

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

**POLICY DEPARTMENT**  
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**RESEARCH FOR CULT  
COMMITTEE - EUROPEAN  
STRATEGY FOR  
MULTILINGUALISM: BENEFITS  
AND COSTS**

STUDY





**DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES**  
**POLICY DEPARTMENT B: STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES**

**CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

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**STUDY**

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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES  
POLICY DEPARTMENT B: STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

# RESEARCH FOR CULT COMMITTEE - EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR MULTILINGUALISM: BENEFITS AND COSTS

## Abstract

This report presents the different results of the research in the economics of languages that deal with the advantages and the disadvantages of multilingualism in the economy, in society and in the institutions of the EU. These results provide a general, albeit admittedly limited, picture of the needs for language policy in the current European multilingual environment. Against this background, we evaluate the relevance of the general goals and the recommendations of the European Strategy for Multilingualism (ESM). Further, we summarise the available evidence of measures and actions carried out by the Commission to implement the ESM, and, where possible, we present data on their advantages and disadvantages.



## CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Executive SUMMARY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. The ESM and the Language Policy of the EU</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1. Goals of the ESM	11
1.2. Defining the Costs, the Benefits and the Relevance of the ESM	15
<b>2. The European Multilingual Context</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1. Multilingual Economy	20
2.1.1. Language Skills as a Form of Human Capital	20
2.1.2. The Contribution of Languages to GDP and Trade	24
2.1.3. Language Policy and Innovation	25
2.2. Multilingual Society	26
2.2.1. Mobility, Inclusion and the “Mother Tongue + 2” Formula	27
2.2.2. The Integration of Migrants	31
2.3. Multilingual Institutions	32
2.3.1. Effectiveness and Fairness of the EU Language Regime	32
2.3.2. EU Multilingualism after “Brexit”	35
<b>3. The Implementation of the ESM</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1. Social Cohesion, Intercultural Dialogue and European Construction	38
3.2. Lifelong Language Learning	39
3.3. Employability and Competitiveness	42
3.4. Promoting Linguistic Diversity through Translation	44
3.5. The External Dimension of Multilingualism	45
<b>4. Conclusions</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>5. References</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>6. Appendix</b>	<b>61</b>
6.1. Levels of education in ISCED 2011	61
6.2. Correspondence between ISCED 2011 and ISCED 1997 levels	61
6.3. Language skills in English among EU citizens aged 15 or more, 2012	62
6.4. Linguistic disenfranchisement rates in 25 EU countries, residents aged 25-64, 2013	63

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AES</b>	Adult Education Survey
<b>ADR</b>	Absolute (linguistic) Disenfranchisement Rate
<b>CRITI</b>	Caribbean Research Institute for Translation and Interpretation
<b>CEFR</b>	Common Framework of Reference for Languages
<b>EILC</b>	Erasmus Intensive Language Courses
<b>EMCI</b>	European Masters in Conference Interpreting
<b>EMT</b>	European Master in Translation
<b>EPC</b>	European Patent Convention
<b>EPO</b>	European Patent Office
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund
<b>ESM</b>	European Strategy for Multilingualism
<b>EVS</b>	European Voluntary Service
<b>FP7</b>	7th Framework Programme for research and technological development
<b>IAMLADP</b>	International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications
<b>IATE</b>	Interactive Terminology for Europe
<b>IPR</b>	Intellectual Property Rights
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>LILAMA</b>	Linguistic Policy for the Labour Market
<b>LIND-Web</b>	Language industry web platform
<b>LLP</b>	Lifelong Learning Programme
<b>LPP</b>	Language Policy and Planning

<b>OLS</b>	Online Linguistic Support
<b>MT@EC</b>	Machine translation for public administrations
<b>PIMLICO</b>	Promoting, Implementing, Mapping Language and Intercultural Communication Strategies in Organisations and Companies
<b>RDR</b>	Relative (linguistic) Disenfranchisement Rate
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>VOLL</b>	Vocationally-Oriented Language Learning
<b>VTS</b>	Visiting Translator Scheme

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1:</b> Earning differentials in Switzerland (men). Results in percentage	<b>20</b>
<b>Table 2:</b> Returns on language skills in different European countries. Results in percentage	<b>21</b>
<b>Table 3:</b> EU citizens who declare themselves able to hold a conversation in at least two languages other than their mother tongue. Results in percentage	<b>22</b>
<b>Table 4:</b> Percentage of EU citizens who declare themselves able to hold a conversation in at least two languages other than their mother tongue	<b>27</b>
<b>Table 5:</b> Linguistic disenfranchisement rates in the EU. Results in percentage	<b>32</b>
<b>Table 6:</b> Rates of linguistic exclusion in the EU after Brexit. Results in percentage	<b>35</b>
<b>Table 7:</b> Summary of the EC's activities to implement the ESM	<b>46</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1:</b> Evaluation criteria and the policy cycle	<b>15</b>
<b>Figure 2:</b> Percentage of pupils learning at least two foreign languages in EU, 2000-2010	<b>27</b>
<b>Figure 3:</b> Percentage of pupils learning English, French and German at ISCED 3/upper secondary education (general) (2005-20	<b>29</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background and aims

The European Strategy for Multilingualism (ESM) has three general socio-economic objectives, i.e., promoting mobility of the labour force in the Single Market, employability and growth in Europe; strengthening social cohesion, the integration of migrants, and intercultural dialogue; managing in an effective and inclusive way multilingual communication in a supranational democracy. Promoting lifelong language learning, and supporting translation and interpreting are means to achieve these goals. This report provides an overall evaluation of the relevance of the ESM. We examine the relationship between the Strategy's objectives and the problems that the ESM is supposed to tackle. Such an evaluation is carried out in the light of the empirical and theoretical results of the academic literature in the economics of languages. These results provide a general, albeit admittedly limited, picture of the needs for language policy in the current European multilingual environment. Against this background, we evaluate the relevance of the general goals and the recommendations of the ESM. If a policy is not relevant, it is not likely to bring about benefits for society. Finally, this report discusses the actions carried out by the Commission to implement the ESM. The report summarises the available evidence for such actions, and, where possible, we present data on their advantages and disadvantages. This discussion sheds light on the objectives that potentially require more support, and on the type of data and information that are necessary to improve the monitoring of the implementation of the ESM.

### Findings

The first general goal of the ESM is promoting mobility of the labour force in the Single Market, employability and growth in Europe. The results of empirical research carried out in different countries show that foreign language skills bring about economic advantages for individuals in terms of positive earning differentials. Very good language skills are rewarded more markedly than limited language knowledge. English has an undisputed economic usefulness in the European labour market, but it is not the only linguistic asset worth investing in; in some contexts, skills in other languages may be better rewarded than English. This emphasises the importance of teaching and learning more than one foreign language, following the recommendations of the European Council that have been summarised in the formula "mother tongue + two foreign languages" (MT+2). Positive social rates of return on foreign language teaching show that language learning is a valuable investment for society as a whole. Although the importance of foreign language skills for employability is emphasised in different EU documents, empirical evidence to support this claim is still preliminary. Some studies show that language skills contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but unfortunately, none of these studies concerns EU countries. Proficiency in the language(s) of the host country has a positive effect on migrants' labour income and their employability. The presence of one or more common languages considerably increases trade flows among countries. As regards the relationship between language and technological innovation, it has been shown that language policy has an impact on the distribution of costs borne by European innovative firms to protect intellectual property rights, in particular through patents.

Supporting language learning to foster intra-EU mobility and to promote inclusion in the host country is a goal of the ESM. Empirical evidence supports the claim that language

learning facilitates mobility. Speaking the language of a host country increases migration to that country almost fivefold. In addition, learning the official language of the host country may facilitate inclusion. Yet, good and very good foreign language skills are still not the rule in the EU. Only one fourth of EU citizens state they can speak at least two foreign languages. This percentage has remained virtually constant between 2001 and 2012. Fluency in English is not a universal “basic skill” in Europe: only 7% of EU citizens declare an ability to speak English as a foreign language at a very good level. Intermediate and elementary levels are by far more common. Generally speaking, a language policy based on the MT+2 formula or on the promotion of a single vehicular language cannot resolve the tension between mobility and inclusion because it does not tackle adequately the problem of unpredictability in individuals’ moving opportunities. New measures may be necessary at the European and at the national level in order to promote and to facilitate mobility and inclusion. Learning a language before moving abroad and/or immediately after the arrival in the host country should become more accessible and cheaper. The provision of a greater number of multilingual public services and administrative forms in several languages should be supported. This emphasises the importance of translation and interpreting in the management of multilingual communication in Europe.

The third general goal of the ESM is to promote multilingualism in the institutions of the EU. Multilingualism is the most effective language regime to convey information to EU citizens. The percentage of people who would be excluded if English were the only official language of the EU ranges from 45% to 80% depending on the indicator and dataset used. A trilingual policy based on English, French and German would exclude 26% to 50% of adult residents in the EU. The percentage of excluded people is significantly higher in Southern and Eastern Europe. In addition, economically and socially disadvantaged individuals tend to be less likely to speak foreign languages, and therefore they are more likely to be adversely affected if the EU stops using their native language or primary language of education. In this perspective, multilingualism contributes to social cohesion. Note that it is not just a blanket reduction in the number of languages that would be exclusionary; even reducing the current domains of use of the official language entails analogous effects (e.g. in the webpages of the European Commission). The rates of linguistic exclusion associated with a monolingual and/or a trilingual policy are going to increase after the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. This emphasises the importance of adopting a multilingual approach towards the external communication of the EU.

To conclude on this point, the three objectives presented in the ESM are clearly relevant because they are consistent with the problems that the Strategy is supposed to tackle. Hence, the ESM is likely to bring several benefits to EU citizens and to the European economy. More could be done to relax the existing tension between mobility and inclusion.

The second part of this report analyses the measures adopted by the Commission to implement the ESM. There are three types of such measures. The first one consists of collecting very useful data on the foreign language competence of pupils and students (e.g. the First European Survey on Language Competences), and data on the language skills of adults (e.g. the Eurobarometer survey, and the Adult Education Survey). The second set of initiatives consists of publishing documents, websites and reports that aims at raising awareness of the benefits of language diversity and language learning in society and in the economy. The lack of explicit outcome indicators, nevertheless, prevents us from evaluating the final effects and the outreach of these initiatives. The third type of measures consists of direct financial support to language learning through the Lifelong Learning Programme and the European Social Fund. The Lifelong Learning Programme funded different projects dealing with language learning, but the lack of clear outcome indicators

does not allow for an evaluation of the effectiveness and the cost-effectiveness of these projects. The European Social Fund has been used for language training aimed at improving employability and the integration of immigrants, but no precise figures have been published that quantify the amount of funding invested for this purpose and that estimate the effects obtained. Few initiatives have been undertaken to promote the external dimension of multilingualism.

Generally speaking, information about the costs and the effectiveness of EU programmes and actions undertaken to comply with the ESM is not complete. The indicators to assess the outcomes of language policy should be defined more explicitly. More attention should be paid to the evaluation of the final effects of programmes aimed at improving language skills of students and adults. Close attention should be paid to the consistency between the ESM and other EU policies that may have an impact on linguistic diversity and on the enforcement of the MT+2 formula, in particular in higher education.



## 1. THE ESM AND THE LANGUAGE POLICY OF THE EU

### KEY FINDINGS

- The “golden age” of multilingualism was the 2007-2010 period. After 2014, multilingualism has not been one of the priorities of the Commission.
- The current lack of attention towards multilingualism is not justified.
- The European Strategy for Multilingualism (ESM) has three general socio-economic objectives, namely, strengthening social cohesion, the integration of migrants, and intercultural dialogue; promoting mobility of the labour force in the Single Market, employability and growth in Europe; managing in an effective and inclusive way multilingual communication in a supranational democracy.
- Promoting lifelong language learning, and supporting translation and interpreting are instrumental objectives to achieve the general goals.

### 1.1. Goals of the ESM

The European Council’s Resolution on a European Strategy for Multilingualism — or ESM — (Council of the European Union 2008b) is one of the documents published by the EU that deals with the general European language policy. The ESM, therefore, cannot be studied in isolation. There are two types of documents that are relevant for the purposes of this briefing paper, and they are:

- Official documents defining the general EU language policy**, such as Council Resolutions, Communications of the Commission or Resolutions of the European Parliament. These documents cover four areas. The first one is education, and in particular language learning and teaching. The second area concerns the role and the importance of languages for inclusion, social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, European citizenship and linguistic democracy. Third, different documents address the question of the effect of language skills on individuals’ mobility, their employability and businesses’ competitiveness. The fourth policy area, which has become rather peripheral after 2000, regards the support for minority languages.
- Reports or studies written by external experts on several aspects of EU language policy.**

In addition, there are various official documents, reports or studies that indirectly or incidentally mention languages or language policy as an aspect of other topics, for example, the integration of adult migrants and their children, the creation of a European patent with unitary effect, and higher education. We shall disregard questions on language issues lodged at the European Parliament, the decisions of the Court of Justice or the European Ombudsman concerning language issues, and documents dealing with specific internal features of the language policy of the EU, such as the provisions defining its language regime (e.g. the Regulation 1/58). The stock of documents published is large (see Gazzola 2016, in press for an overview). For example, between 1981 and 2015, EU institutions and bodies issued roughly 100 documents belonging to group (a), while from 1996 to 2015 the EU published 70 publications in group (b). It is neither possible nor

relevant to present a summary of these documents in this briefing paper. Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention some of them in order to contextualise the Council Resolution on an ESM, and to present the general framework of EU language policy.

**The “golden age” of multilingualism has probably been the 2007-2010 period.** At that time, the Commission had a fully-fledged Commissioner for Multilingualism (Mr Orban). Different important policy documents were published during this period, including the ESM. Among others, we should mention the Commission’s Communication *Multilingualism: An Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment* (European Commission 2008e), and *European Parliament Resolution of 24 March 2009 on Multilingualism* (European Parliament 2008). Of course, this does not mean that before 2007 no attention was paid to linguistic diversity. Before 2007, multilingualism had been an explicit policy area of the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism (held by Mr Figel’ between 2004 and 2007), and an important issue on the agenda of the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth, Media and Sport (held by Ms Reding between 1999 and 2004). Between 1999 and 2007, different important policy documents on language learning were published, for example the Commission’s Communication *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity. An Action Plan 2004-2006* (2003), the Commission’s *A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism* (2005), and the *Conclusions of the European Council* held in Barcelona in 2002, when the Council recommended to the Member States that they teach pupils at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue (this formula is sometimes called “mother tongue plus two” or MT+2). It is worth mentioning the organisation of the *European Year of Languages* in 2001. After 2010, nevertheless, multilingualism was re-merged into the Education and Culture Portfolio (held by Ms Vassiliou), and it eventually disappeared in 2014 when the Commission led by Mr Juncker came into office. In summary, the decade spanning 2000 to 2010 has been a period during which linguistic diversity and multilingualism were much more visible than nowadays. This does not mean, nevertheless, that multilingualism and language policy are less important and relevant in Europe today than in the past, quite the contrary. We come back to this point in the conclusions.

**The ESM invites the Member States and the Commission to undertake three types of actions.** Such actions are sometimes mentioned in other official documents. The first one is **strengthening lifelong language learning** (point 2 of the ESM). This means investing more resources in language teaching at any level of education (i.e. compulsory, vocational and higher education), improving the possibilities of learning languages in formal, non-formal and informal contexts, supporting the training of language teachers, and involving them in international exchanges. In the academic literature on language policy and planning (LPP), this is defined as *acquisition planning* (see Hornberger 2006).

