



Mozarthof, Nikolaiplatz 4, A-8020 Graz, Tel. +43-316-32 35 54, Fax: +43-316-32 35 54 4, e-mail: information@ecml.at

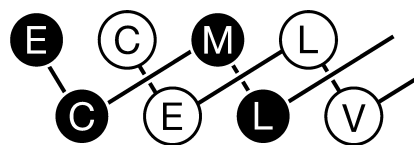
**Official inauguration of the new premises
of the European Centre for Modern Languages
(ECML)**

(Graz, Austria, 17-18 November 2000)

**Debate:
In which languages will our children and grandchildren live?
Languages: their use and their roles in society**

Moderation: Rolf Schärer





June 2001

Table of content

Opening addresses

Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe7

Michel Lefranc, Executive Director of the ECML.....11

Round table.....13

An introductory statement

Rolf Schärer, moderator.....15

Discussion rounds25

Contributions.....29

In which languages will our children and grandchildren live?

*Nicki Bos, European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam,
Programme Officer 'Which Languages for Europe?'31*

The future of our languages: A linguist's view

*Ranko Bugarski, University of Belgrade,
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia35*

A contribution from ESIB,

The National Unions of Students in Europe
Manja Klemencic, ESIB, Slovenia.....39

A brief contribution to the debate
on knowledge of foreign languages

Alain Mouchoux, ETUCE, France43

Every language sees the world through its own eyes <i>Herta Müller, Germany /Romania</i>	45
The international dimension of the medical profession: Do doctors understand each other? <i>Todor A. Popov, Medical University in Sofia, Bulgaria</i>	51
“ <i>Unius linguae uniusque moris regnum imbecile et fragile est</i> ” <i>Joseph Poth, Unesco, France</i>	53
How many languages... <i>Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, University of Roskilde, Department of Languages and Culture, Denmark</i>	57
Appendices	61
Appendix 1: List of participants	63
Appendix 2: Programme.....	73
Appendix 3: Biographies	77

Opening addresses

(Graz, 17 November 2000)

Opening address

Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Ambassadors,
Frau Landeshauptmann Klasnic,
Herr Bürgermeister Stingl,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to launch the ceremony for the opening of the new premises of the European Centre for Modern Languages, a Centre which now celebrates its fifth anniversary. I am sure that the excellent facilities will help the Centre to serve the needs of its partners even more effectively in the future and for many years to come.

This opening occurs at an opportune time, as final preparations are being made for the European Year of Languages. This is an initiative of the Council of Europe which is arousing widespread interest and support. We are pleased that the European Union will join us in this campaign, and that we will have the active support of Unesco.

The Year will mark the culmination of almost three decades of successful work in the field of languages. It is widely acknowledged that the Council of Europe has played a pioneering role in innovation in language teaching. I believe that this Centre will help to ensure that it will continue to do so.

Our work now, as in the future, is guided by Council of Europe policy based on the principles that:

- language learning is a **RIGHT** and **NECESSITY** for **ALL** in Europe today. Everyone must have the possibility to avail of the opportunities for work and leisure which language skills offer;
- communication skills across linguistic and cultural boundaries are essential for **PEACE** and **STABILITY** in our multicultural societies.

The message from the Council of Europe, therefore, is clear and simple:

- Europe is and will remain multilingual and multicultural.

Accordingly, the Council of Europe will use this unique opportunity offered by the European Year of Languages to get this message across to our citizens.

We need to learn MORE languages; as indicated in Recommendation No. R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers: some degree of competence is desirable in at least two languages other than our mother tongue.

We need to DIVERSIFY the choice of languages on offer to students; a *lingua franca* is useful but not sufficient in our multilingual continent; we should celebrate and actively promote this linguistic diversity so that it is seen as a richness rather than as a barrier to communication.

We also need to improve the quality of language teaching and learning if we are to make the best use of limited time and resources. The Council of Europe must intensify its work in two key areas:

- on the one hand the development and implementation of instruments for policy development and standard setting
- on the other the efficient and effective implementation of policy in language teaching.

The Council of Europe is very fortunate in having two complementary instances which can assist member states in both of these areas: the Modern Languages Division in Strasbourg and the European Centre for Modern Languages here in Graz.

