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F E D E R A L U N I O N O F  
E U R O P E A N N A T I O N A L I T I E S

*Living Diversity*



RML2FUTURE

## Network for multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe

### Context

**Based on the right** to the safeguarding and promotion of the linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe as defined in the European Union (Art. II-82) and in other legislation and political documents, in particular the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe,

**with regard to the aim** to make the European Union into the most competitive and knowledge-based economic area in the world and to contribute to the Lisbon Strategy through lifelong learning and the development of systems for education and training,

**to take measures**, to ensure the acquirement of necessary key skills, e.g. in the field of languages through pursuing the aim of mastering the mother tongue plus two other foreign languages and to support the acquisition from the earliest ages on,

**with regard to the policy on multilingualism** of the European Union, the Action Plan for promoting language learning 2004-2006 and the reports on this, the Communication on Multilingualism from 2005, the installation of a Commissioner for Multilingualism and participation in the EU Consultation 2007, and awaiting the new Communication of Language Learning at the end of 2008,

with regard to the policies of the EU member states in the field of language learning and language promotion and the Open Method of Coordination, which is used in the EU to coordinate objectives and indicators,

**recognising the language policies of the Council of Europe**, in particular its methodology of monitoring and reporting in the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages in Europe,

**taking into consideration the developments within the European Union in the field of language promotion**, in particular in the field of regional or minority languages (Ebner-report in the European Parliament in 2003, Feasibility study of 2004, Communication on Multilingualism, end of earmarked funding for EBLUL) and the decision taken to mainstream language support within the EU programmes, in particular within the field of Lifelong Learning,

**having knowledge of the situation of linguistic diversity in Europe** – which apart from the 23 official languages of the European Union comprehend other languages as well, like e.g. more than 60 regional or minority languages, of which the total number of speakers is estimated at 40 million EU citizens,

**considering the current situation of the European regional or minority languages** and the languages that are threatened by extinction; according to the EUROMOSAIC-study those languages with less speakers than 300 000 are characterised as critical, a continuous assimilation and decreasing number of speakers – influenced by challenges of a changing society, changes in employment, demographic developments and globalisation,

**the natural bi- and multilingualism** of the European minorities and the possibilities for early and lifelong learning they offer in their regions as well as acknowledging the unused resources in the field of language learning in the European regions, in the sense of European multilingualism,

**based on the survey for the needs of the member organisations of FUEN** in regard to the field of European language support and language policy, of which the results will be published, and which showed that the European minorities, just like all other languages, have the need in the field of teacher training and the development of learning materials and special need for support in the maintenance and development of their languages and to manage these professionally, because they have to overcome didactic, pedagogic and logistic challenges, e.g. in the implementation of multilingualism in schools, in safeguarding the linguistic quality of the RMLs and have the need for increasing the prestige and anchoring their languages in public use,

based on the expectations to European support for languages and the experiences and expectations to the work of FUEN,

**after thorough research** of language projects that have been supported by the EU so far, as well as further projects in all education fields, in particular in the programmes Comenius and Grundtvig,

**after talks about cooperation and examining cooperation** with other organisations active in the field of regional- or minority languages, in particular after participation in meetings to found the network of the Language Boards led by the Welsh Language Board and several talks with EBLUL and its member state committees,

**after consultation with experts** in the field of education and language promotion, as well as with potential partners and supporters,

**the Federal Union of European Nationalities – the umbrella organisation of the autochthonous national minorities in Europe – decided to establish a network for the European multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe and to apply for funding within the EU Programme Lifelong Learning, transversal programme Languages, with a renowned consortium.**

## Network for multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe - Summary

The network **RML2future** is dedicated to the **promotion of multilingualism and linguistic diversity in the Europe of the 21st century, actively involving the regional and minority languages (RML).**

**The aim of the network is to promote the European objective of multilingualism**, according to which each European should learn two additional languages beyond the proficiency of his/her mother tongue. In the course of this the European regional and minority languages are integrated and the the pursuit is followed to use this resource of natural bi- and multilingualism. Because it is the potential of multilingual regions that must be exploited in regard to the European objective and in the context of a positive effect for maintaining linguistic diversity.