In point 5 of the ESM, the Council invites the Commission and the Member States to **promote EU languages across the world**. For this purpose, the Council recommends strengthening cooperation between the cultural institutions of the Member States, and to enhance cooperation with organisations working in the field of language learning and linguistic and cultural diversity. In LPP this is called *status planning*.

Finally, the Council emphasises the **importance of translation industry**, and it encourages actions aimed at supporting the translation of texts and films, the training of

translators, and the development of multilingual terminology databases and language technologies.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this briefing paper is not to discuss the three actions just presented, not primarily at least. Rather, we focus on the **three explicit or implicit general objectives of the ESM**. Promoting lifelong language learning and supporting translation industry, indeed, are not the ultimate goals of the ESM. They are prerequisites to achieve other general socio-economic objectives, namely:

1. strengthening social cohesion, the integration of migrants, and intercultural dialogue (point 1 of the ESM);
2. promoting mobility of the labour force in the Single Market, employability and growth in Europe (point 3 of the ESM);
3. managing in an effective and inclusive way multilingual communication in a supranational democracy (final recommendations to the Commission).

**The ESM should be evaluated in the light of these three general goals.**

**The first goal of the ESM is the promotion of multilingualism for the purpose of “strengthening social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and European construction”.** These concepts have not been formally defined neither in the ESM nor in the Commission’s Communication *Multilingualism: An Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment* (European Commission 2008e). In this paper, therefore, we adopt the following working definitions.<sup>2</sup> *Social inclusion* can be defined as the process by which people resident in a given territory, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Policies promoting equal access to (public) services and actions enabling citizens’ participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives are examples of efforts to enhance social inclusion. *Social cohesion* is a related concept that can be defined as a feature of a society in which all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy. The Council of Europe defines *intercultural dialogue* as “an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other’s global perception”.<sup>3</sup> Although there is no official definition of *European construction*, we can interpret this term as the dynamic process whereby the EU developed progressively as a political entity. It relies on partial interdependences which have been gradually extended from the economy to political domains.

These definitions are too general and vague to be interpreted as concrete policy objectives and they should be better specified (we come back to this aspect in the conclusions). In this paper, therefore, we focus on the particular interpretation of these concepts that emerges in the ESM and in other important official statements on multilingualism such as the *Council Conclusions of 22 May 2008 on Multilingualism* (Council of the European Union 2008a) and the *European Parliament Resolution of 24 March 2009 on Multilingualism* (European Parliament 2008). Strengthening social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and European construction means different things. First, the linguistic integration of adult migrants and their children is certainly one of the explicit goals of the ESM (see also the

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<sup>1</sup> Different examples of programmes or databases such as *Creative Europe*, *Interactive Terminology for Europe* (IATE), and the machine translation system for public administrations (MT@EC) will be discussed in length in section 3.4.

<sup>2</sup> The definitions of social inclusion and cohesion are adapted from the Social Policy and Development Division of the United Nations. <http://undesadspd.org/socialintegration/definition.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> See [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/concept\\_EN.asp#P30\\_3374](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/concept_EN.asp#P30_3374)

*Green Paper on migration* published by the European Commission 2008b). This does not mean that integration should not allow migrants to maintain the language(s) of their country of origin. Second, the acquisition of foreign languages skills should be possible and accessible to everyone in society. In other words, language skills should not be a prerogative of the elite. Foreign language skills and linguistic integration should contribute to avoiding the emergence of “parallel communities” that are divided (or even segregated) by language barriers within a given society. This does not hold only for migrants, but also for mobile EU citizens abroad. Language skills facilitate intercultural dialogue because they increase the capability of EU citizens to understand the culture of other fellow Europeans (and migrants), thereby contributing to European integration.

**The second general goal of the ESM consists of “promoting mobility of the labour force in the Single Market, employability and growth in Europe”.** Mobility is a term indicating different phenomena, that is, “*immigration* (foreigners moving into the country), *emigration* (nationals leaving the country), *return migration* (nationals returning to the country), and *circular migration* (nationals who move back and forth between countries)” (Vandenbrande 2006: 9). Also this objective is very general, but it is relatively easier to define and to measure than the first one. Let us note that the second general goal has become predominant in the EU discourse on multilingualism during the last 15 years. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the EU discourse on foreign language learning has been increasingly connected to the achievement of the general socio-economic objectives of the EU as defined in *Lisbon Agenda 2000-2010* and then in the *Europe 2020 Agenda* (Krzyżanowski and Wodak 2011).<sup>4</sup> This does not imply that the cultural or cognitive aspects of language learning have been neglected. Rather, the scope of EU language policy has been broadened. Foreign language skills are increasingly viewed as a form of human capital that can bring about economic advantages for individuals, businesses and the economy as a whole. In the Commission’s communication *Multilingualism: An Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment* (European Commission 2008e), for example, language skills are presented as a type of ability that contributes to economic prosperity, an asset that increases the competitiveness of European companies, and a form of human capital that can positively affect citizens’ employability. In the Commission’s communication *A New Strategic Framework for Multilingualism* (European Commission 2005), the improvement of Europeans’ foreign language skills is explicitly linked to one of the central goals of the European project, that is, the achievement of a full economic integration. In this document, the Commission argues “for the Single Market to be effective, the Union needs a more mobile workforce. Skills in several languages increase opportunities on the labour market”. In the *Council Conclusions on Language Competences to Enhance Mobility* (Council of the European Union 2010), language skills are presented as “an essential component of a competitive knowledge-based economy. Knowledge of foreign languages is a life-skill for all EU citizens, enabling them to enjoy both the economic and social benefits of free movement within the Union”. In the recent Commission’s communication *Rethinking Education: Investing in Skills for Better Socio-economic Outcomes* (European Commission 2012f; European Commission 2012d), language skills are described as “more and more important to increase levels of employability and mobility of young people”; further, “poor language skills are a major obstacle to free movement of workers. Businesses also require the language skills needed to function in the global marketplace”. There are sound economic reasons behind such statements. We come back to this point in more detail in the next section.

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<sup>4</sup> The Lisbon Agenda was a plan developed by the European Commission aimed at making the EU “the most competitive and dynamic ‘knowledge-based economy’ in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion by 2010”. *Europe 2020* is a 10-year strategy aimed at “smart, sustainable, inclusive growth” with greater coordination of national and European policy.

**The third objective of the ESM concerns the management of multilingual communication in EU institutions.** The Council invites the Commission to take “particular care to provide information in all official languages and to promote multilingualism on the Commission's websites”. This recommendation echoes the aforementioned Recommendation of the European Parliament (2008), in which the Parliament insists “on the need for recognition of parity between the EU's official languages in all aspects of public activity”, and the 2008 Conclusions of the Council (2008a), which highlights that “the linguistic diversity of Europe should be preserved and parity between languages fully respected. EU institutions should play a key role in pursuing these objectives”. The emphasis given in the ESM to the value of translation and interpreting, and to the importance of the language industry is partially linked to the Council's support of multilingualism in EU institutions. The EU in fact is the largest employer of translators and interpreters in the world.

## 1.2. Defining the Costs, the Benefits and the Relevance of the ESM

Generally speaking, a public policy is defined as a “series of intentionally coherent decisions or activities taken or carried out by different public—and sometimes private actors—, whose resources, institutional links and interests vary, with a view to resolving in a targeted manner a problem that is politically defined as collective in nature. This group of decisions and activities gives rise to formalised actions of a more or less restrictive nature that are often aimed at modifying the behaviour of social groups [of individuals] presumed to be at the root of, or able to solve, the collective problem to be resolved (target groups) in the interest of the social group who suffer the negative effects of the problem in question (final beneficiaries)” (Knoepfel *et al.* 2007: 24).

Language policies can be characterised as a particular type of public policy that ultimately aims at modifying the language behaviour of a given target population (see Grin 2003, Gazzola 2014a for a discussion). More specifically a language policy is a set of measures—usually undertaken by the State, regional and local authorities—to influence, explicitly or implicitly, the corpus, status, and the acquisition of one or more languages. As shown in the previous section, some of the measures or actions suggested in the ESM can be viewed as a form of status and acquisition planning. For example, promoting lifelong language learning aims at modifying the behaviour of individuals by increasing their language skills. As lifelong language learning and translation are implicitly presented as a means to achieve other general socio-economic goals of the EU, the evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages (or, “benefits” and “costs”) of the ESM, as well as its distributive effects, should be carried out with respect to such general goals. Before discussing how the advantages and disadvantages of the ESM can be characterised, it is necessary to recall some important definitions.

The design and implementation of public policies is often presented as a cycle (or “policy cycle”), whose phases can be summarised as follows:<sup>5</sup>

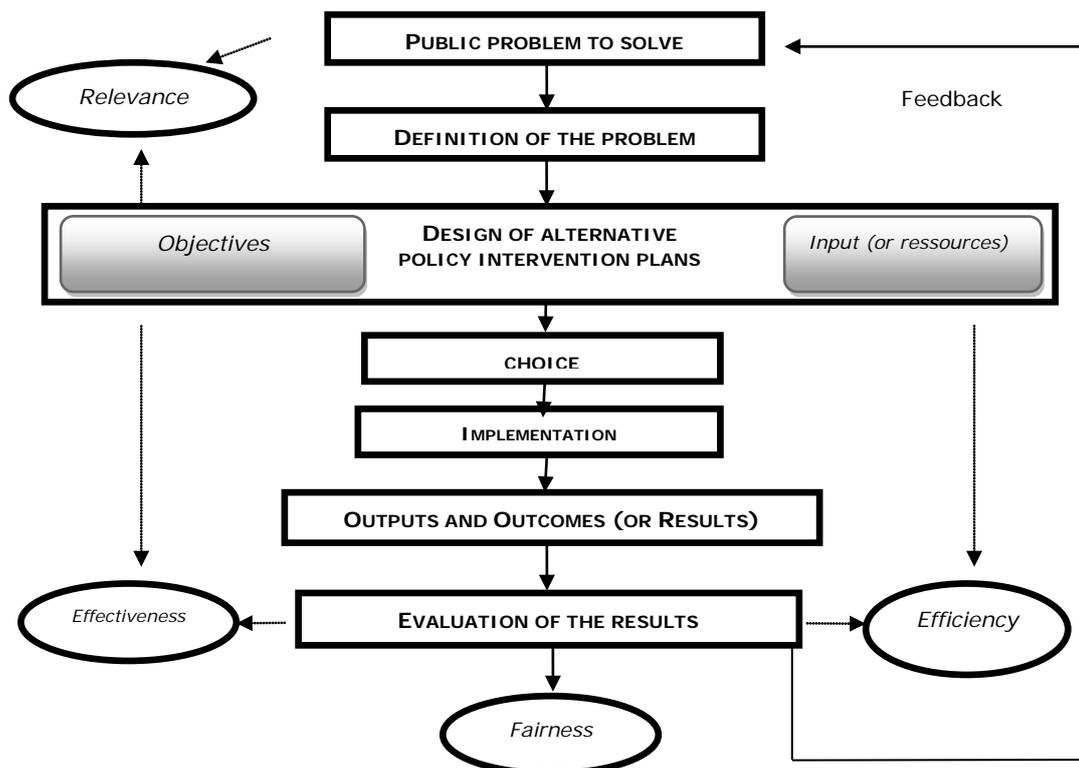
- a. emergence and perception of a public problem to solve (e.g. a lack of adequate language skills on the labour market, language barriers hamper mobility),
- b. understanding and definition of the problem,

<sup>5</sup> See Gazzola (2014a: 53-54, quoting Knoepfel *et al.* 2007) for a discussion.

- c. formulation and comparison of possible solutions or alternative policy plans (e.g. alternative ways of promoting language training for adults),
- d. choice of a solution,
- e. implementation,
- f. outputs and outcomes (or results)
- g. evaluation of results,
- h. (i) - (re)emergence and perception of a problem.

The evaluation of a language policy is carried out in the light of different criteria. The most important criteria are the following: *relevance*, *effectiveness*, *efficiency* (often interpreted as cost-effectiveness in applied research), and *fairness*. **Relevance** refers to the evaluation of the appropriateness of the explicit objectives of the policy in relation to the problems it is supposed to address. Assessing the **effectiveness** of a policy implies to clarify to what extent have the objectives been achieved. The evaluation of effectiveness requires an in-depth examination of the goals to be achieved, an analysis of the cause-and-effect relationships connecting the policy and its ultimate goals, and the measurement policy outcomes (see below). The evaluation of the **efficiency** (in the sense of **cost-effectiveness**) of different policies means to put into relationship the resources mobilised with the results obtained. In policy analysis, evaluating **fairness** implies identifying who loses, who gains, and (if possible) how much, and how the costs of alternative policies are shared among individuals or groups. Therefore, there is no particular ethical content in the technical concept of “fairness” in policy analysis (e.g. Just, Hueth, & Schmitz 2004), and the fairness of language policies can therefore be approached in terms of the distributive effects of alternative language policies on the actors concerned. Figure 1 summarises the main steps of the policy cycle. Oval bubbles represent evaluation criteria.

**Figure 1: Evaluation criteria and the policy cycle**



Source: Gazzola (2014a: 53-54)

**Input** (or resources) of a policy are defined as all financial, human, material, organisational and regulatory means mobilised for the implementation of an intervention. **Costs** are computed on the basis of resources mobilised. Policy **outputs** are the direct effects of a policy, that is, what is funded and achieved (or realised) through the resources allocated to the policy. In other words, output is everything that is obtained in exchange for public expenditure (some concrete examples are presented in the next sections). **Outcomes** (or results) are the final effects of a policy in terms of the variables one wishes to influence (e.g. promoting employability through language learning). In cost-benefit analysis, the benefits of a policy must be measured in monetary terms. Nevertheless, the identification and the computation of the benefits of language policies is something fraught with methodological and epistemological difficulties due to the complex nature of language that are far from being solved (see Grin 2003 for a discussion). It is worth recalling that the advantages of language policies are not only limited to the **market value** of languages, but also to their **non-market** or **symbolic value** (see Grin and Vaillancourt 1997 for a discussion). Language skills acquired in vocation training, for example, can be used in the workplace and bring about economic advantages for individuals. Nevertheless, they can also improve intercultural dialogue among people from different national background too. In the evaluation of language policies, **benefits** are defined as the positive impacts of a policy on the actors directly concerned by the policy itself. In certain cases such benefits can be quantified in monetary terms, for example earning differentials accruing to bilingual workers who have attended language training, whereas in other cases other non-monetary units of measures must be used. In the evaluation of language policies, therefore, some simplifications are required (e.g. “the number of unemployed person who find a job as a results of linguistic skills acquired through vocational training”, and “the percentage of EU citizens who can understand the official languages of the EU”). Some examples will be presented in the next sections.

The standard evaluation model presented in Figure 1, nevertheless, is applicable to the ESM only to a certain extent. The ESM, in fact, sets very general objectives in very different policy areas, such as the labour market, social inclusion, and citizenship. In order to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the ESM in any single area of intervention, policy-makers should specify the goals in more detail and clarify the logical chain connecting the resources invested with the expected outcomes. This would be too specific for a Resolution, of course, but not for separate implementation plans. In addition, the benefits should be defined and identified through a set of measurable outcome indicators and, even more important, adequate and reliable data should be provided. To the best of our knowledge, this information is not available, and what is available is sufficient for evaluating just some aspects of the ESM. A possible way to overcome these obstacles is to narrow the scope of the analysis and to make a distinction between, on the one hand, the evaluation of the relevance of general goals of the ESM, and on the other hand the evaluation of the effects of the measures undertaken by the Commission to implement the ESM.