The Modern Languages Division in Strasbourg is responsible for the DEVELOPMENT of policy, including common standards and related instruments for the CDCC countries. During the European Year of Languages it will launch a common framework for standard setting and for evaluating achievements in language learning. It will also launch a European Language Portfolio – a document for citizens containing a common language passport which can be understood internationally. The Portfolio will acknowledge all language skills, including those acquired outside formal education. It will support citizens in diversifying their language skills in their life-long learning.

In close complementarity and co-operation with Strasbourg, and in keeping with its mission, the ECML deals with the IMPLEMENTATION of policies.

The role of the ECML is fundamental because there can be no successful innovation without good classroom practice and adequate teacher training. The Centre's workshops and networks of national multipliers address a wide and diversified range of key areas. These include, for example, the use of new technologies, languages and twin cities, learning the languages of our neighbouring countries, multi-literacy, language and cultural awareness. Indeed, the ECML is rapidly acquiring a distinguished reputation as a centre for teacher training and as a resource for the dissemination of good practice. It has an added advantage – as a Partial Agreement it can provide a flexible response to particular needs and help neighbouring countries to develop close co-operation.

This institution is symbolically and strategically located close to the centre of Europe.

It offers a unique forum for sharing experiences across linguistic and cultural boundaries. It has grown rapidly in a relatively short space of time. The Council of Europe is grateful to the Austrian authorities for their support and commitment which have provided the necessary base for this expansion. We also wish to thank the 28 member states which have played an active role in developing its mission potential. We look forward to the accession of many others and trust that the European Year of Languages will provide the occasion for further growth.

The debate tomorrow morning will offer the opportunity to take stock of the implications of accelerating change in European societies for language policy. The movement towards a new more radical phase of globalisation and market forces must not be allowed to threaten the linguistic diversity of our continent. The growing re-assertion of local, regional and ethnic identities must not be allowed to develop into ethno-centrism and rejection of differences. The Council of Europe must continue to promote its values, and to support plurilingualism and pluriculturalism as a basis for living together in harmony. Language skills are a core competence for democratic citizenship in a peaceful Europe. In this context I look forward to following the Centre's essential contribution to bridging language and cultural barriers.

Inauguration of the new premises of the European Centre for Modern Languages

Once again I would like to thank the Austrian authorities and all those whose support makes this contribution possible. Congratulations on your achievements so far, and we all wish the Centre well in facing the challenges of plurilingualism at the start of this millennium.

Thank you.

Opening address

Michel Lefranc, Executive Director of the European Centre for Modern Languages

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to act as the master of ceremonies on this special occasion and to introduce important guests who will grace the proceedings. It is also an honour to welcome the Permanent Representatives to the Council of Europe and experts from over 30 states to the new premises of the European Centre for Modern Languages.

Thanks to the support of many of you and in particular the Austrian Authorities, the ECML moved from a beautiful XVIIIth century building, characterised by harmony, the Mozarthof in the Schubertstraße, into a XXIst century building also characterised by harmony near the river Mur which runs through Graz.

This inauguration represents an added value not only for the experts and teachers who live and work on a daily basis in the world of languages and who will directly benefit from the outputs of the Centre but also for citizens living in Europe who will profit indirectly from the results of the Centre by learning more languages and in a better way. In other words the inauguration of the new premises is a contribution towards a greater openness of the peoples of Europe to dialogue, tolerance and fraternity.

This Centre is not merely a place for the implementation of language policies and innovations for language's sake, but above all a place where languages are considered as tools for cultural awareness and mediation, for democracy, for shared human values, which are at the basis of the existence of the Council of Europe. We are one of the outposts of the Council of Europe, some 900 km from Strasbourg yet we feel close both to the peoples of Europe and to our parent institution.

One aspect, which I greatly appreciate in the light of this geographical distance between Graz and Strasbourg is the close cooperation between the Centre and other sections of the Council of Europe, in particular the Modern Languages

Inauguration of the new premises of the European Centre for Modern Languages

Division: the ECML and the Modern Languages Division constituting the two bodies responsible for languages in the Council of Europe. Indeed I look at both of us as constituting one of the most harmonious, dedicated, constructive and long lasting working tandems of the Council of Europe.