For the multilingual regions in Germany, Denmark, Austria, Belgium and Italy that have been selected for the first years of the action of the network, **scenarios for language transmission in the context of European multilingualism using the minority languages** will be developed. These scenarios serve subsequently for the use of the results to other multilingual regions, comprise scientific results and guidance for professionals and decision makers. These scenarios will be supported by actions in the field of early language learning, languages in adult education and certification and testing of language proficiency.

To exploit the **regional education potentials** in cooperation between professionals, experts and decision makers and to **create the establishment of language friendly environments** in the regions, integrating the minority languages, the network is aiming at the acquisition of necessary know-how in the field of language planning and language policies amongst the participants.

**The networks pursues the objective of developing into a centre of competence in the field of regional and minority languages as well as multilingual regions.**

### Duration

3 years: Januar 2009 – December 2011

### Partners

- Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), Applicant / Contractor, Germany [www.fuen.org](http://www.fuen.org)
- European Academy in Bolzano (EURAC) – Coordinator, Italy, [www.eurac.edu](http://www.eurac.edu)
- German-speaking community in Belgium – Agency for European Education programmes, Belgium [www.dglive.de](http://www.dglive.de)
- Højskolen Østersøen, institution for adult education, Denmark [www.hojoster.dk](http://www.hojoster.dk)
- Council of the Carinthian Slovenes, Austria, [www.nsksk.at](http://www.nsksk.at)
- Youth of European Nationalities, Netherlands, [www.yeni.org](http://www.yeni.org)

## Why does the consortium want to undertake this project?

**Apart from the 23 official languages of the EU there are another 60 autochthonous regional and minority languages in the Union.** The awareness that multilingualism contributes to a positive development of the community is connected to the **preservation of the diversity of languages.**

**Multilingualism as part of the Lisbon-strategy** stand for the objective that each European should learn two additional languages next to his mother tongue. At the same time multilingualism promotes the social cohesion and the intercultural dialogue, which makes it possible to become acquainted with other values and other perspectives.

**FUEN as observer of the European policy of multilingualism** (Year of Languages, Ebner-report in the European Parliament, Action Plan, Communication, Commissioner) and as connoisseur of the national and regional language field as well as partner in the monitoring and reporting system of the Council of Europe, in particular of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, decided in consultation with the more than 80 member organisations to establish a network in the field of languages.

**This was preceded by an almost two year long preparation.** This ranges from a needs analysis amongst the minorities, a discussion with politicians and aims in the field of school education and vocational training as well as languages, research of reports, projects and studies (High Level Group, Group of Intellectuals, Lingua-projects, EUROMOSAIC) up till consultation with experts, with the European Commission, the European Parliament and other organisations active in the field of languages.

Knowing the linguistic diversity in Europe, the situation many languages are in and the aim of multilingualism the motivation grew to **establish a network for the promotion of multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe, under pro-active integration of the minority languages.**

The consortium is of the opinion **that the minority languages can contribute (more) effectively to reach the European objective of multilingualism,** as condition for mobility, economic development, intercultural dialogue **and preservation of linguistic diversity.**

## Aims and objectives

**The network pursues the following objectives:**

**I Promotion of European multilingualism,** through an effective contribution to reach the objective of learning the mother tongue plus two additional languages from the early age on and through lifelong learning, using the minority languages that are alive in the regions.

**II Preservation of linguistic diversity in Europe** and in particular of the endangered minority languages, through increase of prestige and recognition, especially in the European context of multilingualism.

**III Exploitation of regional education potential** in cooperation between professionals, experts and decision makers as well as the **creation of language-friendly environments** in the different European regions, integrating the minority languages.

**IV Involvement in the development and implementation of a European language policy** that integrates the minority languages and mainstreaming of the results of the network.

**V Establishment of a professional network** to implement the objectives as well as to support and encourage a strengthened European cooperation, especially amongst language teachers and language establishments of minority languages.