**This report is organised in two parts. The first part provides an overall evaluation of the relevance of the ESM.** We examine the relationship between the Strategy's objectives and the problems that the ESM is supposed to tackle. Such an evaluation is carried out in the light of the empirical and theoretical results of the academic literature in language economics. This report presents the different results of the research dealing with the advantages and the disadvantages of multilingualism in the economy, in society and in the institutions of the EU. These results provide a general, albeit admittedly limited, picture of the needs for language policy in the current European multilingual environment. Against this background, we evaluate the relevance of the general goals and the recommendations

of the ESM, that is, we evaluate whether the ESM proposes objectives and measures that are relevant to tackle some of the most important language problems in the current European multilingual environment. If a policy is not relevant, it is not likely to bring about benefits for society.

**In the second part of the report, we focus on the actions carried out by the Commission to implement the ESM.** We summarise the available evidence for such actions, and, where possible, we present data on their advantages and disadvantages, using the simple framework presented in Figure 1. This discussion sheds light on the objectives that potentially require more support, and on the type of data and information that are necessary to improve the monitoring of the implementation of the ESM.

## 2. THE EUROPEAN MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT

### KEY FINDINGS

- In general, foreign language skills bring about economic advantages for individuals in terms of positive earning differentials. Very good language skills are rewarded much more markedly than limited language knowledge. English has an undisputed economic usefulness in the European labour market, but it is not the only linguistic asset worth investing in; in some contexts, skills in other languages may be better rewarded. This emphasises the importance of teaching more than one foreign language in the education systems of European countries.
- Positive social rates of return on foreign language teaching show that language learning is a valuable investment for society as a whole.
- Although the importance of foreign language skills for employability is emphasised in different EU documents, empirical evidence to support this claim is still preliminary. However, proficiency in the language(s) of the host country has a positive effect on migrants' labour income and their employability.
- Some studies show that language skills contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but unfortunately, none of these studies concerns the EU.
- A common official or spoken language considerably increases trade flows among countries.
- Language policy may have an impact on the distribution of costs borne by European innovative firms to protect intellectual property rights through patents. This can raise equity concerns about the project of a European patent with unitary effect.
- Language learning facilitates mobility. Speaking the language of a country increases the likelihood to migrate to that country almost fivefold.
- The "mother tongue plus two foreign languages" formula or the promotion of a single vehicular language are not enough to promote at the same time intra-EU mobility and integration in the society of the host country.
- Only one fourth of EU citizens state they can speak at least two foreign languages. This percentage has remained virtually constant between 2001 and 2012. The vast majority of Europeans have an elementary or an intermediate level of competence in foreign languages. The level of language proficiency is likely to improve in the near future, but only to a certain extent.
- Only 7% of EU citizens declare an ability to speak English as a foreign language at a very good level. Intermediate and elementary levels are more common. Despite the massive investments in the teaching of English in the education system, bilingualism is not expected in the near future. Knowledge of English is not a universal "basic skill" in Europe.

- New measures are necessary to relax the tension between mobility and inclusion, e.g. the possibility of effectively learning a language before moving abroad and/or immediately after the arrival in the host country should become easier and cheaper.
- If the institutions of the EU adopted a monolingual policy based on English-only or a trilingual regime based on English, French and German they would exclude a high percentage of EU citizens from communication with the EU. The percentage of excluded people would be very high in Southern and Eastern Europe.
- Multilingualism is still the most effective language regime among the alternatives usually examined in the literature.
- Economically and socially disadvantaged individuals tend to be less likely to speak foreign languages, and therefore they are more likely to be adversely affected if the EU stops using their native language or primary language of education. Multilingualism contributes to social cohesion.
- It is not just a blanket reduction in the number of languages that would be exclusionary. Even reducing the current domains of use of the official language entails analogous effects.
- The rates of linguistic exclusion associated with a monolingual policy and/or a trilingual are going to increase after “Brexit”. This emphasises the importance of adopting a multilingual approach towards the external communication of the EU.

The three general goals presented in the previous section refer to three interrelated aspects of the European multilingual environment, that is, the economy, society and the institutions of the EU. The purpose of this section, without any claim of exhaustiveness, is to present some relevant results of academic research in economics that deals with these topics. This is a stepping stone towards section 4, where the actions undertaken by the EU to implement the ESM are discussed against the background of the empirical evidence presented below.

## **2.1. Multilingual Economy**

The relationship between linguistic variables and economic variables is the focus of a growing body of academic literature on multilingualism (see Gazzola *et al.* 2016, for a detailed bibliography; see also Grin 2003, and Zhang and Grenier 2013, for surveys). Some of the questions addressed in this work are relevant to the ESM because the latter often recall economic arguments to support multilingualism. It is therefore useful to mention some of the most important results in this field.

### **2.1.1. Language Skills as a Form of Human Capital**

A first line of research deals with the estimation of the net effects of second or foreign language skills on individuals’ income and on their employment status. This means evaluating whether the knowledge of a language that is not socio-linguistically dominant in a country or a region (e.g. Spanish in France) brings about economic advantages for individuals. The second research line deals with the relationship between immigrants’ income and their language skills in the local dominant language (e.g. German for Turkish people in Germany). In this section, we report some results from the first group of studies. Section 2.2 discusses the effect of language skills on migrants’ income.

### 2.1.1.1. Earning Differentials

Language skills can be viewed as a form of human capital generating economic benefits for individuals because they can influence their productivity, thereby increasing their efficiency in the workplace (e.g. making purchases or sales faster, and establishing new networks). Such benefits are usually estimated by computing the net earning differentials accruing to individuals who know a given language as a second or foreign language, all other things being equal (that is, holding all other relevant variables constant). The estimates of earning differentials are usually the result of an econometric analysis of large samples of data. This makes it possible to control for other relevant socio-economic variables such as work experience, the educational level achieved, and the respondents' marital status.

**Few studies deal with the earning differentials associated with foreign language skills in Europe.** The main reason for that is the lack of adequate and reliable data. This section presents some results for different European countries (not necessarily in the EU). Table 1 shows the net earning differentials accruing to multilingual individuals in three different linguistic regions of Switzerland. Results are broken down by language and by the level of language proficiency declared by respondents. In the French-speaking part of the country, for example, a man who has very good skills in German earns, on average, 23.2% more than someone without this skill, all other things being equal. The earning differentials associated with a basic or good level of proficiency are lower.

**Table 1: Earning differentials in Switzerland (men). Results in percentage**

LANGUAGE	LINGUISTIC REGION	LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY		
		Basic	Good	Excellent
German	French-speaking	10	12.4	23.2
	Italian-speaking	n.s.	n.s.	27.6
French	German-speaking	n.s.	15.1	15.5
	Italian-speaking	n.s.	14.1	23.4
English	French-speaking	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
	German-speaking	n.s.	19.4	25.1
	Italian-speaking	7	n.s.	29.3

**N.S. = not significant.**

**Source: Grin (1999: Chapter 8)**

Di Paolo and Tansel (2015) show that in the Turkish labour market, knowledge of Russian and English as foreign languages, on average, brings about positive earning differentials for individuals (20% and 10.7%, respectively). These differentials increase with the level of competence. Knowledge of French and German is also positively rewarded in the Turkish labour market, but to a lesser extent (8.4% and 8.2% respectively). In Germany, very good skills in English bring about a positive earning differential of about 12% in contexts where such skills are used (Stöhr, 2015); knowledge of other foreign languages is rewarded in few specialised occupations. According to Williams' estimates, the use of a second language in the workplace is associated with positive earning differentials ranging from 3% to 5% in different Western European countries (Williams, 2011). English is the language whose use is most widely rewarded in the 14 Western European countries examined by the author, but in some countries the use of German, French and Italian is rewarded too. Ginsburg and Prieto (2011) study the effect of foreign language skills (and their use on the workplace) on individuals' earnings in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France,

Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Results are presented in Table 2. The level of proficiency is not specified. Results show that language skills in English are positively rewarded in the labour market of all countries examined. In some countries, knowledge of French and German is positively rewarded too, and sometimes even more than competence in English.

**Table 2: Returns on language skills in different European countries. Results in percentage**

COUNTRY	LANGUAGE		
	English	French	German
Austria	11	n.s.	/
Denmark	21	n.s.	-11
Finland	23	n.s.	n.s.
France	29	/	46
Germany	26	n.s.	/
Greece	15	24	n.s.
Italy	18	21	28
Portugal	31	34	n.s.
Spain	39	49	n.s.

N.S. = not significant.

Source: Ginsburg and Prieto (2011: 612)

The studies mentioned in this section differ in many respects. The datasets used differ both as regards their quality, and as regards the period considered. The authors adopted different estimation strategies, and this can explain why the magnitude of the results obtained varies considerably. In addition, in some papers the author(s) studies the effect of language *knowledge* on individuals' income, while in other papers the variable examined is language *use* in the workplace. Finally, it is not always possible to examine the impact on income of different *levels* of language proficiency. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, **all studies converge towards the same conclusions**. First, **earning differentials associated with language skills are not negligible**. This suggests that learning foreign languages can be a good investment for individuals. Second, **very good language skills are rewarded more markedly than limited language knowledge**. This result has clear implications for educational policy. Third, **English has an undisputed economic usefulness in the European labour market, but it is not the only linguistic asset worth investing in**; in some contexts, skills in other languages may be better rewarded than English. This emphasises the importance of teaching more than one foreign language in the education systems of European countries according to the MT+2 formula.

The empirical studies mentioned usually examine only Western European countries, and they focus on languages that are widely spoken because more data are available. As a result, authors compute estimates for earning differentials corresponding to languages that people already know (typically because they have learnt them in school), but **little is**

known about the potential economic value of languages that are (still) not widely spoken.

### 2.1.1.2. Social Rates of Return

Language learning can be a valuable investment not only for individuals, but also for society as a whole. Instead of looking at earning differentials for individuals, we examine now the aggregate level. On the basis of the estimates for individuals' earning differentials, one can compute the social rates of return on foreign language teaching, that is, the percentage return of a euro invested in language teaching for society as a whole. Table 3 presents the social rates of return for foreign language teaching in Switzerland, one of the few countries where data are available.

**Table 3: Social rates of return on foreign language teaching in Switzerland (men)**

LANGUAGE	LINGUISTIC REGION		
	<i>French-speaking</i>	<i>German-speaking</i>	<i>Italian-speaking</i>
German	6.5%	n.a.	21.5%
French	n.d.	10%	11.7%
English	4.7%	12.6%	n.d.

N.a. = not available.

Source: Grin (1999: Chapter 9)

For example, the return from investing one euro of public money in teaching German in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland is 21.5%, which is rather high compared with the average rate of return on riskless financial capital, and the long-term cost to the State of borrowing money on the market. Unfortunately, we do not have data on other countries in Europe. Nevertheless, **such data suggest that language-teaching can be a valuable investment for society not only for cultural reasons, but also from an economic point of view.**

### 2.1.1.3. Employability

Although the importance of foreign language skills for employability is emphasised in different EU documents and in the ESM, there is still **little empirical evidence available to support this claim beyond preliminary evidence** provided by the Joint Research Centre of the Commission (see Araújo *et al.* 2015). Few papers in academic literature explicitly deal with the question of the impact of language skills on employment, and usually these contributions study the relationship between language skills in the local dominant language and employment opportunities for immigrants (see Gazzola *et al.* 2016, for an overview).

In the aforementioned study of Araújo *et al.* (2015), the authors find a positive and statistically significant effect of knowing English on employability in Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovenia. The impact is measured as the probability of being employed rather than unemployed for a person who knows English as opposed to someone without this skill, all other things being equal. In Cyprus, Spain, Finland and Malta English *proficiency* (that is, very good language skills) has a positive impact on employability. Knowing French has a positive impact on employability

in Malta, German in Denmark, and Russian in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Nevertheless, the authors provide no estimates of the magnitude of these effects. A recent study conducted by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment shed more light on the linguistic competences most requested on the labour market, focusing on online vacancy notices (Beadle *et al.* 2015). Results show that a significant percentage of employers require an advanced level of foreign language skills.

In Switzerland, a member of a multilingual workforce — that is, French-speaking residents knowing German or English, and native speakers of German knowing French or English — is less likely to be dismissed than someone monolingual. On average, when the price of the workforce increases by 5% (i.e. workforce becomes more expensive), the monolingual workforce employed decreases by 8.7%, while the multilingual workforce decreased only by 3.7% (Grin *et al.* 2009).

### 2.1.2. The Contribution of Languages to GDP and Trade

Few papers address the question of the contribution of languages to the aggregate added value produced by the economy, that is, to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). **Language knowledge can contribute to the creation of added value because it can make the processes of purchase, production and sales more efficient.** In Switzerland, skills in foreign or second languages (limited to English, French and German) contribute to some 10% of the Swiss GDP, with English accounting for half of this percentage (Grin, Sfreddo and Vaillancourt 2010). Estimates for Quebec are in the region of 3% of provincial GDP. Unfortunately, no data for EU countries exist. Some studies analyses, nevertheless, have been carried out at the regional level. For example, a recent report of the Basque Government in Spain shows that the economic impact of various activities linked to the Basque language can be estimated at 4.2% of the Regional GDP of the Autonomous Community (Gobierno vasco 2016). See also Bane Mullarkey Ltd. (2009) for the Galway Gaeltacht in Ireland.

The *ELAN* study (CILT 2006) examines the effect of shortages of foreign language skills on the export of European companies, focusing on a sample of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). A similar study has been carried out for Catalonia in Spain (Hagen 2010). McCormick (2013) argues that there is a generally positive relationship between the GDP of a country and the average level of English proficiency in the population. The level of linguistic skills is measured by the *English Proficiency Index (EPI)*, an indicator designed by the international education company *Education First* and popularised in the media. McCormick's results, nevertheless, are based on a simple analysis of statistical correlation and they do not prove any genuine causal effect among the EPI and GDP. Furthermore, the data used are likely to suffer from self-selection bias.

The consequence of having a common language on trade has been studied in different papers (see among others, Mélitz 2008, Fidrmuc and Fidrmuc 2015, Egger and Toubal 2016 Egger and Lassman 2016). **Trade patterns can be influenced by language in three different ways.** Countries may share an *official* language, and this usually denotes the presence of geo-political ties (e.g. a common colonial history). They may share a *native* language, in the sense that people living in two different countries speak the same language as mother tongue. This can be viewed as an indicator of cultural affinity. Finally, countries may share a common *spoken* language, typically a language learnt as a foreign language that make communication possible among people with different native languages. Results show that **on average a common (official or spoken) language increases trade flows directly by 44%** (Egger and Lassmann 2012). The effect of a common spoken language is stronger than the effect of a common native language, but both effects

are significantly positive (Egger and Lassman 2016). Fidrmuc and Fidrmuc (2015) show that in the EU widespread knowledge of languages is an important determinant for foreign trade, with English playing an especially important role.

