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
Second Regional Conference
in Apenrade / Aabenraa (Denmark)
from 7–9 February 2011

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Second Regional Conference of the Network RML2future on the subject of „Adult Education“

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Words of welcome and speech
by the president of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) Hans Heinrich Hansen (German from Nordschleswig, Denmark)

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,
dear participants of the conference,

“Welcome, Herzlich Willkommen, hartlik wäljkiimen, hjertlæ velkommen!”, has been written on the invitation for the Second Regional Conference in Apenrade / Aabenraa.

I would like to welcome you on behalf of the Federal Union of European Nationalities in the German-Danish border region in Højskolen Østersøen for the second working conference of a network, which started under the abbreviation RML2future to contribute to multilingualism in Europe while strengthening the regional and minority languages.

On both sides of the border – in South and in North Schleswig – Højskolen / folk high schools are working according to the Danish and Scandinavian tradition. I already would like to thank Peter Buhrmann and Højskolen Østersøen now to be the acting hosts and to offer you, the participants, the possibility to experience the concept up close.

In the region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig, next to German and Danish, also Frisian and Romani, the dialects Low German and Sønderjysk and additional languages are being spoken. About 700 000 people are living here, about 450 000 on the German side and about 250 000 on the Danish side. The Danish minority in South Schleswig, the Frisians, the Sinti and Roma and the German minority in North Schleswig have been recognised as minorities.

I myself am a German from Nordschleswig, Denmark. I was born in the year 1938 and was raised in Hadersleben – have been a veterinarian, long-time chairman of the German minority – and for myself experienced the border between the countries and between the people. As the first German from Nordschleswig I was allowed to speak officially at the Dybbøl remembrance – to celebrate the 75 years that Nordschleswig had belonged to Denmark – that was in 1995. Since then the border region has changed and the visible border disappeared. Also the border between the people. The global, regional changes and the changes in society don’t halt at any region and also the region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig tries in many ways to comply to this reality.

But also the political and fiscal changes are felt particularly hard. The much-quoted Bonn-Copenhagen declarations of 1955 ought to protect the rights of the minorities over here. The past months have shown us that this achievement; that also democracy has to be renewed time and again and that it needs care, that is necessary to teach context, history and backgrounds, against ignorance and against acting despite knowing better. Establishments for education can make a contribution – also a Højskolen.

I am glad that apart from participants from several European regions and minorities and the partners of our network, also the minorities from the German-Danish border region (BDN, SSF, Skoleforeningen, DSSV) have come as well as partners such as ECMI, Mercator and Peter Weber, who is one of the authors of the EUROMOSAIC-study.

We know that natural multilingualism and linguistic diversity are real assets today: resources that should be utilised. We know
that many small languages are below the critical limit of 300,000 speakers, which counts for the viability of a language. **We know** too that all nations, large minorities and minorities with a kin-state have to deal with the challenges of our time. **We know** that language preservation is the top priority for many; that it is based on complex processes and cannot be reduced to only language as such. **We know** as well that the resources – and not only financially – are limited. **We know** that there is not one single and ready solution for a region and minority or for language promotion, but that regional solutions – influenced by several factors – have to be developed.

That’s why our network exists and the engagement of FUEN to work for multilingualism and linguistic diversity, an activity that is still at the beginning. Bringing together professionals and experts and the exchange of good examples are the focus of our conferences. Following the first conference in Eupen, we will deal with adult education here, and in autumn another conference on early language learning will follow at the Carinthian Slovenes.

I am particularly glad that next to the concept of Højskolen Østersøen also the new Institute for Minority Pedagogics will have the stage to present itself. Both are concepts from the German-Danish border region that are worth to be presented on a European level and – but that is up to you – to be applied elsewhere.