ECML round table

(Graz, 18 November 2000)

In which languages will our
children and grandchildren live?

Languages: Their use
and their roles in society

Moderator: Rolf Schärer

An introductory statement

Rolf Schärer

1. In which languages will our children and grandchildren live?

A fascinating question:

- because the answer lies outside our personal time horizons;
- because it touches our identities and personal values;
- because it raises the issue of accountability.

An intriguing question:

- because it forces us to reflect on the issue of quality in human life;
- because it asks for the ingredients of a prosperous and fair society;
- because it raises the issue of progress and the cost of progress.

An impossible question:

- because we do not know the future;
- because we are notoriously hopeless in predicting;
- because we might be unable to cope with the answer.

Let us then focus on three related questions:

- A. Are languages jewels or commodities?
- B. In what languages would we like our children and grandchildren to live?
- C. Are the answers in our hands?

2. Are languages jewels or commodities?

“I am convinced that language is the vehicle that permits thought to be in accordance with the knowledge and the world vision of a given culture, of a people, who have inherited this from their ancestors and which, at the same time, makes it possible to pass it on to the new generations.”

Rigoberta Menchù Tum, *Nobel Peace Prize 1992*¹

Are languages jewels or commodities?

Maybe they are neither, at least not exclusively.

Yet a gulf seems to exist between the positions of “Humanists”, “Politicians” and “Practitioners”.

Does this matter?

It does because interdependence is growing fast and on a global level.

While globalisation in economic and technological activities is a widely discussed phenomenon, the impact of the worldwide interweaving of decisions and actions in other fields of human activities and life (public and private) only starts to dawn on us.

The way we treat languages does affect both human development and economic growth and our chances to build and live in a fair society in a rapidly changing world.

Because there are conflicts of interests and an uneven distribution of chances sustained efforts are needed to clarify and define the global challenges and to work towards common solutions however utopian they may appear at times.

1 From a letter sent on the occasion of the Proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights on June 6, 1996 in Barcelona.

3. Are languages jewels or commodities?

A political view

Learning: The treasure within

[Unesco, Education for the Twenty-first century 1996, page 51]

We must be guided by the utopian aim of steering the world towards greater mutual understanding, a greater sense of responsibility and greater solidarity, through acceptance of our spiritual and cultural differences.

Political declarations in regard to languages are plentiful. They all seem more or less utopian.

Consider:

- “All language communities have equal rights” (Article 10-1 of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, 1996 Barcelona);
- Article 7, of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Council of Europe Strasbourg 1992, European Treaty series 148):
 - 1.a “(the) recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth”
 - 1.d “(the) facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life”.

Recommendation No. R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states concerning modern languages, Council of Europe March 1998:

- Article 2 of the Appendix: “Promote widespread plurilingualism”.

Whether utopian or not, these declarations have in common that we seem to support them in principle, that they are difficult to put into practice and their ranking order in our agendas differ widely.

4. Are languages jewels or commodities?

An utilitarian view

Economic growth, control of resources and technological progress are the keys to progress (and happiness).

Efficient, cost-effective communication is ensured through a lingua franca. Customers' languages are effective in maximising sales.

And a contrast

In their private lives individuals may use whatever languages they want.

As the saying goes: Money makes the world go round! Hence commercial interests seem to dominate the language debate.

The Tribune de Genève puts the argument this way (3 November 2000):

- *Pour Ruth Dreifuss (one of the Swiss ministers), les Suisses n'ont pas besoin de l'anglais précoce.*
- *Des pédagogues veulent multiplier les langues pour les très jeunes enfants.*
- *La Suisse doit choisir entre utilité économique et cohésion nationale.*

These are examples out of a heated debate in Switzerland on the place of English in relation to the national languages in the school system.

As so often in heated debates, we run the risk of overlooking the wood for the trees.

Languages are important tools and tools are used for specific purposes.

To remind us adults: children use languages to play and explore and for them this is important business.

To remind us as success driven adults: children demonstrate that it pays off to be generous, broad-minded and relaxed when engaging in serious business.

5. In what languages would we like them to live?

A language of respect and tolerance?

A language of business and success?

A language of social identity?

A language of dominance?

A language of thought?