### 2.1.3. Language Policy and Innovation

The effect of languages on industrial innovation is still relatively underexplored. By industrial innovation we mean technological innovation protected intellectual property rights (IPR) such as patents, trademarks and industrial design. Although a few studies address the question of the connection between multilingualism and creativity — and therefore the question of innovation *through* creativity — (Marsh and Hill 2009), **papers discussing the relationship between language diversity and industrial innovation focus on the effects of language *policies* on innovation (as opposed to languages *per se*).**

The IPR-intensive industries are defined as industries that have an above-average use IPR per employee (including copyright). In the EU, IPR-intensive industries contribute 26% of employment and 39% of GDP; patent-intensive industries alone account for 13.9% of EU GDP and for share equal to 10.3% of total employment (EPO-OHMI 2013). The European Patent Office (EPO), based in Munich, Germany, is a regional patent granting authority whose purpose is searching and examining European patents applications on behalf of the 38 Contracting States of the European Patent Convention (EPC). The official languages of the EPO are English, French and German. The EPO grants the European patent, that is, a “bundle” of national patents that subsequently have to be validated in the states designated by the patentee. The validation procedures include the payment of validation and renewal fees and in some cases the translation of the whole patent (or part of it, typically claims) into one of the official languages of the country concerned. The majority of the papers dealing with languages and the European patent system present estimate of such *post-grant* translation costs, and they discuss on their impact on patent filing and on the number of countries in which European patents are validated (see Van Pottelsberghe and Mejer 2010, Van Pottelsberghe and François 2009, Harhoff, Hoisl *et al.* 2009). Results show that a **reduction of post-grant translation costs is likely to have a positive effect on the number of application filed**. Gazzola (2014a, 2015) examines differences in the *pre-grant* translation costs faced by European applicants filing a patent application with the EPO. Results show the overall **costs to access patenting procedures borne by European applicants whose first language is not English, French or German are at least 27% higher than cost borne by English-, French- or German-speaking applicants**.

The EPO is not one of the institutions or bodies of the EU, and the ESM does not touch upon the issue of IPR. Nevertheless, technological innovation is linked to EU language policy in different ways. In 2012, representatives of EU member states achieved an agreement to set up the European unitary patent — or “**European patent with unitary effect**” —. The Unitary Patent is a European patent, granted by the EPO under the rules and procedures of the EPC, to which, upon request of the patent proprietor, unitary effect is given for the territory of the Member States participating in the unitary patent scheme. The agreement to install a European patent court is currently being ratified by EU member states. Besides, it is still not clear which effect the result of the referendum held in the UK the 23 June 2016 is going to have on the ratification process. Suffice it to say the regulation currently in force specifies that the unitary patent will be granted in a language among English French or German, and that a translation of claims into the other two official languages will be necessary (Council of the European Union 2012). Nevertheless it adds that no further

translation should be required to enforce the patent.<sup>6</sup> **The language regime of the unitary patent, therefore, will decrease post-grant translation costs, but it will not cancel the existing disparities among European applicants with regard to pre-grant translation costs.** The costs to translate a patent application into one of the procedural languages of the EPO, in fact, should be reimbursed only within the limits of a fixed ceiling and only to certain categories of applicants. Machine translation can help reducing costs related to patent information, but only to a certain extent. The effect of the unitary patent on innovation activities cannot be estimated yet (for a discussion of the expected costs and the benefits of the European patent with unitary effect, see Danguy and Van Pottelsberghe de la Potterie 2011). It is worth noting, however, that **choices concerning the number of procedural languages of EU institutions, bodies or agencies, and the related translation arrangements may have an impact on the distribution of costs borne by European innovative firms to protect their IPR. This can raise equity concerns.** This aspect should not be neglected in the general language policy of the EU.

## 2.2. Multilingual Society

At point 3 of the ESM, the Council invites the Member States to invest in teaching foreign languages in order to promote the mobility of the labour force in the Single Market. There are sound economic reasons behind this recommendation. Neoclassical economic theory suggests that the mobility of production factors (labour and capital) enhances economic efficiency. Workforce mobility, indeed, can reduce differences in unemployment rates across regions, and it equalises marginal productivity of labour, thereby improving allocative efficiency. Yet, **worker mobility in the EU remains a limited phenomenon.** According to official figures, “around 2% of working-age citizens from one of the 27 EU Member States currently live and work in another Member State. By comparison, the respective share of third-country citizens residing in the EU is almost twice as high” (European Commission 2007: 3). Recent data do not show dramatic changes. On 1 January 2015, there were 15.3 million persons living in one of the EU Member States with the citizenship of another EU Member State (this amounts to roughly 3% of the total EU population).<sup>7</sup> There are different factors that discourage international mobility besides the need to learn a new language. Among others, we should mention personal reasons such as the fear of losing family ties, and administrative and institutional barriers such as differences in the tax systems, and difficulties in the mutual recognition of professional qualifications (see Vandenbrande 2006: 26 for an overview).

**Promoting foreign language learning is not only important for facilitating mobility; it can also contribute to the integration of mobile people in the society of the host country.** Providers of basic services (health, school, local authorities and courts) “are increasingly in need of communicating with people speaking other languages while their staff is not trained to work in languages other than their mother tongue and do not possess intercultural skills” (European Commission 2008c: 21). One of the challenges faced

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<sup>6</sup> During a transitional period of 12 years a full translation of the specification of the patent into English where the language of the proceedings before the EPO is French or German, or into any official language of the Member States that is an official language of the Union where the language of the proceedings before the EPO is English. Italy and Spain decided to opt out of the unitary patent because they found translation arrangements discriminatory. In September 2015, Italy eventually decided to start the procedures to join the unitary patent project. This decision was taken in the wake of the Decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union in May 2015 that dismisses Spain's actions against the regulations implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of the creation of unitary patent protection (Judgments in Case C-146/13 Spain v Parliament and Council, and Case C-147/13 Spain v Council).

<sup>7</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics&oldid=292846](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics&oldid=292846)

by European countries today is, in fact, to encourage the mobility of people (e.g. workers, students and researchers), and at the same time to accommodate the linguistic needs of the newcomers in order to avoid exclusion and the emergence of separate communities (Grin *et al.* 2014). **The question, therefore, is whether the MT+2 formula can contribute to the achievement of two apparently contradictory EU socio-economic objectives, that is, promoting intra-EU mobility, and facilitating inclusion and social cohesion.** Providing an in-depth discussion on this question would exceed the limits of this briefing paper.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it is useful to highlight some central points and to present some data.

### 2.2.1. Mobility, Inclusion and the “Mother Tongue + 2” Formula

Empirical evidence supports the claim that language learning facilitates mobility. **Speaking the language of a country increases the likelihood to migrate to that country almost fivefold** (Aparicio Fenoll and Kuehn 2016). Learning languages during compulsory education reduces migration costs for individuals, especially for the young people. Developing skills in the official language of the host country facilitates inclusion of the newcomers (see the next section). Nevertheless, **neither the MT+2 formula nor the promotion of a single vehicular language are currently sufficient to realise this objective, and they are not likely to be enough in the foreseeable future.** First, just a minority of Europeans are proficient in foreign languages. Second, the effectiveness of educational systems in teaching foreign languages has still to be improved. Third, and more fundamentally, neither the MT+2 formula nor the promotion of a single vehicular language are adequate to tackle the problem of unpredictability in individuals’ moving opportunities. This section discusses these problems in turn.

Table 4 shows the percentage of EU citizens aged at least 15 who declare themselves able to hold a conversation in at least two languages other than their mother tongue. Data were published in 2001, 2006 and 2012 in different waves of the *Eurobarometer survey*. Because of successive enlargements, the number of Member States has changed. In order to allow for an intertemporal comparison, Table 4 presents the results for 2006 and 2012 that refer to the European Union with 15 and 25 Member States respectively.

Table 4 reveals that **only one fourth of EU citizens state they can speak at least two languages, and this percentage has remained virtually constant between 2001 and 2012. This is not surprising** because education reforms take decades to display their effects. Further, data from different waves of the Eurobarometer survey are comparable only to a certain extent (see Ó Riagáin 2015), and we have to allow for a certain margin of error in the estimates.

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<sup>8</sup> The study of different strategies to reconcile inclusion and mobility is currently the object of the EU co-funded project *Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe* - MIME (2014-2018). See [www.mime-project.org](http://www.mime-project.org).

**Table 4: EU citizens who declare themselves able to hold a conversation in at least two languages other than their mother tongue. Results in percentage**

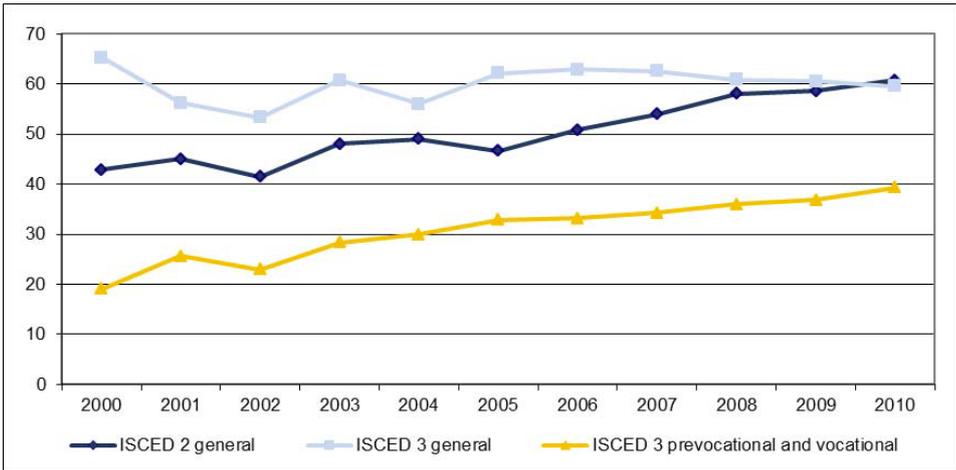
EU	WAVE OF THE EUROBAROMETER SURVEY		
	2001	2006	2012
EU-15	26	26	25
EU-25	n.a.	28	26
EU-27	n.a.	n.a.	25

n.a. not available

Source: Table compiled by the author

The situation is going to improve in the future, but it is not going to change drastically. Data from the third wave of the Eurobarometer survey (European Commission 2012a) show that younger people, in particular those aged 15-24, are more likely to have some knowledge of two foreign languages (37%) than those aged more than 55 (17%). The percentage of pupils learning at least two foreign languages is increasing. The proportion of lower secondary pupils (ISCED level 2) learning at least two foreign languages has increased from 47% in 2005 to 61% in 2010, whereas the percentage of general upper secondary pupils (ISCED level 3) in the EU learning at least two foreign languages has remained relatively constant, as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Percentage of pupils learning at least two foreign languages in EU, 2000-2010**



Source: European Commission (2012c: 39)

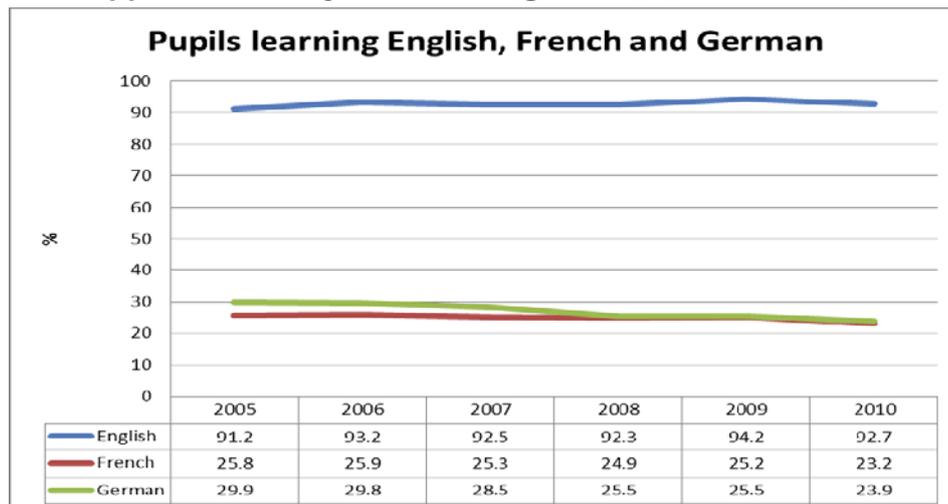
Recent figures confirm that the proportion of students learning two or more foreign languages at the ISCED level 3 general level in the EU-28 remained virtually constant between 2009 and 2014 (Eurostat 2016). Recall that ISCED stands for International Standard Classification of Education (see Appendix 6.1 and Appendix 6.2).

Nevertheless, **studying languages in compulsory education *per se* does not guarantee that the majority of pupils learn them well.** It is common knowledge that language skills are not a dichotomous variable (i.e. know/do not know) but rather a

complex continuum, and that any skill is subject to obsolescence if it is not used enough. In some circumstances a basic level of knowledge can be enough (i.e. the ability to order a meal abroad), but in many other contexts good and even very good levels of language ability are required (and rewarded in the labour market, see section 2.1.1 above). Data from Eurobarometer 2012 show that the *level* of proficiency varies considerably among citizens. **The vast majority of respondents declare themselves as having an elementary or an intermediate level of language competence.** For example, among respondents who declare to know at least some English, only 20% assess their level as “very good”. **The level of language proficiency is not expected to improve considerably in the near future.** The results of the *First European Survey on Language Competences* (European Commission 2012b) have shown that “the outcome of foreign language learning in Europe is poor: only four in ten pupils reach the ‘independent user’ level in the first foreign language, indicating an ability to have a simple conversation. Only one quarter attains this level in the second foreign language. Too many pupils — 14% for the first language and 20% for the second — do not reach the ‘basic user’ level which means that they are not able to use very simple language, even with support” (European Commission 2012d: 1). To conclude on this point, empirical evidence shows that **the MT+2 formula is still not a reality for the majority of Europeans.** Although considerable and encouraging progress in the educational systems have been made in the last two decades, **there is still considerable room for improvement.**

However, even if the majority of Europeans (or at least the younger generation) were able to speak two foreign languages fluently, **the MT+2 formula is not likely to be the best language policy to promote mobility and inclusion at the same time, unless it is accompanied by other language policy measures.** The crux of the matter is the following: no one can foresee which particular language skills are going to be necessary in his/her future life, and there is no guarantee that foreign languages learned by pupils during compulsory education are precisely what they need when they decide to move abroad in their adult life. Besides, people may move several times in their life for different periods of time (e.g. some months or some years) and in different countries. The range of language abilities needed by an individual, therefore, is usually not known in advance.

A possible response of individuals (or pupils’ families) to tackle this problem consists of investing in the learning of a largely spoken language that can serve as a vehicular language in various countries. In Europe this role is primarily, but not exclusively, played by English. English is, in fact, the foreign language most often spoken by European citizens. Nevertheless, data show that English has not yet reached the status of a universal basic skill in Europe. According to the figures published in 2012 in the Eurobarometer survey, 38% of Europeans in the EU-27 speak English as a foreign language, and the level of competence achieved tends to be intermediate or low. **Only 7% of EU citizens state an ability to speak English as a foreign language at a very good level. Intermediate and elementary levels are more common** (17% and 12% respectively). In other words, the percentage of EU-citizens who are native speakers of English or fluent in it does not exceed 21% of the population. Large differences among EU countries exist in this respect (see Appendix 6.3). **The situation is going to change in the future, but only to a certain extent.** In 2014, almost 80% of children in primary education in EU-28 learned English as a foreign language (Eurostat 2016). Figure 3 shows that more than 90% of pupils learn English at ISCED 3/upper secondary education.