I wish you all a very interesting conference and good luck at the Second Regional Conference of the network RML2future.
Monday, 7 February 2011
19:00 hr  Opening of the Second Regional Conference of the network RML2future
           Welcoming the participants by Dr. Peter BUHRMANN
           Welcome and speech by the president of FUEN – Federal Union of European
           Nationalities – Hans Heinrich HANSEN
           Lecture on the Højskole-tradition in Denmark and Scandinavia, Dr. Peter
           BUHRMANN, leader of Højskolen Østersøen
21:00 hr  Singing together in regional and minority languages and being together in the
           café

Tuesday, 8 February 2011
8:00 hr   “Morgensamling”
9:00 hr   An insight to the Højskole: way of instruction and active participation in the
           method of tandem-education,
           Dr. Ulrike PATZKE, teacher of Højskolen Østersøen
12:00 hr  Lunch
13:00 hr  Excursion to the “Gendarmstien” – a linguistic hike on the German-Danish
           border, with along the way linguistic and historical exercises
18:00 hr  Dinner
19:00 hr  Adult education in selected regional and minority languages – a short overview
           in the form of a lecture
           Saskia BENEDICTUS-VAN DEN BERG, research assistant at the Mercator
           European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning at the
           Fryske Akademy, the Netherlands;
           followed by discussion

Wednesday, 9 February 2011
8:00 hr   “Morgensamling”
9:00 hr   Adult education in multilingual regions – which perspectives does Europe have
           to offer?
           Welcome and presentation of the programme by Judith WALDE, project manager
           of the network RML2future
           Grundtvig – the European programme for general adult education; funding
           opportunities
           Johanna SCHRÖDER, coordinator for the programme of Grundtvig and Study
           Visits of the Agency for European Education Programmes VoG; National Agency
           for the Lifelong Learning Programme in Belgium
10:00 hr  Presentation of the Institute for Minority Pedagogics in the German-Danish
           border region
           Lisbet MIKKELEN BUHL, representative of Dansk Skoleforeningen / Danish
           School Association in Südschleswig, Germany and Anke TÄSTENSEN, representative
           of the German School and Language Association in Denmark
10:45 hr  Café Philosophique
           Exchange of experiences and ideas between regions and on the examples of
           adult education that were presented
11:45 hr  Summary of the results; questions; discussion and outlook
12:15 hr  Lunch and final words of the Second Regional Conference
           Dr. Peter BUHRMANN, leader of Højskolen Østersøen
           Hans Heinrich HANSEN, President of FUEN
What is a Højskole and what does the Danish philosopher and educationalist Grundtvig have to do with this type of school? Why is his name used for the funding programme for adult education of the European Commission? Which concrete opportunities for funding are actually available within this Grundtvig-programme in Brussels? Adult education in multilingual regions – what perspectives does Europe have to offer? What can the minorities learn from one another and how can we develop “lifelong learning” in regard to the specific situation of the minorities in Europe?

These are some of the questions that were answered for the participants of the Second Regional Conference of the RML2future-network – the Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity in Europe – from 7 till 9 February 2011 at Højskolen Østersøen in Aabenraa / Apenrade, Denmark. Højskolen Østersøen is located with a view on the Firth of Aabenraa in the German-Danish border region and is one of the partners in the network that is supported by the European Commission and South Tyrol.

The main topic of the regional conference was the subject of adult education. The aim of the regional conference was to examine the subject of adult education starting from the model of Højskolen Østersøen, with lectures, workshops and discussions and to explore the use of the model from the German-Danish border region in other European regions.

The conference of the network RML2future was attended by circa 50 participants from several regions of Europe, among them representatives from Lusatia, the German-Danish border region, from South Tyrol, Italy, from Carinthia, Austria, from Friesland in the Netherlands and from the German-speaking Community in Belgium. It was the second conference of the network, which – under the aegis of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) set itself the goal of promoting multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe, thereby focusing on the regional and minority languages.

Judith Walde, project manager of the network is glad “that in the discussions we have been able to stimulate projects and that we know better now where the needs of the minorities are in the field of adult education; furthermore the excellent spirit amongst the participants shows that we had a successful conference on which our network will be able to build further.”

The RML2future-network set itself the goal to establish a competence centre for regional and minority languages once the three-year project duration is over. In the opinion of the network a European advisory centre for the multifaceted interests of the regional and minority languages in Europe is missing. “We have come one step closer to our aim of such a centre of competence and we are happy with that – the smaller and smallest languages in Europe need a strong European partner”, FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen explained satisfied at the end of the conference.

**Successful Regional Conference in Apenrade/Aabenraa – With Grundtvig and a view on the firth on the adult education track**
Højskolen Østersøen in Apenrade/Aabenraa, Denmark

Højskolen Østersøen, a Danish folk high school 30 kilometres north of the German-Danish border, was established to promote cooperation between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea and to teach both the German and Danish language and culture in the border region. The house is a former top-class hotel and is located directly at the firth. You have a view of the water; sailing boats and vessels pass by.