A language of aggression?

A language of solidarity?

The estimate is that there about 6 000 living languages in this world and that about half of them will die during this century.

The 10 world's largest mother tongues account for roughly half of the world's population.

English as mother tongue, as second or foreign language is spoken by every fifth human being in this world and the proportion is increasing.

Yet the majority of people still lives in other languages.

Should our model hence be to live in the language of origin and in addition in English as *lingua franca*? Is such a model desirable and feasible?

Things do not seem to be that simple. Languages are spoken not only by individuals but also by smaller or bigger social groups, in defined territories or among other language groups.

We are back at the questions of the functions of language and our individual and group values and priorities.

It seems important for the future of our children and grandchildren to clarify the qualities languages should have and transmit.

6. In what languages would we like them to live?

The language of the Web!??

I'm your life and I no longer care
I'm your dream, make you real
I'm your eyes when you must steal
I'm your pain when you can't feel
Sad But True

Metallica

In what languages do they want to live?

Wherever it is available the Web has a strong attraction for young people and it makes access to their own world easy.

Teachers and parents often deplore a perceived lack in quality of language presented and the influence it has on their children.

It is true that aggressive and vulgar language can and is often transmitted via the net. Yet, it is equally true that much of the language is poetic and that it reflects real issues the young generation is faced with.

This might be the place to mention that the quality of English as *lingua franca* will be more directly affected by the competence of the teachers in English and of the support they will get in fulfilling a demanding task than by the net.

After all, they are expected to help learners in large numbers to feel good or even at home in their *lingua franca*.

7. Is the answer in our hands?

The king and the wise man
An old legend

Wise man, is it true that you know all the languages of the world?

Yes, Sir.

Is it true that you listen to the birds and you can understand their song?

Yes, Sir.

That you know how to read the shape of the clouds?

Yes, Sir.

That you can even read people's minds?

Yes. Sir.

In my hands, hidden behind my back, is a bird. Is it alive or dead?

The answer, Sir, is in your hands.

This legend is retold in the preface to the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (Follow-up Committee Barcelona 1998). The preface ends with the affirmative statement: "The answer is in our hands".

Can we be so sure?

- How will we cope with the ever increasing world population?
- How will we distribute and use scarce resources (e.g. water.)?
- How will we respond to the growing migration pressure?
- How will we respond to "progress" (gene manipulation, cloning)?
- How will we use technology (computers, media, production plants)?
- What effect will the increase of the world temperature have?

Our control over these key factors seem to be minimal.

So what can we do?

8. Is the answer in our hands?

Language Death, *David Crystal, CUP 2000*

Should we care about language death? The paradoxical situation is that the languages will certainly die unless we do something; but, the reality is that they may also die even if we do something.

David Crystal states the following reasons why we should care:

- because we need diversity;
- because languages express identity;
- because languages are repositories of history;
- because languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge;
- because languages are interesting in themselves.

And he states what can be done:

An endangered language will progress if its speakers:

- increase their prestige within the dominant culture;
- increase their wealth relative to the dominant community;
- increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community;
- have a strong presence in the educational system;
- can write their language down;
- can make use of electronic technology.

Interestingly he provides us with a list for self-help.

Yet self-help alone might not be enough.

9. Is the answer in our hands?

Promotion of plurilingualism and mutual understanding:

- the Modern Languages Division;
- a Common Framework of Reference;
- a European Language Portfolio;
- the ECML in Graz.

The Council of Europe and its member states consider:

- that the rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures in Europe is a valuable common resource to be protected and developed;
- that a major educational effort is needed to convert that diversity from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding.

The Modern Languages Division acts as lead body in this important and creative mission.

A Common European Framework of Reference for the learning, teaching and assessment of modern languages has been developed and tested. Increase transparency and coherence in learning and in reporting competence is the envisaged goal.

The dissemination and implement of a European Language Portfolio (ELP) has just been recommended by the Ministers of Education of the member states. The ELP belongs to the learner, values all competence positively, is based on the Common European Framework.

And last but not least, the ECML plays a crucial part in translating policy into practice. It acts as a platform for training and development and as an outpost aerial in support of the professional language world throughout Europe.

10. Is the answer in our hands?

- Is the answer in our hands?