**Figure 3: Percentage of pupils learning English, French and German at ISCED 3/upper secondary education (general) (2005-2010)**

Source: European Commission (2012c: 40)

In 2014, this percentage was 94.1% (Eurostat 2016). This does not mean, nevertheless, that the majority of pupils studying English are going to become proficient in it. The results of the *First European Survey on Language Competences* (European Commission 2012b) reveal that only 28% of pupils studying English in the last year of lower secondary education (ISCED2) or the second year of upper secondary education (ISCED3) reach a B2 level of Europe's Common Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). **Despite the massive investments in the teaching of English in the education system, bilingualism is not expected in the near future. As a result, there is still no common language that is widely spoken at a good or proficient level by the vast majority of European citizens.**

As shown at the beginning of this section, proficiency in the official language of a country increases the likelihood to migrate to that country. Hence, language policies aimed at promoting English as a single vehicular language in Europe, in principle, are more likely to promote mobility towards the English-speaking countries rather than to other European Member States. The implications of this asymmetry for the European labour market have not yet been examined in depth.<sup>9</sup>

It is worth noting, though, that inclusion would not be necessarily easier if all Europeans had a common second language. It is well known that communication does not involve a simple transmission of information. English can be useful to access higher education programmes in large cities such as Milan or Berlin, and perhaps to find a job in banks or IT firms based in those cities. But it is probably not enough to be fully integrated in societies in which Italian or German, respectively, are still the local dominant languages. While language *skills* at a given time can be viewed as a stock of human capital, language *use* is a situated practice. In other words, languages are used in different particular situations and moments and in some contexts some language are more useful and/or appropriate than others. Even if a person declare to know a certain foreign language, this does not mean that he/she often uses (or that he/she is willing to use) this language actively or passively. For example, people living in large cities on the Continent may have, on average, a good command of English, but they are not necessarily willing to switch to English every time a foreign colleague or friend is present. This choice should not be interpreted, not *a priori* at

<sup>9</sup> For a general discussion on this topic at the global level see Van Parijs (2000).

least, as parochial nationalism. Preferring interactions in the local dominant language may be due to legitimate reasons such as the need to “feel at home” or the desire to avoid or minimise linguistic insecurity. Mobility implies that interactions with foreigners both in the workplace and in private life become more frequent. This, in turn, increases the number and the frequency of situations in which the use of a vehicular language would be required. But people are not necessarily willing to embrace this change. One of the possible negative results (or “costs” in a very general sense) of this could be the emergence of “parallel societies” in which local people and foreigners (or expats) live in separated communities and networks. In some cases, especially in higher education, this is already happening.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, neither the MT+2 formula nor English alone can be a means of resolving the tension between mobility and inclusion. They may be part of the solution, of course, but other forms of language policy should be implemented. For example, **language learning “on demand” should become easier and, more importantly, cheaper**. By language learning “on demand” we mean the possibility of effectively learning a language *before* moving abroad and/or immediately *after* the arrival in the host country. The Online Linguistic Support (OLS) platform created by the European Commission for Erasmus students provides a useful example.<sup>11</sup> **One of the challenges for the EU in the next years consists of designing language policies that make it possible, on the one hand, to take advantage of the benefits of mobility, and, on the other hand, to reduce the negative effects of mobility on inclusion** (Grin *et al.* 2014). We shall come back to this point in Section 3 to show how the Commission addresses this issue.

### 2.2.2. The Integration of Migrants

The question of migrants’ language skills has become a highly debated issue in Europe. Many EU countries require non-EU citizens to acquire or to test their language skills in the official language of the host country in order to obtain a residence permit or citizenship (see Pulinx, Van Avermaet and Extramiana 2014). Proficiency in the local language is often viewed as a condition for social and economic integration. Empirical evidence tends to support this view, although many emphasise that language proficiency is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for integration. Generally speaking, **proficiency in the language(s) of the host country has a positive effect on migrants’ labour income in a range of 5% to 35%** (see Adserà and Pytliková, 2016; see also Chiswick and Miller, 2014, for an overview), e.g. 27% in Spain (Budría and Swedberg 2012), 7.3% in Germany (Dustmann 1994), and 21% to 23% in the UK (Dustmann and Fabbri 2003). Proficiency in the official language has a **positive impact on immigrants’ employability** (see Aldashev *et al.* 2009, for Germany, Leslie and Lindley 2001, for the UK, and Rendon, 2007, for Catalonia). In different EU countries, non-EU migrants declaring good or very good skills in the official language of the host country are more likely to be employed than those declaring no knowledge of the local language or just a fair level of competence in it (Gazzola 2016, forthcoming). A related question concerns the effect of a lack of language skills on the education outcome of migrants’ children. **Students with a migrant**

<sup>10</sup> For example, we observe the emergence of rather separate networks of interaction among national and international students studying in English outside the UK or Ireland (Priegnitz 2014).

<sup>11</sup> For example, in order to achieve a level of proficiency in English equal to the B2 level of the CEFR, the average learner needs about 500-600 guided learning hours starting from beginner level. This means spending 20 hours a week in language learning for almost 30 weeks (or 7.5 months) (source: <https://support.cambridgeenglish.org/hc/en-gb/articles/202838506-Guided-learning-hours>). Clearly, there are a number of factors that can affect how long it might take to achieve a given level of language skills (e.g. age, individual talent, the affinity between the target language and the learner’s mother tongue, etc.). Nevertheless, this simple example shows that supporting an intensive language learning before moving abroad (e.g. three months) and immediately after the move (e.g. 4,5 months, or even less considering that living

**background score systematically less well than domestic students.** An insufficient command of the language of instruction is often pointed out as one of the reasons (although not necessarily the most important one) that explains this outcome (European Commission 2008b). The phenomenon of migration has gained momentum in recent years. In 2009, for example, 9.3% of 15 year old students belonged to immigrant families in the EU, and approximately half of students with a migrant background speak a language different from the language of instruction in their home (European Commission 2012d: 13).

## 2.3. Multilingual Institutions

The third general goal defined in the ESM is promoting an effective and inclusive way to manage multilingual communication in a supranational democracy. The institutional language policy of the EU (or “language regime”) is based on the formal equality between 24 official and working languages.<sup>12</sup> This choice has led to an intensive debate on its costs, advantages and disadvantages. The language regime of the EU has been studied by different authors and from different academic perspectives, and it is not possible to present this literature here. It is useful, nevertheless, to report some figures based on official data. The availability of data on Europeans’ language skills in the *Eurobarometer* surveys (2001, 2006, and 2012) and in two waves of the *Adult Education Survey –AES* — published by Eurostat in 2011, and in 2013 — has enabled researchers to publish different empirical papers about the effectiveness of the EU language regime.

### 2.3.1. Effectiveness and Fairness of the EU Language Regime

In the literature, the effectiveness of the EU language regime, at least as regards as its external communication, is usually measured through an indicator named *linguistic disenfranchisement rate* (DR) or *rate of linguistic exclusion*, an indicator introduced by Ginsburgh and Weber (2005). The disenfranchisement rate is defined as the percentage of citizens or residents who do not speak any official language as their mother tongue or as a foreign language. This percentage is equivalent to the share of citizens (or residents) who cannot understand official EU documents — e.g. regulations, the content of the plenary meetings of the European Parliament transmitted through the Internet, and the webpages of EU institutions —, unless they find other solutions such as paying a translator or an interpreter or asking a friend or a relative for help. The lower the disenfranchisement rate, the higher the effectiveness of a language regime. Clearly, the disenfranchisement rate is a rough indicator of potential citizens’ participation in the EU business, because it is based on a simplistic view of language as a means of transferring information. It is well known, indeed, that the value attached to languages goes beyond their simple communicative value, but the disenfranchisement rate has the undisputed advantage of being quantifiable and comparable. This provides an empirical basis for public discussion on the language regime of the EU.

Authors use different types of rates of linguistic exclusion. The simplest definition is the percentage of citizens who do not speak any official language. This indicator is called the **absolute disenfranchisement rate** (ADR), and it provides a first approximation of the percentage of people potentially excluded from communication with EU institutions. Sometimes the absolute disenfranchisement rate is defined as the percentage of the population that either does not speak any of the official languages or that speak only one of them only to a basic level. We use the acronym ADR<sub>2</sub> to denote this alternative definition.

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abroad speeds up the learning process) could have a positive effect on the inclusion of the newcomers in the long term.

<sup>12</sup> For a description of the EU language regime see, among others, Phillipson (2003), Ammon (2015: 730-833), Hanf *et al.* (2010: 81-162), Van der Jeught (2015).

It would be risky, however, to compare native speakers of a language with people who declare just a fair or intermediate level of language knowledge. Hence, scholars have developed other definitions of the disenfranchisement rate that take differences in language proficiency into account. The **relative disenfranchisement rate** (RDR), for example, is defined as the percentage of citizens who are neither native speakers of at least one official language nor they speak it at a proficient level.<sup>13</sup> The relative disenfranchisement rate captures the idea that basic or intermediate levels of knowledge of a foreign language are not enough to participate in EU business without too much effort and place you on an equal footing with native speakers.

Authors usually compare four alternative language regimes. The first one is the *status quo* (i.e. equality among the official languages). The second option is a language regime that includes only the six largest EU official languages in terms of native speakers, namely, English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish. The third alternative is a trilingual language regime based on English, French and German, while the last option is an English-only language policy. It is worth noting that in practice these four language regimes are already used. **Although official documents must be translated into all the official languages of the EU, many documents that are not legally binding** (e.g. the different webpages of the Commission) **are available only in a limited number of languages**. In 2014, for example, 14 out of 33 Directorates-General (DGs) of the Commission published their home pages in English only, eight DGs in English, French and German, one DG in eleven languages, and 10 DGs in 24 or 23 official languages (Gazzola 2014b: 249-250). Table 5 reports the estimates of the linguistic disenfranchisement rates that result from the four alternative language regimes just described. Figures are quoted from five different studies. Where possible, Table 5 reports all three definitions of the disenfranchisement rates, i.e. ADR, ADR<sub>2</sub>, and RDR. The relative disenfranchisement rate provides the most conservative estimates of linguistic exclusion, because it supposes that residents need a high level of language proficiency to understand EU documents and participate in EU business without too much effort.

**Table 5: Linguistic disenfranchisement rates in the EU. Results in percentage**

STUDY	LANGUAGE REGIME										
	<i>English-only</i>			<i>3 languages</i>			<i>6 languages</i>			<i>Full multilingualism</i>	
	ADR	ADR <sub>2</sub>	RDR	ADR	ADR <sub>2</sub>	RDR	ADR	ADR <sub>2</sub>	RDR	ADR	RDR
1. Ginsburg and Weber (2005), EU-15	45	-	-	19	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
2. Firdmuc, Ginsburg and Weber (2010), EU-27	-	62.6	-	-	37.8	-	-	16.4	-	-	-

<sup>13</sup> In the Eurobarometer survey respondents were asked to rate their ability using a simple three-point scale – *very good*, *good*, and *basic*, but these levels were not formally defined. By contrast, the AES language skills are evaluated with the help of descriptors, i.e. *fair* (“I can understand and use the most common everyday expressions. I use the language in relation to familiar things and situations”), *good* (“I can understand the essentials of clear language and produce simple texts. I can describe experiences and events and communicate fairly fluently”), and *proficient* (“I can understand a wide range of demanding texts and use the language flexibly. I master the language almost completely”).

3.	Gazzola and Grin (2013), EU-27	50	62	79	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
4.	Gazzola (2014), EU-24	49	-	81	28	-	55	12	-	26	0	4
5.	Gazzola (2016), EU-25	45	65	79	26	39	49	8	14	19	0	4

**Net results. There is no double counting; e.g. a person knowing English and French is computed only once**

**Source: Gazzola (2016)**

The first study from Ginsburg and Weber (2005) employs data from the Eurobarometer (2001) and it evaluates the ADR in EU-15. In this study, the language regime based on six languages includes Dutch instead of Polish. Using data from the second wave of the Eurobarometer survey (2006) on the linguistic skills of EU citizens aged at least 15, Fidrmuc, Ginsburgh and Weber (2010) estimate the ADR<sub>2</sub> for EU-27. Gazzola and Grin (2013) estimate various disenfranchisement rates for EU-27 using data from the 2012 wave of the Eurobarometer survey. Gazzola (2014b) studies the rates of linguistic exclusion of adult residents (including permanent residents of foreign origin) in 24 EU countries using data from the first wave of the AES (2011). In the AES adults are defined as people aged 25 to 64. We exclude for a lack of data Croatia, Malta, Luxembourg, Ireland and the Netherlands. Finally, Gazzola (2016) estimates the disenfranchisement rates of adult residents in 25 EU countries (Croatia, Romania and the Netherlands are excluded for a lack of reliable and adequate data), using the second wave of the AES (2013). The results of Study N° 5, for example, should be interpreted as follows: 45% of residents in the 25 countries examined do not know English; 65% of respondents either do not know English or they speak it only at a fair level; 79% either do not speak English or they know it at a fair or intermediate level (or, conversely, only 21% of respondents are either native speakers of English or proficient in it as a foreign language). For example, if English, French and German were the only official languages of the EU, a percentage of residents that ranges from 26% to 49% in the 25 countries examined would be linguistically excluded, depending on the indicator used. The ADR resulting from a full multilingual regime is equal to zero, whereas the RDR is equal to 4%. This is due to the presence of different minorities that do not have very good language skills in the official language of the country where they reside (e.g. the Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic countries, or the Arabic-speaking minority in France).

Although the five studies use different datasets and examine different groups of countries, the estimates are rather similar and results converge towards the same conclusions. A monolingual language policy based on English-only or a trilingual language regime that includes only English, French and German would exclude a high percentage of EU citizens from communication with the EU. Using only six languages would reduce the rates of linguistic exclusion, but only to a certain extent. **Multilingualism is the most effective language regime among the four alternatives examined.**

It is important to note that the results reported in Table 5 are average values for the EU as a whole or for a large subset of member States. **Large differences exist among countries** with regard to the disenfranchisement rate that results from a monolingual language regime or a language policy based on three or six languages. Obviously, the disenfranchisement rate is very low in countries that share a common language with the

EU, whereas it is higher (and sometimes much higher) in other countries (see the Appendix 6.4).

In addition, research shows that **economically and socially disadvantaged individuals tend to be less likely to speak foreign languages, and therefore they are more likely to be adversely affected if the EU stops using their native language or primary language of education** (Gazzola 2014b, 2016). For example, in the 25 countries examined in the fifth study mentioned in Table 5, 17% of residents who have successfully completed a tertiary level of education have no knowledge of English, whereas this percentage is 47% among those who have achieved only an upper secondary level of education. Some 21% of respondents holding a job have no knowledge of English, French or German, either as a foreign or native language, but this percentage is 41% among the unemployed. In France, about three-quarters of people in the top 10 % income bracket speak some basic English, whereas only a third of people in the lowest 10 % income bracket do. In Italy, people in the top 10 % income bracket are twice as likely to speak English as a foreign language than those in the bottom 10 % income bracket.

A drastic reduction of the official languages of the EU, therefore, would have two negative effects. First, it would generate considerable inequalities between, on the one hand, citizens who are resident in a country whose native language or primary language of education is an official language of the EU, and on the other hand the majority of citizens living in countries that do not have any official language in common with the EU. Second, abandoning multilingualism would have regressive effects, because it would be particularly detrimental to the disadvantaged groups in society, that is, the least educated people, those with the lowest income, and the unemployed. It is worth stressing that it is not just a blanket reduction in the number of languages that would be exclusionary. **Even reducing the current domains of use of the official language entails analogous effects.**

Although it is not possible to put a monetary value on the benefits deriving from the multilingual language regime, the analysis of the disenfranchisement rates clarifies the advantages of multilingualism in terms of the effectiveness of EU communication and its distributive consequences. Recall that EU institutions spend around €1.1 billion per year on language services. This amounts to less than 1% of the budget of EU institutions and less than 0.009% of European GDP (Gazzola and Grin 2013).