More important than the outside is the life at the school. It is a boarding school for adults of each and every age, who are doing a long course of 3 or 6 months, or who stay only one or two weeks.

There are about 80 folk high schools, which is a typical Danish establishment with a history of more than 150 years, which is anchored in the Danish culture and democracy and is based on the value of popular education for all, as advocated by the philosopher, theologian, educator and poet Grundtvig. Grundtvigs contemporary Søren Kierkegaard said:

>> Love cannot be explained; one should experience it. It is the same with the Danish højskole!

The schools are funded by state grants and school fees. For a major part they are operated autonomously and based on the school’s own responsibility and give a lot of leeway for learning and living together – without a curriculum, grades and exams.

Whereas other folk high schools focus on subjects such as journalism, philosophy, design, IT, sports, music and many other subjects, Højskolen Østersøen was founded in 1993 against the background of the fall of the Berlin wall. Germany and Denmark are neighbours with many cultural, historical and economic ties, and the founding fathers wanted that the ability to communicate would be improved and that dialogue would be promoted. Therefore Germans and Danes learn from each other here, both during the classes, in which communicative skills are specifically and effectively taught and also in living with each other, in optional classes such as e.g. music, literature, rhetoric, social studies, sports, during free time, in other words: almost 24 hours a day!

In this way the participants learn, they expand their horizon, get new stimuli and contacts and often they learn many things that will benefit them throughout their life.
Adult education as part of lifelong learning, has an important role against the background of the current and predicted demographic development, but a role that is not honoured enough at this moment. Højskolen Østersøen, working according to the Scandinavian tradition of lifelong and permanent learning, has become a partner in the network in order to present attractive adult education with the focus on language learning as a good-practice in the selected European regions.

The goal of this is to present the established practice in Højskolen Østersøen within the network with all its methods and ways of instruction of a linguistic and cultural nature and to stimulate dialogue and to give an impetus for language education in adult education.

A specific focus is directed at raising awareness of minority languages, treatment of aspects of multilingualism and lifelong teaching as well as on methodology and didactics of adult education. What is also important is to examine the factors and obstacles for motivating adults to engage in language learning.

Adult education, encompasses – to put it briefly – everything that comes after formal education in school, university and vocational training, it encompasses real lifelong learning in fact. Adult education has its own traditions in each country and therefore also the form differs. Alone in the field of language learning there is a large market of suppliers: public courses, adult education centres, private commercial courses, online courses, self-study, education vacations, weekend courses, advanced training, etcetera.

Although we are a language network, learning however should not be reduced to sheer language learning, so much is made clear by the Højskolen.

Within the framework of the EU programme for Lifelong Learning the sub-programme Grundtvig offers opportunities for funding in the field of adult education and training. The programmes are mostly little known, such as e.g. funding possibilities between schools.

With priorities such as
- Training and mobility of language teachers
- Mutual visit to get to know the education systems
- Establishing capacity and training on didactics
the programme offers an interesting opportunity also for minorities.

More about the Grundtvig programme:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/grundtvig_de.htm (DE)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/grundtvig_en.htm (EN)
The conference was introduced through a lecture on the Højskole-tradition in Denmark and Scandinavia by Dr. Peter Buhrmann, the leader of Højskolen Østersøen. Buhrmann’s lecture about the fundamentals of this special type of school was well received by the participants. Højskolen Østersøen is visited by Germans, who want to learn Danish and by Danes, who want to learn German. After a stimulating discussion on living and learning at a Højskole the participants got to know each other by singing in the different languages of Europe – in particular the songs of the representatives from the minority regions were being sung.

“The Danish folk high school has been around for 160 years now. Still today, many of the values that were the basis for this special type of school back then, are important pillars for the folk high schools in Denmark. The Danish Folk High School Act is in its core a liberal act. Højskolen Østersøen in 2011 is a part of this Danish folk high school tradition and is specialised in offering language courses.”

Monday, 7 February 2011

Presentation of Højskolen Østersøen

The conference was introduced through a lecture on the Højskole-tradition in Denmark and Scandinavia by Dr. Peter Buhrmann, the leader of Højskolen Østersøen. Buhrmann’s lecture about the fundamentals of this special type of school was well received by the participants. Højskolen Østersøen is visited by Germans, who want to learn Danish and by Danes, who want to learn German. After a stimulating discussion on living and learning at a Højskole the participants got to know each other by singing in the different languages of Europe – in particular the songs of the representatives from the minority regions were being sung.

