

RAPPORTEUR'S SUMMARY

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The second EUNoM symposium has tackled the relevant issue of *Higher Education and Research* with the purpose of finding new paths for the development of strategies that allow us to boost plurilingualism for the safeguard of European multilingualism, and of the multicultural distinctive features of the European society. Europe can't miss the chance to achieve the objective of raising plurilingual citizens both in formal settings and through informal programmes of lifelong learning.

A challenging perspective which demands a rethinking of the concept of 'language', the concept of individual multilingualism or plurilingualism and the idea of language community: what is language? What role does language play in achieving or at least fostering social cohesion? What kind of multilingualism should we work on and support? Who is a plurilingual?

Research on societal multilingualism and plurilingual intercultural education is issue number one on our agenda.

A challenging perspective, again, which demands deep changes in language policies at local and global level. Can Higher Education effectively contribute to this change? How can universities rethink the relationship between research and globalization? How can we meet the linguistic demands of the information society and the knowledge economy?

Well, Higher Education can definitely contribute to language policy development within Europe. Considering the varied and important contributions presented at this symposium, we can foresee that the EUNoM network will be able to contribute effectively to the development of the EU'S 8TH Framework programme by presenting the range of actions suggested within the symposium enriched by interesting examples of 'good practice'.

At the level of higher education, the following priorities should be established to promote multilingual education:

First, language policy should be developed by universities at institutional level or within a transnational network of institutions to meet the needs of their staff and their students, and of the economic environment that can benefit from multicultural understanding and plurilingual communication.

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An example of well planned language policy within a network of institutions was presented by René Jorna who reported on the development of a two year academic Master on Multilingualism in a behavioral science perspective that will be run in cooperation by the University Campus Fryslan, the University of Groningen and the Fryske Akademy, an example of good practice to come.

Heidi Rontu illustrated another excellent example of how language policy can be put into practice. She discussed the planning and implementation phase in particular. The presented case study refers to a new bilingual university in Finland, arising from the amalgamation of several pre-existing institutions, where they have to tackle the challenge of using at least two languages in internal communication and developing competencies in other languages for international relationships. She suggested some major steps to be undertaken: the strategic work that has to draw on one's university's language policy and the development of and implementation plan followed by a monitoring and assessment process.

Cecilia Serra pointed out how the universities' language policy in multilingual countries depends on the target of personal plurilingualism they are aiming at. She also pleaded that such universities should foresee their students' language needs, and provide enough language support in other, local or international languages, so as to guarantee high standards of content and language learning. The expected level of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Calp) has to be met in multilingual academic teaching. She also maintained that the social representations of our universities are to be taken into account in order to design ad hoc curriculum planning, and she showed us very effectively how teacher discourse changes according to his/her social representations and role in teaching settings.

As I said before there is also a lot of rethinking or reconceptualizing to be done.

Jeroen Darquennes invited researchers to rethink the idea of language taking into consideration its transdisciplinary nature. Looking at language through the medium of other disciplines offers us more opportunities to foster and promote multilingual communication both in educational settings and in informal ones. Moreover, this approach involves language issues being part of wider research projects that are focused on other research areas, such as economics for instance. This would give the projects a competitive advantage when looking for funding. A remarkable point of his discussion, along with his very interesting report on the difference between individual and societal multilingualism, is that we have to strive for a dynamic (and unbalanced) plurilingualism.

Regarding this topic Jochen Rehbein introduced the fascinating concept of language constellations that need to be taken into consideration if we want to

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develop the best model of multilingual education and communication for a specific setting. Language constellations give us a picture of the social representation of languages in society and we cannot disregard this picture if we want to acquire a new vision of multilingualism. He also argued that multilingual education, among other objectives, aims at lowering ideological barriers between national and community languages and develop the plurilingual potential into real multilingual communication. Sharing Alex Riemersma's point of view, he made a plea for supporting research on longitudinal and transferable models of multilingual education

Another priority we must consider is that higher education should have a crucial role in promoting a change of the self-image and of the perspectives of minority language communities, at both regional and global levels. Alastair Walker reminded us of the importance of opening universities to the environment by increasing field research with a double objective: making students aware of the existence and relevance of multilingualism and making language communities or minorities aware of the relevance of their own language assets. He also dealt with the role of the researcher in the promotion of this issue.

On the basis of two case studies Rita Temmerman stressed the importance of interdisciplinary research in the promotion of what she called functional plurilingualism, that is the ability of a person to understand and communicate in several languages in a specific situational setting. She explored the function of research in this field, that is, the training of professionals through the joint work of language specialists and other specialists like sociologists, political scientists, medical scientists, economists and educationalists. The first case study she presented is a good example of how higher education can meet the needs of society and how it can represent a stimulus for policy makers. Another point she made is the competitive advantage that plurilingualism and cultural diversity can represent.

The use of many different languages in EC documents, for instance, is a way of keeping languages alive and to offer intercultural perspectives on the same subject, a view she shared with professor Serra.

Alex Riemersma suggested different ways to promote language vitality in multilingual contexts. Documentation is the first step to be done. Not only for scientific reasons but also for the good impact that this has on language communities, on their self images. Sharing Professor Rehbein's opinion, Professor Riemersma suggests a reformulation of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, a very important document that unfortunately does not take into consideration one of the outcomes of globalization, that is the existence of transnational language communities scattered in different multilingual spaces. Another issue he brought to our attention is the importance of plurilingual teacher training which can create a

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continuity in multilingual education from pre-primary level to tertiary education.

Robert Dunbar gave us an exhaustive historical overview of the presence of Gaelic in the educational system in Scotland and took a closer look at the remarkable, positive role that education through the medium of minority or regional languages can play in tackling social phenomena like, for instance, depopulation in certain areas. Illustrating the case of Sabl Mor Ostaig in Skye he underlined the key-role of higher education institutions in addressing powerful social and economic forces, so as to achieve the common beneficial goal of plurilingual communication.

Irina Chongarova-Aron looked at the phenomenon of multilingualism and plurilingualism from another perspective, that is, their connection to geopolitical changes. And she made another important point: she invited us to reflect on the reasons that determine inclusion in or exclusion from wide international academic staff exchange. She suggested that it isn't only a matter of language knowledge, for there are other aspects to be considered. These aspects that should find an answer and a possible solution in a language policy that safeguards the rights of all European citizens.