### 2.3.2. EU Multilingualism after “Brexit”

As a result of the referendum held on the 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom has decided to leave the European Union. The negotiations to formalise the withdrawal of the UK from the EU could last up to two years, and we do not know what the future EU is going to look like. Further, it is not possible to predict whether Scotland, where the majority voted to remain in the EU, will decide to split from the UK. Hence, any attempt to describe the language regime of the EU after “Brexit” is necessarily exploratory. For a lack of better data, we compute the ADR and the RDR excluding the UK from the set of countries. After the exit of the UK from the EU, English will be the mother tongue of only a tiny minority of the population in the new EU with 27 Member States (essentially the Irish and Britons living on the Continent). What effect this change could have on the language regime of the European Union? Some people may be tempted to claim that Brexit solves the problem of equity and efficiency in the Union's communication. English could become the only official language of the Union, lowering translation costs, and putting everyone on an equal footing as regards communication between the European institutions and citizens. Data, nevertheless, present a different picture. **Brexit is likely to increase the importance of a multilingual language regime.** Table 6 shows the absolute and the relative disenfranchisement rates associated with a monolingual language regime (English-only) and a trilingual language

regime (English French and German) after Brexit. We use two different datasets, namely the 2012 wave of the Eurobarometer Survey and the second wave of the Adult Education Survey (2013).

Results converge towards the same conclusion. An English-only language policy would exclude more than 50% of the population of the EU without the UK, and make communication difficult for 90% of citizens, especially for those with a low level of education and a relatively lower income status. Only 10% of the population, indeed, declare to speak English as a mother tongue or very well as a foreign language. This means that only 10% of Europeans could have access to EU documents without too much effort. Using three languages would be highly exclusionary too. One third of EU citizens would be totally excluded from communication with the EU, and more than the half would have a difficult access to EU documents.

**Table 6: Rates of linguistic exclusion in the EU after Brexit. Results in percentage**

Constellation of countries and dataset	LANGUAGE REGIME			
	<i>English-only</i>		<i>English-French-German</i>	
	ADR	RDR	ADR	RDR
EU-26 <sup>°</sup> (Eurobarometer 2012)	56	90	36	58
EU-24* (Adult Education Survey 2013)	51	90	30	56

<sup>°</sup> EU-26=EU-28 minus the UK and Croatia for a lack of data. EU citizens aged at least 15. Number of observations= 26,751

\* EU-24=EU-28 minus the UK, Croatia, Romania and the Netherland for the lack of adequate data. Residents in the EU aged 25-64. Number of observations= 166,311

**Source: Table compiled by the author**

Compare the disenfranchisement rates in Table 6 with those presented in Table 5. **After Brexit, the rates of linguistic exclusion associated with a monolingual policy and/or a trilingual are going to increase.** This emphasises the importance of adopting a multilingual approach towards the external communication of the EU.

### 3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ESM

#### KEY FINDINGS

- Few reports deal with the implementation of the ESM at the EU and at the national level, and data available are not sufficient to carry out a fully-fledged evaluation of the ESM.
- The First European Survey on Language Competences is one of the most important achievements lined to the ESM.
- The *Lifelong Learning Programme* has funded different projects aimed at supporting language learning, but the lack of clear outcome indicators does not allow an evaluation of the final effects of these projects with respect to participants' language skills.
- The Online Linguistic Support (OLS) provided by the European Commission to Erasmus students is a promising tool to support language learning and the self-assessment of language skills.
- The European Social Fund has been used for language training aimed at improving employability and the integration of immigrants, but we lack figures about the amount of funding invested for this purpose and the socio-economic effects obtained.
- Different measures implemented by the Commission to fulfil the ESM recommendations have consisted of publishing documents, websites and reports that aims at raising awareness of the benefits of language diversity and language learning in society and in the economy.
- Most of the measures undertaken by the Commission in the area of translation and interpreting are targeted and relevant. The "Machine translation for public administrations system" (MT@EC) developed by the European Commission is a useful tool to helpful transnational communication among public institutions.
- Few initiatives have been undertaken to promote the external dimension of multilingualism.

In this part of the report, we summarise actions carried out by the Commission to implement the ESM. To the best of our knowledge, the *Report on the Implementation of Council Resolution of 21 November 2008 on a European Strategy for Multilingualism — henceforth Implementation Report* — (European Commission 2011f), is the only official document specifically dealing with the implementation of the ESM by the Commission. There is no document at the EU level that summarises measures carried out by Member States (if any). Additional evidence that may be relevant for the evaluation of the ESM is provided in two working papers published by the Commission in 2008 and 2011 (European Commission 2008d, 2011a). Finally, it is worth mentioning the Report *Multilingualism: Between Policy Objectives and Implementation* and its annexes, published in 2008 by the European Parliament (Cullen *et al.* 2008a, 2008b). This report contains useful information on the implementation of the *Action Plan 2004-2006* (European Commission 2003). Yet, its relevance for an evaluation of the ESM is limited.

This section summarises available evidence on the implementation of the ESM on the basis of the *Implementation Report*, it updates its results with additional sources,<sup>14</sup> and, where possible, it provides an overall assessment of the Commission's initiatives in the light of the concepts explained in Section 1.2 and the results presented in Section 2. Initiatives are presented following the order of the recommendations of the ESM. Table 7 at the end of this section provides a summary.

### 3.1. Social Cohesion, Intercultural Dialogue and European Construction

As far as the first priority of the ESM is concerned (i.e. "Promoting multilingualism with a view to strengthening social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and European construction"), the Implementation Report mentions two types of initiatives. The first one consists of **various publications, including websites,<sup>15</sup> handbooks and reports** on these issues. Some of these publications address the question of the linguistic needs of children from a migrant or minority background. In 2009, the Commission published the Eurydice research on the integration of immigrant children in schools (European Commission 2009). This report presents the measures undertaken by Member States to foster communication with immigrant families and to teach heritage languages to immigrant children. The topic has gained momentum in recent years, and this has led to the publication of several reports (e.g. ICF Consulting Services 2015).

The second initiative was undertaken in 2009, when the Commission established a ***Civil Society Platform to Promote Multilingualism for Intercultural Dialogue***. In 2011, the Platform produced a report containing different recommendations. One of the results of the work of the Platform was the "Poliglotti4.eu project" (2011-2013). The website of the project collects, among other things, information on the key motivators and inhibitors of multilingualism, different catalogues of best practices in multilingual communication management, a catalogue of multilingualism tools, and different examples of best practice on the implementation of multilingualism policy by local and regional authorities. The last report<sup>16</sup> of the *Poliglotti4.eu* project was published in 2012. It contains information on the outputs and the outcomes of the project. The output of this actions is measured in terms of information published on the website (e.g. a list of books on multilingualism, and some examples of best practices), whereas outcomes are evaluated in terms of the number of visits to the website per month. In June 2012, the Platform was officially relaunched to continue promoting multilingualism within the EU, but in late 2015 the European Commission decided not to present a new mandate.

Both set of measures have aimed at raising awareness of the advantages of language learning and linguistic diversity in general, but **it is difficult to evaluate their final impact on the promotion of social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and European construction without clear indicators and data**. Commission initiatives in this area are relevant (see section 2.2 above), but the lack of explicit evaluation reports from the Commission does not enable us to come to a conclusive judgement.

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<sup>14</sup> Additional information of the implementation is provided in a recent Study of Saville and Gutierrez Eugenio (2016). This study, nevertheless, has been published exactly at the same time of our study. Therefore, it has not been possible to fully take its content into account.

<sup>15</sup> Some of the websites published are no longer online.

<sup>16</sup> See [http://poliglotti4.eu/php/about/index.php?doc\\_id=73&lg=en](http://poliglotti4.eu/php/about/index.php?doc_id=73&lg=en)

### 3.2. Lifelong Language Learning

The second priority of the ESM relates to lifelong language learning. It is worth recalling that education is not a competence of the EU and the range of actions in this area are limited to facilitating the coordination among Member States in education and providing direct financial support to projects linked to language learning.

Different important measures in this area have been undertaken since 2008. In 2008, the Commission launched a plan for **a survey aimed at testing the level of proficiency of students in different foreign languages**. The *First European Survey on Language Competences* was published in 2012 (European Commission 2012b). The survey has tested in several European countries the competence levels in different foreign languages (mostly English and sometimes French) from a representative sample of 53,000 pupils in the last year of lower secondary education or the second year of upper secondary education. **The development of a cross-European survey that uses standardised criteria to test pupils' language skills is an important achievement**, because it provides a common basis to monitor the progress (if any) made by Member States in pursuing the Barcelona objectives (that is, the MT+2 formula).

**The EU has funded different projects dealing with lifelong learning, essentially through the Lifelong Learning Programme – LLP - (2007-2013)**. The *Implementation Report* contains some figures on the amount of money spent on language-related activities. The LLP had a budget of nearly €7 billion, and it funded a wide range of exchanges, study visits, and networking activities. From 2007 to 2011, the last year for which figures are available in the *Implementation Report*, the Commission spent approximately €50 million per year on language-related activities. Suppose that the total budget of the LLP was equally spread across the seven years of life of the programme (this yields one billion euros per year). Under this assumption, **roughly 5% of the budget of the LLP was spent on language-related activities**. This corresponds to the input of the language policy measures implemented by the Commission (see Figure 1), but few precise data on the outputs and the outcomes of such measures are available. Without such data it is not possible to evaluate the actual impact of LLP.

The *Implementation Report* reports that from 2007 to 2010, a total of 87 multilateral projects, 17 networks and 8 accompanying measures were selected under Key Activity 2 “Languages” (this activity was also funded by LLP). Key Activity 2 “recognised the importance of linguistic diversity and language learning to ensure that European citizens have better professional and personal opportunities throughout their lives. The aim of this key activity was to raise awareness of this importance not only among students and education staff but also in the wider society” (Saville and Gutierrez Eugenio 2016: 22). The total amount of money granted was €39 million (European Commission 2011a). From 2011 to 2013 the Key Action N 2 funded 10 multilateral networks, 8 accompanying measures and 62 multilateral projects.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, an estimated €35 million more was spent on LLP decentralised actions linked to languages. Such actions were managed by the National Agencies of the LLP. From 2007 to 2010 various projects in the field of languages were funded under other LLP centralised actions including *Comenius*, *Grundtvig*, *Leonardo*, and *Erasmus*. A total of 61 projects was funded totalling almost €17 million. The range of activities funded is large. They include multilateral projects promoting language awareness and access to language learning

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.sepie.es/doc/comunicacion/publicaciones/Keyactivity2.pdf> quoted in (Saville and Gutierrez Eugenio 2016: 22).

resources, the development and dissemination of language learning and language testing materials, as well as language courses and mobility measures. The *Implementation Report*, nevertheless, does not provide detailed figures about the resources invested in specific measures concerning languages funded by *Comenius*, *Grundtvig*, *Leonardo*, and *Erasmus*, with the exception of €1.57 million spent in the 2008/09 academic year for intensive language courses for Erasmus students in 22 countries. We know from other sources that the *Erasmus* programme — which was part of LLP between 2007 and 2013 — supported different language-oriented initiatives in higher education such as the *Erasmus Intensive Language Courses* (EILC), i.e. six weeks of intensive learning of the official language of the host country (European Commission 2011a). More than 5,000 students participated in EILC in 2009-2010. Nonetheless, no figures on the costs of EILC are available, and the outcomes of this initiative have not been published yet. **A lack of precise data on the results achieved by initiatives like EILC is a shortcoming of the *Implementation Report*.** According to an official report of the Commission, “in the last three years of the *Lifelong Learning Programme* (2011-13), €27.8 million were invested in multilateral projects, networks and accompanying measures for the promotion of language learning. Over the same period, approximately 21,000 students and staff attended the *Erasmus Intensive Language Courses*” (European Commission 2015: 4). Also in this case we do not have information about the results of these courses with respect to the language skills acquired by participants at the end of the programme.

The programme *Leonardo da Vinci* was part of LLP from 2007 to 2013. This programme supported linguistic accompanying measures to ease cross-European placements in enterprises (European Commission 2011a). Linguistic preparation for trainees and apprentices was provided through Vocationally-Oriented Language Learning (VOLL), but **no data on the costs and benefits of VOLL have been published.** Some figures are provided in the European Commission (2011a), although from 2007 to 2010, the *Leonardo* programme supported 71 innovation projects aimed at encouraging the learning of modern foreign languages. The *Implementation Report* mentions no figures on the results of these projects with regard to the language proficiency developed by participants. The budget was more than €17.7 million. It is worth noticing that under the LLP a flat-rate amount of up to €500 per participant could be paid to cover his/her linguistic, cultural and pedagogical preparation for experiences abroad (European Commission 2008d).

The activities of LLP continue under the new *Erasmus+* programme (2014-2020). According to the official figures available between 2014 to 2016 *Erasmus+* funded 38,103 projects. The grants awarded vary from few thousands euros to €3.7 million.<sup>18</sup> A simple look at the titles of the projects funded reveals that many of them refer directly to language learning, multilingualism, and language teaching. It is not possible, nevertheless, to provide a reliable estimate of resources spent in language-related activities in this briefing paper, because the activities funded are often just one of the aspects of very large projects involving higher education students and staff mobility. Some figures are reported in a recent publication of the Commission: thanks to *Erasmus+* “almost 220,000 students have assessed their language level and more than 65,000 have followed online language courses to ensure they get better value from their studies and traineeships abroad” (European Commission 2015: 4). In 2016, 66,000 vocational training learners and more than 7,000 Youth-EVS [European Voluntary Service] volunteers are going to benefit from language assessment and online linguistic support. Using the terminology presented in Section 1.2, the number of participants is one of the outputs of the language policy actions undertaken

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<sup>18</sup> See the Erasmus+ Projects Compendium: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-projects-compendium/>

by the Commission to implement the ESM. Yet, **we lack data on the outcomes of the policy, that is, the level of language skills eventually achieved by learners, and the resulting effects on the success of their studies and traineeships abroad.**

One of the most interesting outputs *Erasmus+* has been the creation of the Online Linguistic Support (OLS) platform (<http://erasmusplusols.eu>). The OLS “offers participants in *Erasmus+* long-term mobility activities (Key Action 1) the opportunity to assess their skills in the foreign language(s) they will use to study, work or volunteer abroad. In addition, selected participants may follow an online language course to improve their competence”. The OLS has proved to be very popular (see Saville and Gutierrez Eugenio 2016: 24 for an overview), and it can be an interesting tool to make language learning “on demand” cheaper (see Section 2.2.1).

Finally, the *Implementation Report* mentions the publication of a handbook on early language learning (European Commission 2011c), and some common guidelines for validating language competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning.<sup>19</sup>

In summary, **the ESM invites the Commission and the Member States to strengthen lifelong language learning, and it suggests the pursuit of eight priorities. Some of them, as shown above, have been fully or partially achieved.** A European Indicator of Language Competence (point 2e of the ESM) has been designed, and the results of the first tests have been published. This is an important achievement, because the indicator provides standardised information on the effectiveness of educational systems. Further, the LLP has funded different activities aimed at promoting mobility opportunities for students and teachers (point 2h of the ESM). This can help them improve their language skills. **The figures available, nevertheless, refer mostly to inputs, that is, the resources mobilised, and sometimes to policy outputs, i.e. the number of projects supported and the number of participants (see Section 1.2 for definitions). But we do not have data on the outcomes of the concrete measures implemented by the Commission or by other organisations funded LLP, that is, their effect on the target population of the language policy.** The *Implementation Report*, for example, does not publish enough data to evaluate whether students and teachers have actually improved their language skills or not *as a result* of their participation in projects funded by LLP. The Commission should improve the number and the quality of indicators that are necessary to evaluate the results of the projects funded by the EU as regards the language skills of participants. In other words, **the information system should be improved.** This does not necessarily mean collecting data for *every* single project, but at least some projects should be monitored more closely. Without such data, it is not possible to evaluate the benefits of EU support to language learning and the effectiveness and efficiency of the language policies adopted.

