework provided in the toolkit. The tasks are then divided amongst the group and other people who wish to support. The progress of the project is then monitored by the Action Group. The framework provides a step by step approach to practical language management within a community. Already many communities in Wales have been using this toolkit and they are pleased with the results. This is a model which would be easily transferrable to other communities and small language groups



## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

1. Additional **specific funding needs to be provided for endangered language communities** if they are to survive. Funding could be provided in a similar way as funding is provided for Universities through the Jean Monet programme. In 1998 up to nearly €4m was provided through a specific budget line for the support of regional and minority languages. By now this has decreased substantially. As endangered languages are generally poor in terms of human as well as financial resources any funding which is provided should be relatively simple to apply for and any match funding should be kept to a minimum. Calls for applications for such funding should be targeted mainly at NGO's working in the field of language regeneration.
2. The Council of Europe should be asked to **consider the possibility of including specific clauses within the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages with regard to endangered languages**. This could refer in the first place to languages which have been classified under section 2 of the Charter. More emphasis should also be placed on ensuring that member states who have ratified the Charter for RML's to place a greater emphasis on making progress between each state report and that there is an increasing emphasis on agreeing higher levels of commitment on a regular basis. As the Charter has been operative for some time, it could be opportune to review the Charter and to consider how it can be used more effectively to support the endangered languages that are spoken. The European Union could also encourage those Members of the Union who have as yet not signed the Charter to do so, and to encourage all members who have signed, to ratify the Charter.
3. Research should also be commissioned to support the process of **formulating a highly developed policy framework for the promotion of endangered languages within the context of linguistic diversity**. Member states need to develop robust and relevant language learning policies for endangered language communities where emphasis is placed on learning the language in the home and or through immersion or similar models within the education system.
4. As part of the European Union's emphasis on sharing good practice, all member states should be **encouraged to produce national strategic plans** for the promotion of endangered languages based on the high quality good practice which is already available within a number of language communities in Europe. These strategic management plans would include data on the situation of the minority or endangered language. Based on this data there would be a detailed analysis of the needs of the language community in terms of legislative support, support within the education sector and also within family, community and public life.
5. In member states where there are many endangered language, or even a mixture of minority and endangered languages, the **member state should consider the level of support which is provided to each language** and whether there is a parity of support. Within member states where devolved administrations have responsibility for languages, member state could provide a forum for this debate.
6. In terms of setting European wide priorities, which could also be used as benchmarks in terms of progress, the **areas which require the main focus** are: increasing the numbers of speakers though **transmission within the home**; providing opportunities for children to become fluent in the language within **the educational system**; **corpus planning**, which ensures that the language is well

- document and can be used in modern technology, and **usage planning** in order to ensure that there are plenty of structured opportunities both at a social and more structured opportunities to use the language as an effective means of communication.
7. Developing a robust **educational policy** for the teaching and learning of endangered languages would be particularly beneficial. This should include providing teachers and prospective teachers with training in basic linguistics, language teaching pedagogy and advice on curriculum and teaching materials development.
  8. Both the European Institutions and member states should provide support to promote **better collaborative work between key actors and stakeholders** within endangered language communities. This could involve providing additional support for networking organizations such as NPLD and FUEN. The three institutions – The Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, should work together to develop and implement a working forum for regular strategic review of endangered languages in Europe.
  9. Specific attention needs to be given to the support that technology can provide. Many of the endangered languages communities are small in numbers and can be increasingly dispersed. **Technology and social media can provide easily accessible means of communication** for these language groups both as a means of individual communication but also as an effective way of group communication, carrying news and other aspects of information which people require within society today. Also in terms of the status of a language, technology has and will have a pivotal role to play. The European Union should consider providing support through the Research and Development Programme to look in detail at which domains are receptive to the development of the use of social media within endangered language communities, with specific attention being paid to encouraging the oral use of these languages.
  10. It is also vital that the **endangered languages communities themselves are empowered** and that the process of language planning is not seen as one which is only promoted from outside the communities themselves, this is often called grassroots planning. Much work has been done across the world on techniques which can be used to support very small language communities. This work needs to fully review, and the lessons learned from the studies, which have already been undertaken, should be promoted at a European level.
  11. The main test of whether a language survives or not is whether that language, be it Scots Gaelic or Meankieli, is used on a Saturday evening on a street corner in a town or village as a vibrant means of communication. There are a whole range of reasons why this will or won't happen. In a highly centralized world, where the influences on young people through the media and technology and the pressures from young people on young people to conform to a linguistic and cultural norm, promoting the use of an endangered language requires a great deal of skill and knowledge. As part of a debate on providing financial support for endangered languages, priority should be given to **employing young people who have these skills and this knowledge base to work with other young people from their own language communities in order to show and persuade them that their languages are useful, relevant and desirable in the 21st century.**