To finish, let me tell the story of another king and bird:

The king had many reasons to be sad and unhappy. One day he came across a bird called Happiness. The king offered to take him to his castle but the bird answered: "I just don't like it everywhere" and flew off.

To the dismay of the king the bird got very ill when he forced him to stay in his castle and neither gold nor flattery could cure him. When asked, the bird answered the king: "You do not understand and you do not want to understand".

The king had tears in his eyes and let the bird go free. The story goes on that Happiness, the bird, still flies through the world...
and that he sits down occasionally just here or there...
but he still does not like it just anywhere.

Maybe our task is not so much to predict and control the future.

We ought to feel accountable towards our children and grand-children in a different way. The challenge is to create and maintain conditions in which they can live in the languages which make them feel considered, at home and sometimes happy.

I wish the ECML many enlightened and creative debates in this marvellous new home.

Discussion rounds

Questions for the discussion rounds

1ST DISCUSSION ROUND

- Where should we put the priorities given the political visions and the limited resources?
- Does the panel agree that the first foreign language should be la langue ou les langues des voisins, given that English will happen anyway?
- For how long will English be the global *lingua franca* and what might be the next?
- If you are honest, is it not the commodity and utilitarian criteria that is always applied – and the jewel concept?
- Would it be possible to allow the children to choose the language of education/instruction at the age of 14 (or so)?

2ND DISCUSSION ROUND

- The people's linguistic environment is more diverse than what the education system provides. How can school cope with that richness?
- Linguistic diversity – how to link it to questions of national, personal identity?
- Should every child have the opportunity to learn one of the major languages?
- Accepting the diversity of languages puts new demands on teachers. How can they be helped to face up to this challenge?
- Does accepting the diversity mean that some languages are lower in the hierarchy than we wish them to be? Does it make it desirable to accept and develop partial competences?

3RD DISCUSSION ROUND

- How could you provide enough opportunity for the children to be exposed and to acquire many languages?
- La “langue des jeunes” is very different to their parents’ language. What are the panel’s views on this situation?
- How can you support language learning and teaching and the provision of teacher training?
- Could the Council of Europe help in developing national linguistic policies – including a better coordination of mother tongue, minority and foreign language programmes?
- What are the policies of the government of European countries in the teaching of immigrant languages?

Contributions

In which languages will our children and grandchildren live?

*Nicki Bos,
European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam,
Programme Officer 'Which Languages for Europe?'*

When we speak about multilingualism, the discussion often starts at the foot of the Tower of Babel. It is unfortunate that the most famous story about language should be one in which multilingualism is depicted as an evil, a punishment for arrogance. And it is even more unfortunate that this conception is now projected by many onto the European situation.

We are not told what happened after the languages were confused and the people were scattered across the earth. But of course we know that over the centuries, there has always been contact between people from different lands. Somehow or other, they always found a way to communicate if there was a need to. Nothing much has changed in that respect. But now that we have come to a complex situation that goes beyond bartering goods, the question is not if and when, but: how?

How? In the first place, by stopping to speak about Europe as a second Babylon. It is not useful because, like the Babylonians, we do not have a perfect language to go back to, and all it gives us is a negative perception of language diversity. In our present Europe, and in many other parts of the world, multilingualism is a given. The enormous challenge facing us is to approach this given both democratically and practically. These seem to be two diametrically opposed views: after all, complete democracy equals complete impracticability, as it would allow everybody to use their own language in all situations. Similarly, complete practicability is completely undemocratic: it means abolishing all languages and introducing one standard to be spoken at work, in the public domain, at school and in the home. Surely we must be able to find a combined solution?

There is a lot of debate about English as *the* language of Europe and the world. People find it efficient to have a global language, but at the same time are afraid to lose their own languages and with that their identities. A proposal to teach classes in English at Dutch universities was almost accepted, but rejected when

the ensuing debate showed true fears that this would be a first step towards English taking over as the official language of The Netherlands. Are these fears well-founded? Probably not. Even if English becomes the *lingua franca* of Europe, which is very likely, it will never be the sole language spoken across the entire continent. Distinguishing yourself from others is a human need. Although geographic expansion and integration seems to make differences between Europeans smaller, it has also generated an increased sense of regional identity and an accompanying interest in regional languages. Our identities become multiple.