**As regards progresses towards the achievement of the Barcelona’s objectives** (that is, the MT+2 formula, see point 2a of the ESM), **evidence is mixed.** The average number of foreign languages taught at the lower secondary level of education (ISCED 2) has slightly increased from 1.4 in 2004 to 1.5 in 2011 (ICF GHK 2014, European Commission 2012e, European Commission 2012f), but the average number of foreign languages taught at the upper secondary level of education remained constant at 1.6. The percentage of students learning at least two foreign languages at ISCED level 3 general has

<sup>19</sup> A revised edition of the European guidelines for the validation of non-formal and informal learning has been published end of 2015 and it is available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4054>

remained virtually unchanged (Eurostat 2016). The financial crisis, and the consequent fiscal austerity measures adopted in several countries, may help to explain this trend.

**More information is necessary to evaluate the measures carried out by the Member States** to train language teachers (point 2.f), and to promote the use of digital communication technology and distance learning (point 2.d). More precise data would be necessary to monitor the variety of languages taught in Europe, including recognised languages which are less widely used (point 2.c), and to evaluate progress (if any) of approaches based on the intercomprehension of related languages (point 2.d). Official data, however, show that in 2014 94% of students in general upper secondary education were learning English, but only 23% French, 19% German, 19% Spanish, 3% Italian, and 3% Russian (Eurostat 2016). In order to contribute to the achievement of the results of the ESM, in particular with regard to the MT+2 policy, **the EU could increase financial support for the teaching of languages other than English**. While education is a competence of member States according to the subsidiarity principle, the EU could use financial support to promote linguistic exchanges in non English-speaking countries for students at the ISCED 3 level.

### 3.3. Employability and Competitiveness

The ESM invites the Commission and Member States to promote multilingualism in order to enhance businesses' competitiveness, and citizens' mobility and employability. As shown in Section 2.1 of this briefing paper, these goals are sensible. Yet, little is known about the effects of EU-funded programmes in this area. According to the *Implementation Report* "structural funds have been used to finance training in foreign languages aimed, among other things, at improving employability, enabling workers to understand security rules, developing the tourism sector or upgrading the skills of civil servants. Training in the language of the host country is also funded to encourage the integration of immigrants and their families". This is consistent with the Council's recommendations (see point 3.c of the ESM). **Unfortunately, the *Implementation Report* does not mention precise figures about the amount of funding invested for this purpose, let alone about the effects obtained.**

Some data are provided in a separate document published in 2011 by the Commission (European Commission 2011a). Between 2007 and 2013, the European Social Fund (ESF) earmarked €11 billion per year across all Member States with the objective of improving people's skills and job prospects. Language training is one of the ways to achieve this objective, but **we do not know the precise amount of money spent on it**. From 2007 to 2011, language learning was promoted in the 244 priorities of the 48 Operational Programmes of 21 Member States (from a total of 117 Operational Programmes of 27 Member States). Most of the projects funded were part of wider policies to encourage language learning, targeting primarily ethnic minorities, migrants, the (long-term) unemployed or inactive, workers and employees, early-school leavers, the young, trainers and educators. Some examples for the period 2000-2006 are described in a report published by the Commission (see European Commission 2008d).

**A visible output of the Commission's initiatives in the area of employability and competitiveness is the promotion of some thematic groups concerning the importance of language skills in the economy, and the publication of various reports or studies** aimed at raising awareness about the potential contribution of languages to employability and businesses' competitiveness. In this section, we present such initiatives and, when possible, we discuss their follow-up.

- The report *Languages for Jobs* (European Commission 2011d), issued from a working group of experts, identifies different examples of “good practices” in achieving a better match between the language competences of people entering the labour market and the expectations of employers.
- In 2009, the Commission established a *Business Platform for Multilingualism*. The Platform, among other things, has discussed how to enhance awareness of the importance of languages in business, and to develop services and tools to help companies and individuals to improve professional performance through language policy. The report was published in 2011.<sup>20</sup> The Platform also published the brochure “Languages Mean Business”. One of the results of the Platform is the *CELAN Network for the Promotion of Language Strategies for Competitiveness and Employability* (2011-2013). The goal of the CELAN network is to provide language services to business stakeholders, e.g. research on the linguistic needs of European companies/SMEs in different sectors, and analyses of existing language-related services and tools. The most important outcome of the CELAN network is the development of an on-line application named “Language Needs Analysis Application”. This application provides an interactive system allowing firms “to profile their language needs, compare these with current practice, and gain information and access to a range of various language resources available in the language community and market”.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, there is no ex-post evaluation on the follow-up of the Platform’s recommendations. Figures about the actual use of the *Language Needs Analysis Application* would help to evaluate its impact.
- In 2011, the Commission published the *Report on Language Management Strategies and Best Practice in European SMEs: The PIMLICO Project* (Hagen 2011), where PIMLICO stands for “Promoting, Implementing, Mapping Language and Intercultural Communication Strategies in Organisations and Companies”. The PIMLICO project identifies and describes various models of best practice in 40 European SMEs that “have been selected for their significant trade growth thanks to formulating and employing language management strategies”. One of the outputs of the project is a review of different language support organisations and networks in the EU that operate at the supranational, national, regional and local level. In order to assess the effectiveness of the project, some figures on the actual use of this information by firms should be collected and published.
- From 2009 to 2011, the Lifelong Learning Programme funded the *LILAMA Network* (where LILAMA stands for *Linguistic Policy for the Labour Market*). The network is a learning platform for the exchange and dissemination of guidelines, best practices and policy recommendations contributing to the design and implementation of linguistic policies oriented to labour market needs.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2011, the Commission published the study *Mapping Best Multilingual Business Practices in the EU* (European Commission 2011e) and *The Language Guide for European Business. Successful Communication in Your International Trade* (European Commission 2011b). Data to evaluate the actual use of this guide are missing.

Although these studies and reports may have raised awareness about the importance of language skills in the economy, it is not clear how to evaluate their actual influence of relevant actors.

<sup>20</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/languages/library/documents/business\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/languages/library/documents/business_en.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.celan-platform.eu/index.html>

<sup>22</sup> See <http://www.lilama.org/>

### 3.4. Promoting Linguistic Diversity through Translation

The fourth point of ESM concerns translation. The Council invites the Commission and Member States to provide information about national and European assistance schemes for the translation of cultural products such as books or films (mainly by means of subtitling). It also urges the Commission to reinforce programmes aimed at training translators, to support multilingual terminology databases, and to encourage the development of language technologies. In this section, we review and update the most important initiatives in this field. **Generally speaking, the measures carried out in this area are well explained in the *Implementation Report*. Most of them are targeted and relevant,** in particular for the implementation of a multilingual policy at the level of EU institutions (see Section 2.3).

The Commission, with the help of LLP, set up the European Master in Translation (EMT), which is a partnership project between the European Commission and higher education institutions offering programmes in translation at Master's level with the goal of improving the quality of translator training and to get highly skilled people to work as translators in the EU. Universities involved in the EMT form a network named *EMT network*, which is the forum where EMT member universities meet and exchange good practices in translation teaching. The network has 63 members. Further, the Commission organises other programmes and outreach activities aimed at promoting translation as a profession, in particular the *Visiting translator scheme* and the visits to *DG Translation programmes*. The first programme allows Commission translators to spend some weeks at a university teaching translation and advising on EU career opportunities for linguists, whereas the second programme organises visits to DG Translation for students and others with a professional interest in translation. In addition, the Commission organises the *Juvenes Translatores* translation contest to raise awareness among secondary school pupils about the importance of translation.<sup>23</sup> The Commission and the Parliament were active in creating the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI).

The Commission makes available different **tools**, reference materials and databases for translators and terminologists, for example, the *Interactive Terminology for Europe* (IATE). Data on the actual use of IATE by external users would help to assess the impact of this initiative.

The Commission launched the *Language Industry Web Platform* (LIND-Web), which contains facts and figures about the EU language industry. The Public Sector Information Directive (2003/98/EC) puts in place a concrete mechanism to promote the re-use by Member States of language resources produced by EU institutions and bodies, such as translation archives and documents translated into different EU languages (European Commission 2011a). There are translation field offices located in 24 Commission Representations acting as an interface with national language stakeholders. **Data on the services currently provided by these offices would be useful to evaluate the impact of the ESM.**

From 2007 to 2011, the *Culture Programme* helped finance the translation of 1,548 books with a total budget of €8.4 million (European Commission 2011a). A study on the use of subtitling to encourage foreign language learning and improve the mastery of foreign languages was published in 2011 (Media Consulting Group 2011). According to a recent

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<sup>23</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/index_en.htm)

report, in 2015, the Commission's framework programme for support to the culture and audiovisual sectors *Creative Europe* has funded the translation of more than 500 books (novels, short stories, plays, poetry, comic books and children's fiction) from 35 European languages for a budget of almost €4 million (European Commission 2015: 5).

The European Commission has been working since 2010 on a new machine translation system for public administrations named *MT@EC*. This system "allows all EU institutions and agencies (not only translators but also regular members of staff) as well as national public administrations in EU Member States to obtain fairly accurate machine translations in a total of 552 language pairs covering all of the EU official languages. This new system is a key development since it enables multilingualism across public services" (Saville and Gutierrez Eugenio 2016: 36).

The Commission has published different **studies** on the importance of translation in society and in the economy. Among others, we should mention a study on the translation industry (Rinsche and Portera-Zanotti 2009), a report on the translation profession (Pym *et al.* 2012), a paper on the role of translation in EU society (Euréval 2010), and a study focusing on the impact of new technologies and new business models in the global translation industry (Troussel and Debussche 2014). In 2010, the Commission published a study on the impact of information and communications technology (ICT) and new media on language learning (Stevens 2010).

The Commission has supported different **scientific projects** in the of field human language technology. For example, one of the priorities of the *7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development* (2007-2013) was "Language Technologies", which covers many research groups and disciplines including natural language processing, speech technology, information extraction, and machine translation. A total of 25 language-technology projects with overall EU funding of €56 million was launched in 2009-2010 (European Commission 2011a). The language technologies' portfolio includes projects from the Competitive and Innovation Programme (2007-2013). Projects on language technologies, and in particular machine translation, may be funded also by *Horizon 2020* (2014-2020), the new EU Framework Programme for research and innovation.

The Commission is active in **international cooperation activities** in the area of translation and interpreting, for example in the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP), a forum and network of managers of international organisations employing conference and language service providers. Further, the European Commission has concluded international agreements with various State bodies involved in translation and multilingual terminology such as the Translation Bureau, the Public Works and Government Services of Canada, the CRITI — Caribbean Research Institute for Translation and Interpretation (European Commission, 2011a). The Herzen State Pedagogical University in St Petersburg and the Moscow Language University participate in the Visiting Translator Scheme (VTS). In the area of interpreting, the Commission has different international cooperation programmes with China, Vietnam, Macao, and Russia.

### 3.5. The External Dimension of Multilingualism

The fifth point of ESM concerns the "external dimension of multilingualism", which means promoting European languages abroad and enhancing cooperation with national and

international organisations that are active in the field of language learning and in the area of linguistic and cultural diversity. The *Implementation Report* mentions two initiatives.

The first one involves **India**. In 2008, the Commission organised a conference on multilingualism and intercultural dialogue in New Delhi. In 2009, it signed a joint declaration on multilingualism with the government of India. In 2011, a meeting among senior officials was organised in the framework of the EU-India policy dialogue. The second initiative involved **China**. In 2009, the Chinese government and the Commission signed a joint declaration on multilingualism. A conference on multilingualism and language learning was organised in 2011.

**No information is available on the follow-up (if any) to these declarations.** This is somewhat deceptive, because the EU is often pointed out as an example to study (and sometimes even as a model to imitate) by multilingual countries with several official languages such as India or South Africa. Given that multilingualism in the world is the norm rather than the exception, the EU should probably look for models which might offer some concrete evidence about what managing multilingualism and linguistic diversity mean in practical terms. As Kraus notes, when European politicians look for such models, “their interest is often captured by the case of the United States. [Nevertheless], if we wish to develop a sound approach to analysing the EU’s prospects as a diverse political community, we should perhaps rather bring into focus the experience of a democratic federation whose politics are substantially characterised by the intertwining of multiculturalism and multinational factor. The comparative frame for assessing Europe’s political future would thus be moved only slightly to the north, from the USA to Canada” (Kraus 2008: 97: 97). Switzerland is another interesting case (see Lacey 2013).

Finally, the EU should pay more attention to the development of cooperation with multilingual countries in order to exchange experiences and practices. Comparative research in the area of multilingualism and language policy could be supported. Setting up a **European chairs or a research centre on multilingualism and language policy could contribute to promoting a genuinely EU vision of multilingualism** in the world rather than simply promoting European languages as such. This would be consistent with the EU’s support for large research projects on multilingualism and in the sixth and seventh Framework Programmes for research and technological development,<sup>24</sup> and with the recommendations made in 2005 by the Commission itself in the document *A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism*. In this document, one can read that “the Commission will provide support through the proposed Lifelong Learning Programme for studies on the state of multilingualism in higher education and the creation of chairs in fields of study related to multilingualism and inter-culturalism” (European Commission 2005: 8).

Table 7 summarises the main outputs of the activities carried out by the European Commission to implement the ESM and it provides a general remark on their outcomes.

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<sup>24</sup> See the project *LINÉE* (Languages in a Network of European Excellence), *DYLAN* (Language Dynamics and Management of Diversity), *ELDIA* (European Language Diversity for All), and *MIME* (Mobility and Inclusion in a Multilingual Europe).

**Table 7: Summary of the EC's activities to implement the ESM**

Area	MAIN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES AND REMARKS
<i>Social Cohesion, Intercultural Dialogue and European Construction</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Various publications</li> <li>2. Establishment of a Civil Society Platform to Promote Multilingualism for Intercultural Dialogue</li> </ol>	(1 and 2) Perhaps a positive impact on the awareness of the advantages of language learning and linguistic diversity, but the lack of clear data and indicators does not allow us to come to a definitive conclusion
<i>Lifelong Language Learning</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data collection (First European Survey on Language Competences)</li> <li>2. Direct funding to different projects dealing with lifelong learning (5% of the budget of LLP used for this purpose)</li> <li>3. Significant number of participants to these projects</li> </ol>	(1) Important achievement. Availability of new data for the comparative evaluation of the effectiveness of the educational systems (2 and 3) Probably positive effects, but more data on the outcomes of the programmes (e.g. the level of language skills eventually <i>achieved</i> by learners) are necessary to evaluate the effectiveness and the benefits resulting from the implementation of the ESM
<i>Employability and Competitiveness</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Various publications</li> <li>2. Direct funding to support training in foreign languages</li> </ol>	(1) Perhaps a positive impact on the awareness of the advantages of foreign language for businesses. More data and indicators would be necessary to assess the actual impact of these publications (2) Probably positive effects, but few data on the final results of such direct funding are available
<i>Promoting Linguistic Diversity through Translation</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. European Master in Translation</li> <li>2. New tools and databases for translators</li> <li>3. Support to the translation of books</li> <li>4. Various studies</li> <li>5. Several international cooperation activities</li> </ol>	Most of these initiatives are targeted and relevant
<i>The External Dimension of Multilingualism</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joint declaration on multilingualism with India</li> <li>2. Joint declaration on multilingualism with China</li> </ol>	(1 and 2) Limited impact and no follow-up

Source: Table compiled by the author

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

### KEY FINDINGS

- The general objectives of the ESM are relevant because they are consistent with the problems that the ESM is supposed to tackle. Some new measures may be designed to further relax the tension between mobility with inclusion, for example strengthening language learning “on demand”, and providing a greater number multilingual public services and including administrative forms. The “Online Linguistic Support” (OLS) and the “Machine translation for public administrations” system (MT@EC) developed by the European Commission are good examples.
- The evaluation of this relevance can be carried out on limited empirical evidence. We lack adequate and reliable data to study the effects of language skills on individuals’ economic welfare and on companies’ competitiveness. Better data on the income of European residents could be collected in the *Adult Education Survey*. More quantitative data on the use of languages in the economic activities of European companies (i.e. in the processes of purchase, production and sale) are necessary.
- As regards the evaluation of the measures and activities carried out by the Commission to implement the ESM, we observe mixed evidence. Information about the costs and effectiveness of EU programmes and actions undertaken to comply with the ESM is not complete. The indicators to be used to assess the outcomes of language policy should be defined more explicitly.
- Close attention should be paid to the evaluation of the final effects of programmes aimed at improving language skills of students and adults. Evaluation methods can be adapted from existing guidelines already published by the Commission.
- Incentives can also be an effective way to promote multilingualism, especially in higher education.
- There should be consistency between the ESM and other EU policies that have an indirect impact on linguistic diversity and on the enforcement of the MT+2 formula. Sometimes in certain policy areas, monolingualism and/or trilingualism *de facto* prevail.
- The European Commission’s external communication could be more multilingual, in particular as regards its websites.