## 11. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Over the past decades much has been learnt by many minority language communities on how to promote and regenerate their languages. This knowledge and these skills now need to be able to be used by many of the language considered as being endangered. In order to achieve this, there needs to be a highly structured way of sharing good practice which is based on good networking between all minority language communities. The European Union could play an influential role in this sharing of good practice between member states as it would not impinge directly on the issue of subsidiarity in this context.

The main goals of the European Union funding programme **for the period 2014-2020, understandably, is to focus on economic growth and a further development of a trained and mobile workforce. In this context the issues surrounding the promotion of minority and endangered languages will not be a priority area.** However, when there is a danger that a large number of languages in Europe over the next decades could become extinct, and an important part of the European heritage lost, some attention should be given to ensuring that all language are maintained and passed on to future generations.



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## ANNEX 1

This annex lists the languages in each member state and their link with the Charter for RML's and the 'Atlas of Languages in Danger'

EU Member states	Signed	Ratified	Latest report adopted by the Committee of Ministers	Languages included in the Charter for Minority and Regional Languages	Languages left outside from Charter	Languages in the World's Atlas of Languages in Danger
<b>Romania</b>	1995	2008	2011	Albanian, Armenian, Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Polish, Romani, Ruthenian, Tatar, Yiddish. Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, German, Hungarian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Turkish, Ukrainian.		Banat Bulgarian, Crimean Tatar, Csango Hungarian, Gagauz, Judezmo, Nogay, Romani, Rusyn, Torlak, Transylvanian, Saxon, Yiddish
<b>Czech Republic</b>	2000	2006	2013	Slovak, Polish, German Romani	Southern Moravia	Bavarian, East Franconian
<b>Luxembourg</b>	1992	2005	2010	There are no regional or minority languages traditionally used		Moselle Franconian, Walloon, Yiddish
<b>Cyprus</b>	1992	2002	2012	Armenian, Cypriot Maronite Arabic		Cypriot Arabic
<b>Slovakia</b>	2001	2001	2013	Hungarian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Romani German, Czech, Bulgarian, Croatian, Polish		Rusyn, Eastern Slovak, Burgenlandcroatian
<b>United Kingdom</b>	2000	2001	2010	Welsh, Scots Gaelic, Irish, Scots, Ulster Scots, Manx, Cornish		Alderney French, Cornish, Guernsey French, Irish, Jersey French, Manx, Romani, Scots, Scots Gaelic, Welsh, Yiddish

<b>Austria</b>	1992	2001	2009	Burgenlandcroatian, Slovenian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovakian and Romani language		Alemannic, Bavarian, Burgenlandcroatian Romani
<b>Spain</b>	1992	2001	2011	Galician, Aragonese, Catalan, Asturian, Asturian-Galician, and Leonese, Aranese, Basque, Valencian	Tamazight (Berber), Portugese Arabic	Aragonese, Asturian-Leonese, Basque, Gascon, Guanche
<b>Sweden</b>	2000	2000	2011	North Lule and South Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani, (Chid), Yiddish	Elfdalian, Ume Sami	Dalecarlian, Gutnish, Lule Sami, North Sami, Scanian, South Sami, Ume Sami, Yiddish
<b>Slovenia</b>	1997	2000	2009	Hungarian, Italian, Romani	German, Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian	Gottscheerish, Romani, Venetan
<b>Denmark</b>	1992	2000	2010	German,	Faeroese, Greenlandic	Low Saxon, Scanian, South Jutish, Yiddish, East North and West Greenlandic
<b>Germany</b>	1992	1998	2010	Danish, Upper Sorbian, Lower Sorbian, North Frisian, Sater Frisian, LowSaxon, Romani.		Alemmanic, Bavarian, East Franconian, Limburgian-Ripuarian, Low Saxon, Moselle Franconian, North Frisian, Rhenish Franconian, Romani, Saterlandic, Sorbian, South Jutish, Yiddish
<b>Croatia</b>	1997	1997	2010	Italian, Serbian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, Ruthenian, Ukrainian,	Slovenian Romani, Istro-Romanian	Arbanasi, Istriot, Istro-Romanian, Molise Croatian, Venetan, Burgenlandcroatian, Vojvodina Rusyn, Romani, Judezmo
<b>Lichtenstein</b>	1992	1997	2011	There are no regional or minority languages used		Alemmanic,