English dominance in Europe is not desirable from a democratic point of view, as it favours the British and the Irish and puts others at a disadvantage in communication and in the labour market. However, it is an irreversible development. The papers recently reported that worldwide more people now speak English as a second language than as a native tongue, and the numbers continue to grow very quickly. It is probably an unavoidable side effect of globalisation: people want to use the communication opportunities that now exist and English happened to be the most suitable language for that purpose at this particular time. In other circumstances, we might have all been learning Chinese or Spanish.

So rather than dwell on how undemocratic the use of English as a *lingua franca* is – which, of course it is! – should we not focus on all those other languages which so much deserve attention? With English dominance, language diversity becomes even more important. It reflects the richness of the continent, its history and its culture. When a language is lost, a culture and a way of thinking are lost at the same time. Should we not put our energy and resources into providing other languages with an opportunity to develop rather than focusing on a crusade against English? English dominance is already a fact in Europe, but it certainly does not mean that there is no demand for other languages. The London labour market last year showed a requirement for 38 different languages. However, the distribution of these other languages may change. French, German, Spanish and Italian may become less prominent in comparison to other languages, because it will not necessarily be the size of the speaker group that determines the importance of the language. This could be favourable for regional minority languages, which will have to face less ‘competition’ with the national language, because the latter has lost prominence in international communication. Loss of status for ‘traditional’ languages could also increase the status of immigrant minority languages, which can take their place in the wide European language spectrum on a more equal basis. And finally, there may be increased emphasis on communication with other

continents, which would make languages such as Chinese and Arabic more important. For total 'anglification' of the whole world is still a long way off.

Europe is multicultural and multilingual and, fortunately, will remain to be so. Many people are in favour of preserving this richness and certainly few people would thoughtlessly cast away their own culture and language. Maybe the primary function of language in an international context will shift to being a vehicle of culture rather than an instrument for communication. But in any case, acquisition of other languages than English must continue to be stimulated, and should remain compulsory in school. For living in a multicultural society requires us to be able to think in different ways and look at things from different perspectives. Only then can we truly understand and value the diversity that constitutes Europe.

The future of our languages: A linguist's view

*Ranko Bugarski,
University of Belgrade, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*

Languages are disappearing fast from the face of the earth, possibly at the average global rate of one in every week or two. According to informed estimates, almost one half of the roughly 6 000 languages now existing are already **moribund**, i.e. spoken by small numbers of people but no longer passed on to children. Most of the other half are **endangered**, i.e. still acquired by children but likely to become moribund within decades. This means that well over 80% of the world's languages are facing extinction within the next hundred years. Only the remaining 10-20% of languages, probably under 1 000, may be considered safe on a long-term view, in having a sufficiently large number of speakers and/or adequate institutional support.

Throughout history, numerically stronger and politically dominant languages have tended to eradicate those of ethno-linguistic minorities. In modern times, the principal agents of this large-scale "linguicide" have been the great imperial languages such as Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Russian and especially English. The plight of small languages all over the world has become worse in the present era of communications, technology and globalisation. This situation is quite alarming, since the death of every single language means the loss of a unique instrument of the human intellect and of a community's culture. Language loss is an aspect of the more general ongoing process of reduction of diversity and impoverishment of mankind's total riches, comparable to losses suffered in the world of nature with the extinction of countless zoological and botanical species.

What can be done about this state of affairs? The process of language loss cannot be halted, let alone reversed, but it may perhaps be slowed down. Here one must distinguish between linguistic and broader social aspects of the phenomenon. The former are relatively straightforward: as the science of language and languages, linguistics must obviously be highly concerned about the gradual disappearance of such a huge part of its potential subject matter. Therefore linguists should in large numbers go out into the field to record and document the dying languages before it is too late, thus broadening the empirical base of linguistic theory.

The social side of the matter is far more problematic, as the priorities here are set by the speech communities themselves, at least in principle. These, however, may and do differ in their choices – if they have a choice. Many languages and their communities are beyond help, but those that may still be salvaged raise intricate sociopsychological and ethical issues in addition to the more visible economic and political ones. A traditional view insists on the preservation of the mother tongue as an irreplaceable part of one's ethnic and cultural identity. Another, more pragmatic attitude encourages casting off the disadvantaged mother tongue as a mark of minority membership and low social status, while embracing the language of a larger and more powerful community as an instrument of social betterment. But it is important to emphasize that this is not necessarily an either-or choice.