Tuesday, 8 February 2011

Tandem

In the morning of the second day of the conference the participants took part in the daily morning gathering at the Højskole. They experienced in a practical way how the participants of the Højskolen Østersøen are living and learning together and how very diverse topics from everyday life are taken into account within the school. Afterwards Dr. Ulrike Patzke, teacher at Højskolen Østersøen, introduced the teaching method of tandem, which was tried later by the participants of the conference themselves. The participants clearly had fun in this class and learned from and with each other – in up to 16 different languages. The class consisted of the participants developing and presenting language games.
Tandem-education ...

... belongs to the most important teaching units for language learning at Højskolen Østersøen. The situation that Germans and Danes are at the Højskole at the same time is used to learn with each other and from each other. At tandem people sit together in pairs and work on language assignments, that have to be solved together. Both the languages of the students are being used.

Linguistic diversity –
outcome of tandem education at Højskolen Østersøen
**Excursion to “Gendarme” – a linguistic hike on the German-Danish border**

Tuesday afternoon the participants of the conference went on a hike guided by Dr. Ulrike Patzke along the Gendarme path on the German-Danish border and had a compelling introduction to the history of the German-Danish border region.

**Adult education in selected regional and minority languages**

In the evening Saskia Benedictus-van den Berg from the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning in Leeuwarden/Ljouwert, West-Friesland, the Netherlands, spoke about different approaches of adult education in regional and minority languages in Europe and stimulated the discussion on different approaches in the minority regions.

The presentation about dissemination and promotion ideas of the network RMLfuture met great interest and acclaim, and was presented by the representatives of partner organisation YEN – Youth of European Nationalities, Hester Knol (Frisian from the Netherlands) and Kirsten Schumacher (Dane from Germany). After a presentation about the Summer Promo Tour in 2010 and its results, also the possibilities for using modern information and communication technology by RML were shown. Regardless if you use Facebook, Youtube and Twitter or not, because it’s never too late – also not for a target group who is already a bit older.

**Wednesday, 9 February 2011**

*Wednesday morning was dedicated to adult education in multilingual regions.*

**Grundtvig**

Johanna Schröder, coordinator for the education programmes of Grundtvig and Study Visits of the Agency for European Education Programmes VoG – German-speaking Community in Belgium, gave the participants professional advice about concrete funding opportunities within the EU programme of Grundtvig and other relevant funding programmes.

Many participants were surprised about the chances and the money waiting in the different EU-funds and during the exchange that followed at the Café Philosophique, several concrete ideas for projects and requests for the FUEN-led network RMLfuture were expressed.
Presentation of the Institute for Minority Pedagogics in the German-Danish border region

There was much interest as well for the Institute for Minority Pedagogics, which was founded by the school associations of the Danish and German minorities and that was presented by Lisbeth Buhl, from the Danish School Association in Germany, and Anke Tästensen, from the German School and Language Association in Denmark. The goal of the institute is to prepare teachers and educators for the particularities of working with minorities in the education system and to train them further.

Café Philosophique

At the concluding exchange during the Café Philosophique concrete ideas for projects and demands to the FUEN-led network RML2future were expressed. At the Café five main topics could be chosen. Each participant had the opportunity to visit the table with the different topics and to express his or her own ideas or to go deeper into concrete questions. The outcomes of the brainstorming session were collected, evaluated and taken into account for the further work of the network RML2future.

There were 5 main topics to choose from:
1) Grundtvig – the European programme for general adult education
2) Institute for Minority Pedagogics in the German-Danish border region; minority pedagogics
3) Adult education at minorities
   - Best practice examples; transfer of best practice examples (e.g. the model of the Højskolen) to the other regions, analysis of the needs in the regions, possibilities and limitations
4) Dissemination of the campaign “Monolingualism is easy to cure!” – motivation of young adults, using ICT – which access do adults have in the regions?
5) The network RML2future: presentation, aims and analysis of needs

A selection from the results and statements at the Café-tables as an overview:

TABLE 1 – Grundtvig – the European programme for general adult education
For the minority languages and multilingual regions there is a high demand for services and advice for educators, professionals and decision-makers in the field of education and language:
• Demand for information on funding programmes of the European Commission in general
• Demand for answering concrete questions about application formalities and content, objectives and possibilities, funding criteria, application procedures, financial budget, countries and regions, selection procedures, searching and finding partners
• Service and advice for minorities in regard to applications on the European level, especially at the European Commission
• How to inform a wide audience
• Training for people responsible for the field of education on the local and regional level
• Study visits at the partners
• A wish for organising workshops on various topics in the field of adult education (not just related to language)

TABLE 2 – minority pedagogics – Institute for Minority Pedagogics in the German-Danish border region
• Building up a database of experts and best-practice examples in the field of education of regional and minority
languages in Europe
• Development and exchange of teaching modules for minorities in Europe
• Creating links between minorities in the field of language – association of educators
• Accessibility of specific target groups
• Exchange and training between the regions and the RML

TABLE 3 – adult education at the minorities
• Collection of “good and best practices” and comparing these (similarities and differences): possibilities for adaptation, use and transfer to other regions
• Support for establishing and organising new courses in the regions
• Best practice website for minorities, especially for the RML that do not offer integral adult education
• Necessity of promotion of adult education of the RML, more than language alone, integration in the image campaign
• Needs analysis of adult education is needed for the RML
• Development of information and learning materials
  – Development of a catalogue of materials, which have been developed by teachers
  – Use of these by other teachers to apply in the different regions
• Overview of language courses of courses of specific subjects for RML
• “Task force” for adult education for regional and minority languages on European level
• Common European Framework of Reference – application and adaptation for the RML

TABLE 4 – campaign “It’s never too late... monolingualism is easy to cure!”
Collecting ideas for a language campaign:
• Promotion of several T-shirts: MULTILINGUALISM taking into account the RML
• Collecting the slogans in several languages, in particular the RML
• Looking for ambassadors for the regions and RML: e.g. top-model (example of West-Friesland) or sport-legends

TABLE 5 – the network RML2future
• Information and objectives of the network RML2future
• Establishment of a centre of competence with a demand for services and advice in the field of language promotion
• Establishment of an association of teachers from regional and minority languages
• Wish for exchange of knowledge and skills in the field of language promotion on the European level
• Integration of the age group between 35 and 50 in the network and in the work on language promotion in the field of adult education in general
I already said it, at the opening: with the idea of the Højskolen and the new Institute for Minority Pedagogics we learned about two concepts which deserve to be disseminated and adapted around Europe, to foster multilingualism and to preserve linguistic diversity, but also as a means for thinking together of how Europe and the Europeans wants to live together in the future.

Our network – our three year pilot project – is only one step on our way to establishing a centre of competence. This has become clear to me once again from the talks in the Café Philosophique and I consider it a clear task for FUEN and its partners.

For us however it is not about just adding one new European cooperation project on a long list of good examples or about publishing another study on the endangered regional and minority languages which will end up forgotten in a drawer. No – for us it is important that we, according to your wishes and needs, will offer advice, service, a network and also support for your language promotion.

Therefore we set ourselves the ambitious goal to establish a centre of competence, which will take into account the different starting situations, the different goals and needs of the multilingual regions and the European minorities. The pilot project is therefore also a follow-up to the demands in the Ebner-report adopted by the European Parliament in 2003 for an agency and a funding programme for the regional and minority languages.

This conference here in Aabenraa / Apenrade made very clear that a reduction to sheer language learning is not acceptable.

“Europe’s identity is neither a blank page nor a pre-written and pre-printed page. It is a page which is in the process of being written.” is stated in the proposals of the Group of Intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue set up at the initiative of the European Commission.

And further:

“**There is a common artistic, intellectual, material and moral heritage of untold richness, with few equivalents in the history of humanity, constructed by generation after generation and which deserves to be cherished, acknowledged and shared. Each and every European, wherever he or she may live, wherever he or she may come from, must be able to access this heritage and recognise it as his and hers, without any arrogance but with a legitimate sense of pride.**

**Our heritage is not, however, a closed catalogue.”**

Exactly this is where we are acting, this is where the national minorities and small peoples and multilingual regions are called upon to show their contribution to European heritage and its future in a courageous and self-confident way. This is our frame of thought for language promotion and language policy.

Use it! I thank you for your participation and look forward to fruitful cooperation.

Tak! Thank you!
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