<b>Netherlands</b>	1992	1996	2012	Frisian, Limburgish, Low Saxon, Romani, Yiddish.		West Frisian, West Flemish, Limburgian-Ripuarian, Low Saxon, Yiddish, Romani
<b>Hungary</b>	1992	1995	2009, the 5th adopted 16.11.2012	Romani, Beas, Croatian, German, Romanian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovenian	Ruthenian, Polish, Armenian Bulgarian Greek, Romani, Ukrainian	Bavarian, Burgenland, Croatian, Romani, Rusyn, Yiddish
<b>Finland</b>	1992	1994	2011	Swedish (the less widely used national language) and Sámi, including North, Inari and Skolt Sámi. Tatar, Yiddish, Russia, Karelian, Romani		Inari Sami, Karelian, North Sami, Olonetsian, Romani, Skolt Sami, Yiddish
<b>Poland</b>	1992	1993	2011	Armenian, Belorussian, Czech, German, Hebrew, Karaim, Kashub, Lemko, Lithuanian, Romani, Russian, Slovak, Tatar, Ukrainian Yiddish I	Silesian	Belorussian, Kashubian, Low Saxon, Polesian, Romani, Rusyn, Slovincian, Vilamovian, Yiddish
<b>Italy</b>	2000					Alemannic, Algherese Catala, Alpine Provençal, Arbesch, Bavarian, Campidanese, Cimbrian, Corsican, Emilian-Romagnol, Faeter, Francoprovençal, Friulian, Gallo-Sicilian, Gallurese, Gardiol, Griko, Ladin, Ligurian, Logudorese, Lombard, Mocheno, Molise Croatian, Piedmontese, Resian, Romani, Sassarese, Sicilian, South Italian, Töitschu, Venetan Yiddish

<b>France</b>	1999					Alemannic, Alpine Provençal, Auvergnat, Basque, Breton, Burgundian, Champenois, Corsican, Franc-Comtois, Francoprovençal, Gallo, Gascon, Languedocian, Ligurian, Limousin, Lorrain, Moselle Francoinan, Norman, Picard, Poitevin-Saintongeais, Provençal, Rhenish Franconian, Romani, Walloon, West Flemish, Yiddish
<b>Malta</b>	1992					
<b>Belgium</b>						Champenois, Limburgian-Riparian, Lorrain, Moselle Franconian, Picard, Walloon, West Flemish, Yiddish
<b>Bulgaria</b>						Aromanian, Crimean Tatar, Gagauz, Judezmo, Romani, Torlak
<b>Estonia</b>						Viro-Seto, Romani, Yiddish
<b>Greece</b>						Aromanian, Arvanitika, Cappadocian Greek (Greece), Corfiot Italkian, Gagauz (South Balkans), Judezmo, Megleno-Romanian, Pontic-Greek, Romani, Tsakonian
<b>Ireland</b>						Irish
<b>Latvia</b>						Belarussian, Latgalian, Livonian, Romani, Yiddish
<b>Lithuania</b>						Belarussian, Karami, Romani, Yiddish
<b>Portugal</b>						Asturian-Leonese
<b>San Marino</b>						Emilian-Romagnol



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ISBN 978-92-823-4413-2

doi: 10.2861/22124