Under favourable circumstances it may be possible to combine the benefits of both positions, thus neutralising the conflict between tribalism and nation-building; after all, we do not want linguistic ghettos and “cultural museums” any more than faceless uniformity. Given adequate measures of language policy and planning, as well as sufficient interest and co-operation in the minority community, one may advance the sense of value of one's ethnic language for self-identification, perhaps even pride in it and a concomitant desire to pass it on to children. This, however, by no means precludes the acceptance of a wider linguistic and social framework, thus reconciling the maintenance of the original cultural identity with the social advantages of assimilation. This may be the theoretically ideal resolution of a minority's crucial dilemma.

The above implies a positive and active attitude to multilingualism. Focusing now on Europe, where the chances of preserving endangered languages are generally much better than elsewhere, we find that numerous strong languages, both within and outside the European Union, can look forward to a secure future. Yet among the hundred or so autochthonous languages now spoken in Europe there are possibly a few dozen in real danger in the long run – for example, even such standardized languages as Irish and Scottish Gaelic, Breton, Basque, Romansh, Ruthenian, or Sorbian.

Occasional successes of revivalist efforts (as in the case of Welsh recently) should not blunt our awareness that the best general policy is societal as well as individual multilingualism. A basic frame of reference, adjusted to local conditions, is a multilevel pyramid accommodating minority languages, regional or national languages (especially standard forms of official languages), as well as languages of wider international communication – with most or all of these categories represented in the verbal repertoire of individual members of complex modern societies. The currently highly favoured position of English as

the leading international language does not imply that it will eventually squeeze out all its rivals either in Europe or worldwide. Major languages like French and German will certainly remain active internationally, and on the world scale, as informed opinion suggests, in the course of the next century several languages – especially Chinese, Hindi/Urdu, Spanish and Arabic – may in fact narrow the gap now separating them from English. One principal factor in this redistribution of linguistic power and influence will be increasing multilingualism among the political, cultural and especially business elites, of which there are distinct signs already.

In conclusion, the key to such preservation of languages as is still workable is in fostering multilingualism in the spirit of interculturalism – not only in theory but also in the day-to-day practice of ever-growing networks of speakers. The concept of language rights, while safeguarding the ethnic mother tongue, also includes the right to learn and use other languages. In that way most of our European languages will indeed have a future, and our children and grandchildren will possess a rich linguistic home to live in. As we have been warned by researchers in contact linguistics, monolingualism is curable!

A contribution from ESIB, The National Unions of Students in Europe

Manja Klemencic
ESIB, Slovenia

In the world of student representation we believe that:

“Education is aimed towards full personal development and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also promotes the culture and understanding of active, critical and constructive participation. Education shall promote understanding, tolerance, respect and friendship among all nations, ethnic or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. Education facilitates more effective participation in a society and people’s ability to form an opinion of their own. It also facilitates persons to contribute to the quality of the society.”¹

In the same world of student representation we believe that languages are integral part of every educational system and thus:

- **Serve as a tool for widening access to education for all and overcoming discrimination against minorities.**

Access to education is a right and therefore higher education needs to be a public service, without fees and thus free. Fees are, however, not the only obstacle to access. Language of instructions can be a discriminatory measure too.

In ESIB we believe that “All students have the right to study in any of the languages commonly used in their country of residence. Every effort must also be made to promote diversity of access and experiences of education for all members of society, irrespective of, but not limited to, such factors as political conviction, religion, ethnicity, cultural origin, sexual orientation, gender, social standing or disabilities. Every effort must be made to promote involvement of foreign students in higher education. This must include offering courses in

¹ Student Rights – Human Rights policy paper, adopted by ESIB Board at 39th Board Meeting in October 2000 in Geneva.

different languages but also other measures are needed. It should also be the responsibility of providers of higher education to take the appropriate measures in order to guarantee access to all levels of education for all minority groups”.¹