The leading idea is that the **existing resource of a natural bi- and multilingualism** in many regions of Europe, which integrates the minority languages, must be exploited as potential for the European community, so that the European objective of multilingualism and preservation of the linguistic diversity will be reached.

Through embedding them in a European context of multilingualism a **contribution is being made to allow in particular the endangered minority languages to develop sustainable strategies for the continued existence of these languages.**

For this the following actions will be development: research into selected issues of competence transmission in language policy and language planning, awareness raising for multilingualism and linguistic diversity, contribution to European language policy and mainstreaming, activities for European cooperation, consulting, disseminating information, opportunities for exchange, training and conferences.

## **What will the project produce?**

For the multilingual regions that have been selected for the first years of the action of the network, **scenarios for language transmission in the context of European multilingualism using the minority languages** will be developed. These scenarios serve subsequently for the use of the results in other multilingual regions; they comprise scientific results and guidance for professionals and decision makers.

**In addition information** in the field of multilingualism, language learning and linguistic diversity **will be elaborated and disseminated**, through compiling and publishing information material and digital adaptation. For the **building up of competences** in the field of language planning and language policy development and implementation of training measures will take place.

The network will reach a concrete cooperation of the partners and the associated partners as a result of **strengthened European cooperation**. In particular the **founding of a network of language teachers and establishments of minority language is central**.

**In developing and promoting education activities** for the following themes

- pre-school and school education,
- adult education,
- certification and testing of language skills,
- language promotion amongst young people,

exchange of proven methods, training measures and development of guidelines are offered.

**To exploit the results**, local presentations for professionals, experts and decision makers are offered. Here the planned exploitation of the regional education potential, integrating the minority languages will be implemented.

**The result of the dissemination strategy should be an increased awareness for European multilingualism and linguistic diversity**, involving the minority languages.

**Through the accompanying project and quality management** a professional European network with cooperation and development potential will be developed.

**In the European language policy** the network should become establish itself with its preparation of background information and recommendations as a regular point of reference.

## **What is the approach adopted by the consortium to develop the work of the proposed project?**

The composition of the network of six partners took place in order to reach the aims and the target group in an efficient way, with a workable number of renowned partners and involving additional associate partners, which also are part of the target group.

The European Academy Bolzano is responsible for the management and internal monitoring of the network, in close coordination with the partners. The quality management will be arranged by the applicant organisation, using the services of an external evaluation. The dissemination and exploitation of the results will take place together with all the partners.

Each of the partners is responsible for one thematic main area:

- school and pre-school education,
- language skills,
- adult education,
- language promotion amongst young people,
- language policy and language planning,
- Scenarios for language transmission.

The activities are focused on a selection of European regions. The selection is linked to the partners and took place on the basis of the resource of natural bi- and multilingualism that is available and used in these regions.

In the regions the pro-active involvement of the minority languages in the attainment of European multilingualism is encouraged, stimulated and supported. In the follow-up of the network the adequate use and implementation of the results and experiences in the other regions is anticipated.

After allocation of the grant a consolidation of the network will take place, combined with a kick-off meeting in South Tyrol and publication of the working programme. The obligatory annual project meeting will be organised by EURAC and FUEN together and will be devoted to individual thematic subjects. The end meeting will again take place in South Tyrol. To present the progress made annual reports will be published and a final report with the evaluation report.

It is extremely important for the network to be present in the selected regions. Additional to the annual project meeting there will therefore be regional conferences, which will focus on the specific thematic areas of the partners and which will be organised under the responsibility of the partners.

Of decisive significance for the network is the continuous involvement of the youth.

## Who will produce these outputs?

The network consists of **six partners and additional partners.**

**The applicant is the European organisation FUEN**, which developed the aims and the working programme, based on a needs analysis amongst its member organisations, together with the partners, political decision makers and experts.

The Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) could be engaged as partner. Together both umbrella organisations are predestined to offer an **exemplary dissemination and exploitation strategy** towards the selected target group, because together they represent more than 100 organisations in Europe.