As shown in Section 1, strengthening language learning and supporting the translation sector can be viewed as a means to achieve other general socio-economic goals, such as promoting mobility, facilitating the inclusion of migrants and EU mobile citizens, improving employability, and ensuring a certain equality among the official languages of the EU (point 1 and point 3 of the ESM, and final recommendations).

Empirical evidence presented in Section 2 shows that that foreign language skills may have a positive effect on individuals’ income and on society’s welfare, and that investing in the teaching of more than one foreign language is a sensible goal. Such benefits can be measured. In addition, foreign language skills can ease mobility and inclusion. Evidence of

the impact of language skills on employability is still preliminary, but it shows a positive relationship between language skills and employment status. Language skills can contribute to the economic integration of migrants by increasing their income and job opportunities. The study of the linguistic disenfranchisement rates shows that an equal treatment of the EU's official languages for the external communication of EU institutions is necessary to guarantee effectiveness and fairness in the access to documents published by the EU.

Supporting language learning to foster intra-EU mobility and to promote inclusion in the host country is one of the goals of the ESM, but neither the MT+2 formula nor the promotion of a single vehicular language are enough to resolve the tension between mobility and inclusion. Some innovative measures could be developed at the national level and at the EU level. **Learning the official language(s) of the host country before moving abroad and/or immediately after arriving in the host country should become more accessible and cheaper.** The Online Linguistic Support (OLS) provided by the European Commission to Erasmus students is a good example and it could be extended to other target populations (see section 3.2). In addition, as suggested in point 3.c of the ESM, the EU could draw on the European Structural Funds to provide job-specific language courses in vocational training and adult education. This would be consistent with the recommendations contained in the Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on multilingualism and the development of language competences. In this document the Council invites Member States to “exploit the potential of the *Erasmus+* Programme and the European Structural and Investment Funds” to achieve these aims.

**A greater provision of multilingual public services, at least in large cities, could be useful.** The provision of standardised administrative forms in more than one language may facilitate economic activities and the coordination of social security systems. Some progresses have been made, but there is some room for improvement.<sup>25</sup> The Machine translation for public administrations system (MT@EC) developed by the European Commission can be very helpful in that respect (see section 3.4). This emphasises the importance of translation and interpreting in managing multilingual communication in Europe. To conclude on this point, **the general objectives presented in the ESM are relevant because they are consistent with the problems that the ESM is supposed to tackle. Language skills bring about several types of advantages (or “benefits”) for individuals, for society and for the institution of EU. Some of these benefits have been (or can be) quantified. Nevertheless, some innovative measures should be designed to further relax the tension between mobility and inclusion.**

**It is worth noting that in this study the evaluation of the relevance of the ESM has been carried out on limited empirical evidence.** Such evidence concerns only some countries in Europe, including countries that are not EU Member States such as Turkey or Switzerland. **We lack adequate and reliable data to study the effects of language skills on individuals' economic welfare,** thereby comparing the importance of different languages in the labour market, and taking regional effects into account (for example, language skills in Italian are not likely to be equally rewarded way in the French region Rhône-Alpes and in Brittany). To our knowledge, the ***Adult Education Survey*** published

<sup>25</sup> For example, EU norms in the field of the coordination of social security systems provide that beneficiaries are covered by the legislation of a single country and pay premiums in that country, and that the organisations managing social security decide the legal jurisdiction to which beneficiaries belong (this is called the principle of the “single applicable law”). For example, someone who is based and works in Austria with an additional economic activity as employee in Slovakia should pay all his/her social security in Austria. Yet, each national organisation uses different forms in different languages that civil servants working in organisations abroad do not necessarily understand. Therefore, EU citizens working in more than one Member State have to face administrative hindrances that increase the costs of mobility.

by Eurostat is currently the only dataset that can be used for cross-European analyses of the relationships between language skills and employability and/or individual income. Nevertheless, the quality of data collected should be improved, in particular with regard to the variables describing respondents' income. A possible solution is to publish some ad hoc surveys or to include, at regular intervals, specific questions on language skills in wide-ranging representative longitudinal studies like the *German Socio-Economic Panel Study* (SOEP). No data is available to examine the contribution of language skills to the GDP of the EU. In order to assess the contribution of language skills to competitiveness and to the creation of added value, we need **more quantitative data on the use of languages in the processes of purchase, production and sale of European companies** (see Section 2.1.2 for an example). This idea is not entirely new. The Commission staff working document *Impact Assessment: Accompanying Document to the Communication Multilingualism: An Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment*, recommends to consider collecting survey data on language strategies adopted by companies, and by service providers and local communities, and to gather data on the way linguistic and cultural diversity is taken into account by media (European Commission 2008c: 32). **Data collected in Switzerland provide an example.**

The evaluation of the measures and activities carried out by the Commission to implement the ESM has shown that, although many of actions were relevant (in the light of results presented in Section 2), **information about the costs and the effectiveness of EU programmes and actions to achieve the goals of the ESM is often incomplete. Indicators to assess the outcomes of language policy should be better defined.** Data published refer to inputs (euros invested) and sometimes to outputs (e.g. number of programmes supported), but more attention should be paid to the evaluation of the final results (or outcome) of such programmes on the target population. A good model of evaluation of the effectiveness of EU funding to language policies aimed at supporting minority language is provided in the report written by Grin *et al.* (2003). Evaluation methods can be adapted from existing guidelines already published by the Commission (European Commission 1999, European Commission 2008a). Outcome indicators should be better designed (see Section 1.2).

The results of EU financial support for language learning among Erasmus and international students could be better monitored. It is worth noting that direct financial support is just one of the levers the EU can use to achieve the ESM goals. **Incentives can also be an effective way to promote multilingualism.** For example, the language choices of individuals and higher education institutions respond to incentives built into the systems for the evaluation of the quality of research and teaching activities (e.g. university rankings). Linking public funding to universities or support to student mobility to the simple number of international students enrolled may provide an incentive for university programmes taught exclusively in English without paying enough attention to teaching students the official language of the host country. Using an indicator such as "the number of international students enrolled who achieve a C1 level of knowledge of the local language at the end of their studies" instead of the simple number of foreign students could provide an incentive for higher education institutions to promote language learning more effectively among international students. Generally speaking, **close attention should be paid to the consistency between the ESM and other EU policies that have an indirect impact on linguistic diversity and on the enforcement of the MT+2 formula**, such as the "internationalisation" of higher education, patents and innovation policy, and to the use of language on the websites of EU institutions. Sometimes in such policy areas monolingualism or trilingualism *de facto* prevail, and this can have an impact on incentives of individuals and families as to which languages to learn and use. As noted in the

aforementioned Commission staff working document *Impact Assessment: Accompanying Document to the Communication Multilingualism: An Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment*, “multilingualism is a transversal issue that has an impact on competitiveness and European citizenship and which should be mainstreamed in a range of policies going beyond the field of education” (European Commission 2008c: 5).

A conclusive comment on the last goal of the ESM is in order. The Council invites the Commission to “adopt measures, within the context of the new comprehensive policy framework on multilingualism and within the limits of its competences, aimed at taking due account of the linguistic needs of citizens and institutions, paying particular attention to (i) the relations between the European institutions and the public, and (ii) the relations between the European institutions and national institutions, and taking particular care to provide information in all official languages and to promote multilingualism on the Commission’s websites”. The Commission has not addressed this point in the *Implementation Report* or in related documents. Evidence provided in Section 2.3, however, shows that multilingualism could be better promoted on the Commission’s websites. Besides being a repository of news or general information about the Commission’s activities, the Commission’ webpages also contain material that can have a strategic importance for economic actors such as small and medium enterprises, associations and NGOs that compete for call for tenders, funding programmes or procurement procedures.



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## 6. APPENDIX

### 6.1. Levels of education in ISCED 2011

Compared to ISCED 1997 which had seven levels of education, ISCED 2011 has nine levels of education, from level 0 to level 8 (tertiary education is more detailed):

- ISCED 0: Early childhood education ('less than primary' for educational attainment)
- ISCED 1: Primary education
- ISCED 2: Lower secondary education
- ISCED 3: Upper secondary education
- ISCED 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education
- ISCED 5: Short-cycle tertiary education
- ISCED 6: Bachelor's or equivalent level
- ISCED 7: Master's or equivalent level
- ISCED 8: Doctoral or equivalent level

### 6.2. Correspondence between ISCED 2011 and ISCED 1997 levels

ISCED 2011 (data from 2014 onwards)	ISCED 1997 (data up to 2013)
ISCED 01	-
ISCED 02	ISCED 0
ISCED 1	ISCED 1
ISCED 2	ISCED 2
ISCED 3*	ISCED 3
ISCED 4*	ISCED 4
ISCED 5	
ISCED 6	ISCED 5
ISCED 7	
ISCED 8	ISCED 6

\* Content of category has been modified slightly.

Source: Eurostat :

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/International\\_Standard\\_Classification\\_of\\_Education\\_\(ISCED\)#Correspondence\\_ISCED\\_2011-.3EISCED\\_1997](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/International_Standard_Classification_of_Education_(ISCED)#Correspondence_ISCED_2011-.3EISCED_1997)

### 6.3. Language skills in English among EU citizens aged 15 or more, 2012

Country	Population > 15	Level of competence in English as a foreign language			Total
		Very good	Good	Basic	
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e) <sup>o</sup>
<i>Austria</i>	7,009,827	15%	31%	26%	73%
<i>Belgium</i>	8,939,546	14%	24%	15%	52%
<i>Bulgaria</i>	6,537,510	7%	13%	5%	25%
<i>Cyprus</i>	660,4	31%	31%	12%	73%
<i>Czech Republic</i>	9,012,443	8%	16%	4%	27%
<i>Denmark</i>	4,561,264	38%	34%	15%	86%
<i>Estonia</i>	945,733	9%	27%	14%	50%
<i>Germany</i>	64,409,146	9%	26%	21%	56%
<i>Greece</i>	8,693,566	19%	19%	13%	51%
<i>Finland</i>	4,440,004	18%	25%	27%	70%
<i>France</i>	47,756,439	3%	16%	20%	39%
<i>Italy</i>	51,862,391	4%	21%	8%	34%
<i>Ireland</i>	3,522,000	NS <sup>s</sup>	NS	NS	100%
<i>Latvia</i>	1,447,866	7%	18%	20%	46%
<i>Lithuania</i>	2,829,740	5%	17%	15%	38%
<i>Luxembourg</i>	404,907	18%	27%	10%	56%
<i>Hungary</i>	8,320,614	4%	7%	8%	20%
<i>Malta</i>	335,476	46%	30%	12%	89%
<i>Netherlands</i>	13,371,980	28%	52%	10%	90%
<i>Poland</i>	32,413,735	7%	15%	11%	33%
<i>Portugal</i>	8,080,915	2%	13%	11%	27%
<i>Romania</i>	18,246,731	7%	14%	10%	31%
<i>Slovenia</i>	1,759,701	17%	25%	18%	59%
<i>Slovakia</i>	4,549,955	7%	13%	5%	26%
<i>Sweden</i>	7,791,240	34%	34%	18%	86%
<i>United Kingdom</i>	51,848,010	NS	NS	NS	100%
<i>Total</i>	408,879,069				50%
<i>% of EU citizens who speak English as a foreign language, by level of competence</i>		7%	17%	12%	37%

N.A. not available

<sup>o</sup> For some countries the sum of percentages for columns (b), (c) and (d) is not equal to 100% because of missing answers

<sup>s</sup>NS= native speakers. For simplicity, we set at 100% the number of native speakers or equivalent in the UK and Ireland (see Gazzola and Grin 2013: 105 for a discussion). Our estimates, therefore, must be seen as an upper bound

Source: Gazzola and Grin (2013)

## 6.4. Linguistic disenfranchisement rates in 25 EU countries, residents aged 25-64, 2013

COUNTRY	LANGUAGE REGIME							
	English-only		3 languages		6 languages		Full multilingualism	
	ADR	RDR	ADR	RDR	ADR	RDR	ADR	RDR*
<i>Austria</i>	33	82	0	7	0	6	0	6
<i>Belgium</i>	51	87	22	47	21	46	1	4
<i>Bulgaria</i>	77	95	72	94	71	94	8	8
<i>Cyprus</i>	20	65	20	64	20	64	0	11
<i>Czech Rep.</i>	64	92	46	90	45	90	0	1
<i>Denmark</i>	9	66	8	64	8	63	0	3
<i>Estonia</i>	42	88	36	87	36	87	10	26
<i>Finland</i>	11	74	10	73	10	73	0	2
<i>France</i>	52	93	1	5	1	5	1	4
<i>Germany</i>	34	89	0	6	0	5	0	5
<i>Greece</i>	48	89	46	88	46	88	1	6
<i>Hungary</i>	76	94	66	92	66	92	0	0
<i>Ireland<sup>§</sup></i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Italy</i>	55	95	43	92	0	3	0	3
<i>Latvia</i>	51	92	41	91	40	91	3	36
<i>Lithuania</i>	63	93	52	92	41	85	0	9
<i>Luxembourg</i>	14	84	2	11	2	10	2	9
<i>Malta</i>	11	50	11	49	10	48	0	0
<i>Poland</i>	68	95	57	93	0	0	0	0
<i>Portugal</i>	57	90	47	86	42	84	0	1
<i>Slovenia</i>	36	81	23	77	21	74	1	10
<i>Slovakia</i>	66	95	49	92	48	92	0	0
<i>Spain</i>	69	94	62	91	0	6	0	6
<i>Sweden</i>	12	62	12	61	11	60	1	8
<i>United Kingdom<sup>§</sup></i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Results are reported in percentage.

§ In order to overcome a lack of adequate data for Ireland and the UK, we make the hypothesis that all residents in these two countries are either native speakers of English or proficient in English as a foreign language. For this reason, the disenfranchisement rate is equal to zero.

\* The positive value of the relative disenfranchisement rate associated with the multilingual policy in different countries is due to the presence of minorities or residents of foreign origin with limited proficiency in the official language of the country of residence.

Source: Eurostat, AES 2013. In: Gazzola (2016)



## DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

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