

# RML2future

Network for multilingualism and  
linguistic diversity

***It's never too late ...  
monolingualism is easy to cure!***

***Es ist nie zu spät ...  
Einsprachigkeit ist heilbar!***

## DOCUMENTATION

Regional and minority languages:  
Competence centre

[www.rml2future.eu](http://www.rml2future.eu)

RML2future – Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity in Europe  
under the lead of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)

[www.language-diversity.eu](http://www.language-diversity.eu), [www.rml2future.eu](http://www.rml2future.eu)

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[www.nsk.at](http://www.nsk.at)



[www.yeni.org](http://www.yeni.org)

## REGIONAL AND MINORITY LANGUAGES: COMPETENCE CENTRE

### Context and purpose

The idea to establish a competence centre – as the outcome of the three year activity of the Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity (RML2future) – results from the various efforts around the **promotion of regional and minority languages within the context of European multilingualism policy** and is expressly based on the **Ebner-report**<sup>1</sup> that was already adopted by the European Parliament in 2003.

The report demands both the establishment of a **European Agency for linguistic diversity with due consideration for the European regional and minority languages** and the establishment of a programme for linguistic diversity (including regional and minority languages) and language learning.

The purpose of the competence centre will link the promotion of multilingualism, exploiting the resources of the regional and minority languages that are available in the regions. It concurrently will make a contribution to preserve the linguistic diversity and to promote regional and minority languages.

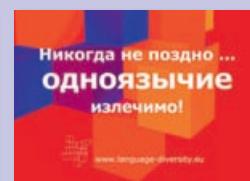
This approach is assessed similarly by the independent experts<sup>2</sup>:

*The Network may be regarded as one of the first attempts to create some kind of comprehensive instrument ("Competence Centre"),*

*which presents an innovative approach to promoting multilingualism policy by exploitation and appreciation of the potential of the minority regions and minority languages in Europe.*

The necessity to establish a competence centre is substantiated by a needs assessment carried out amongst the organisations of the autochthonous, national minorities and in several regions, which established a demand for information and advice on language planning and language policy, and also a demand for practical support, such as e.g. fundraising advice, exchange between language teachers, cooperation between schools and other education establishments, teaching and learning material, good practices.

» ***A competence centre will have the mission to combine giving adequate advice and support to those who feel the needs in practice, based on the newest research results, with engaging in appropriate political participation, public presence and involvement in social dialogue.***



<sup>1</sup> Source: REPORT with recommendations to the Commission on European regional and lesser used languages – the languages of minorities in the EU – in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity (2003/2057(INI))

<sup>2</sup> Source: Lifelong Learning Programme: Evaluation report GD EAC/30/07  
Project Nr. 143708-LLP-1-2008-1-DE-KA2-KA2NW

## MAIN ACTIVITIES:

- Presenting and preparing the newest research results on multilingualism and language learning
- Giving advice on language planning, especially in regard to regional and minority languages and regions
- Supporting language policy in the context of European multilingualism and national, regional language policy. To be interlocutor and adviser for decision makers and authorities on European, national and regional levels
- Collecting and combining data and processing them, especially on the situation of minority languages in the enlarged EU
- Initiating actions, projects and research on the promotion of multilingualism and language learning on a European scale, including the regional and minority languages
- Publicising and informing people, using all types of ICT

## Furthermore:

- Advice on fundraising, especially on EU programmes
- Given advice in regard to the monitoring and reporting system of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
- Exchange of good practices and methods that have proven to be successful
- Helping with establishing contacts and exchange, e.g. of language teachers
- Further education, trainings, lectures, presentations
- Promotion of the youth, e.g. by competitions, price contests and bursaries
- Inclusion of the interests of the youth: the centre has to be attractive for young people, taking into account of new media

Because of the demand for an interdisciplinary approach and its use in the attainment of cross-sector competences and dealing with linguistic diversity, **the subject of multilingualism and language learning is gaining importance within the context of the issues of European identity and how to live together in the future.**

Taking up this approach, FUEN – as representative organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe – sees the need to establish a “Competence Centre”, which will be supported by renowned partners, scholars and decision makers and which will encompass language policy.



## Interdisciplinary approach

“The current knowledge base on language learning is fragmented on disciplinary and sectoral lines and there is little knowledge transfer across sectors and disciplines. There is a need to integrate knowledge, drawing on cognitive science; pedagogy; anthropology and cultural studies; instructional design and knowledge-based systems, within an interdisciplinary framework and space to help

support innovative ways of developing and promoting multilingual and linguistic diversity initiatives that understand the different ‘scenarios’ in which non-native language skills can be best developed and used.”

(Source: *Multilingualism: Between policy objectives and implementation; Study European Parliament, September 2008: MENON Network*)<sup>3</sup>

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[www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cult/studiesdownload.html?languageDocument=EN&file=23220](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cult/studiesdownload.html?languageDocument=EN&file=23220)

## Multilingualism in the context of cross-functional competences and as a source of creativity and innovation

“Knowledge of more than one language points to the expansion of specific types of competence. Multilingualism appears to help people realise and expand their creative potential. In addition, thinking, learning, problem solving and communicating, all of which are transversal knowledge-steeped skills used in our daily lives, show signs of enhancement through multilingualism.

...

That the main overall conclusion – that multilingualism provides benefits that go beyond

the ability to use the languages themselves – be communicated to the general public. This will energise efforts to promote take-up of language learning; support social cohesion through recognition of the value of all additional language competence (majority, minority, regional, heritage); and impact on strategic decision-making in public life.”

(From: *Summary of Recommendations of the Study on the Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity*, July 2009)<sup>4</sup>

## European identity and living together

“**Respect for our linguistic diversity** is not only to take due account of a cultural reality stemming from history. It is the very basis of the European ideal **as it emerged from the ashes of the conflicts which marred the 19th century and the first half of the 20th.**

While most of the **European nations have been built on the platform of their language of identity**, the European Union can only build on a platform of linguistic diversity.

This, from our point of view, is particularly comforting. A common sense of belonging based on linguistic and cultural diversity **is a powerful antidote against the various types of fanaticism** towards which all too often the assertion of identity has slipped in Europe and elsewhere, in previous years as today.

Born of the will of its diverse peoples who have freely chosen to unite, the European Union has neither the intention nor the ability to obliterate their diversity.

On the contrary, its mission historically is **to preserve**, harmonise, strike a balance and get the best out

of **this diversity**, and we think that it is up to the task.

We even believe that it can **offer the whole of humanity a model for an identity based on diversity.**”

(Source: *Proposals from the Group of Intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue set up at the initiative of the European Commission*, 2008)<sup>5</sup>



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4 [www.ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/report\\_creativity\\_en.pdf](http://www.ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/report_creativity_en.pdf)  
5 [www.ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/report\\_en.pdf](http://www.ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/report_en.pdf)



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission and the Autonomous Region Trentino-South Tyrol. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission and the Region cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.





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