**The European Academy in Bolzano**, which does research in the field of multilingualism and professional communication, was entrusted the project management of the network based on its experiences in the elaboration of EU projects. The Academy is partner for the field of research.

**For the involvement of political decision makers and experts that is important for the action of a European network (mainstreaming)**, the **German-speaking community of Belgium** could be engaged as experienced partner. The Agency for European Education Programmes acts as partner, with as main focus area the certification and testing of language skills.

The **Højskolen Østersøen** from the German-Danish border region is partner for **adult education**. The establishment that follows the approach of the Danish folk high schools will disseminate the Scandinavian tradition of adult education.

For the **focus area of pre-school and school education** the **Carinthian Slovenes in Austria** could be attracted, who have mainly experiences and methodologies for the transmission of bi-, tri- up till tetralingualism, which they will bring in.

**FUEN has been offered more applications for partnerships**, in particular by member organisations and their establishments for language learning, which will act as associated partners.

**Necessary tasks that will be carried out by subcontractors, are (selection):** Evaluation, additional research, expertise, advice, services (e.g. website, layout/graphics, translation, print).

## **How will the impact of this project be sustained beyond its lifetime?**

For the selected regions results will be produced according to the objectives that are of similar importance for the other regions, with the involvement of the minorities. The aim of the network is that the results and experiences will be used in an adapted form in further regions when the 3 years pilot phase will have ended.

The consortium bases its action on the hypothesis – based on the needs analysis that was carried out – that the existing resource of natural bi- and multilingualism in the regions is used and exploited too little in the European context of multilingualism. The long term aim of the network is the Europe-wide use of this resource, pro-actively involving the minority languages, for the benefit of European multilingualism and preservation of the linguistic diversity.

As shown there are more than 300 minority language communities in Europe. A sustainable effect from the actions of the network must be based on the needs to make the regional education potential comparable between the selected European regions, use them and to exploit them. The more practicable the results of the actions of the network will be in combination with a clever dissemination strategy, the more successful will the sustainable impact beyond the lifetime of the network can be.

Based on the knowledge about the long-term nature of changes in attitude, changes in consciousness and positive changes of an image, the actions of the network is fully aimed at a sustainable impact.

Of decisive importance will be the ability to bring the results on exploiting the minority languages for the multilingualism of the regions into use in political decision processes.

To reach the target groups regularly and to integrate them, it is important to maintain the developed information and communication media on a continuous basis, in order to allow for informing and dialogue possibilities.

**The long-time impact will be measured on the question in how far we will have succeeded to reach the European aim of multilingualism in these regions and to contribute to the preservation of the minority languages by the year 2020.**

## **Budget summary**

<b>Total costs</b>	625,140
<b>Revenue</b>	
<b>Community Grant</b>	449,940
<b>Autonome Region Trentino-Südtirol</b>	150,000
<b>Own funding</b>	25,200
<b>Total revenues</b>	625,140



## Contact

### FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES FÖDERALISTISCHE UNION EUROPÄISCHER VOLKSGRUPPEN (FUEV)

Susann Schenk  
Judith Walde

Schiffbrücke 41  
D-24939 Flensburg

**Teleon:** +49 461 128 55  
**Fax:** ++49 461 180 70 9  
**Email:** [info@fuen.org](mailto:info@fuen.org) / [judith.walde@fuen.org](mailto:judith.walde@fuen.org)  
**Internet:** [www.fuen.org](http://www.fuen.org)

## Coordination

### EUROPÄISCHE AKADEMIE BOZEN/ACCADEMIA EUROPEA BOLZANO

Dr. Andrea Abel  
Sabine Wilmes

Drususallee 1 / viale Druso 1  
BOLZANO 39100, IT

**Telefon:** +39 047 105 50 55  
**Fax:** +39 047 10 55 059  
**Email:** [andrea.abel@eurac.edu](mailto:andrea.abel@eurac.edu)  
**Internet:** [www.eurac.edu](http://www.eurac.edu)



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# Lifelong Learning Programme

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