- **Foster internationalisation of higher education institutions and especially encourage mobility; and thus promote diversity and tolerance within the higher education and society as a whole.**

Internationalisation of higher education institutions is more than mobility of students and teachers. It means placing the HEI in the international context and thus educating students for living and working in multicultural and multilingual circumstances as well as finding sources and targets of HEI's work outside the country borders. Every government and higher education institution must encourage the diversity of cultures and languages in the higher education institutions. Concrete and practical measures can be taken on institutional level to facilitate the internationalisation and especially prepare for mobility; language learning opportunities play a major role in this process. Development of Language Policy as an integral part of the Higher Education Institution's International Policy is a needed requirement for internationalisation of HEI. Below stated are some practical measures to be taken by HEI as part of its language policy. Especially important is that HEI seek partnerships on developing joint language programs across borders and thus appeal to framework of Bologna Declaration towards European Space of Higher Education.

Some practical suggestions for HEI²:

- to provide information about language learning opportunities to all outgoing students and incoming students;
- to create flexible and versatile learning environments including:
 - courses for linguistic and cultural preparation and support (at different levels; specifically aimed at the *needs* of incoming or outgoing students);

¹ Ibid.

² ENCOURAGING MOBILITY BY BETTER PREPARATION, Comments on 'Objectif 12: Assurer l'accompagnement linguistique de la mobilité' of the 'Plan d'action pour la mobilité', with special reference to student mobility by Wolfgang Mackiewicz (*Conseil européen pour les langues / European Language Council*).

- pre-sessional courses for incoming students (if appropriate in co-operation with other organisations);
- self-learning facilities, featuring technology-driven materials as well as learning advisers;
- seek co-operation with other institutions in the region in an effort to provide preparatory courses for outgoing students that they cannot offer on their own. In addition, they should seek to provide opportunities for independent learning;
- encourage language learning and reward students for successful language learning by:
 - integrating language modules into non-language degree courses and giving credits for successful completion of modules;
 - enabling students to provide proof of language proficiency and by recording the results of such language tests/exams in an appendix to the diploma certificate;
 - allowing outgoing students, where appropriate, to obtain a certain number of ECTS CPs from language courses taken at the host institution;
- promote living and working in multicultural and multilingual Europe.

Language learning and especially learning of less widely used and less taught languages and learning it in holistic approach (not as a system but in a cultural context) has been contributing to the idea of multicultural and multilingual Europe as place for education, work and living. Institutions like the European Centre for Modern Languages can contribute enormously to development of language learning and its use in educational and societal context.

It is important that language learning is not limited only to formal education and classical students but it is part of concept of lifelong learning (as a life style) and in domain of variety of its providers. Especially this concept should prioritise less widely used and less taught languages.

My paper has been prepared in the framework of work as a student representative and thus in context of higher educational systems, with

development of European Space for Higher Education within the Bologna Process in mind.

It has been prepared in view of personal belief in:

- languages giving common ground to communication and thus facilitate each others understanding;
- languages changing and developing and to be understood and respected in their diverse – developed usage rather than judged conservatively as solely wrong or right. Key question thus is whether understanding has been facilitated through language use;
- languages taught and learned not as a system but in a holistic manner considering cultural and personal context;
- learning “foreign” languages is not “betraying” your mother tongue or giving up your culture but contributing to personal well-roundness and cosmopolitanism.

The important question for me remains how many languages will next generation be able and encouraged to learn by different providers throughout their life time. My wish and hope would be that everyone (learners in context of lifelong learning) will have many and good possibilities to learn languages: that everyone will spend at least some months during their studies or work abroad; that everyone will be thought at least one course in other language than mother tongue; that parts of course reading will necessarily be in other languages than mother tongue; that people will decide for language learning at all stages of their life acknowledging wide advantages to their personal and professional development.

My hope would also be for more multi-language HEI reflection on existence of multicultural societies and thus fostering peace and tolerance.

As I see education being crucial for social development, languages as the means of facilitating understanding and thus learning must be seen as its integral part. Institutions like the ECML have thus a key role in Europe’s social development.

A brief contribution to the debate on knowledge of foreign languages

Alain Mouchoux
ETUCE, France

The debate on the learning and future of foreign languages is being fuelled almost continuously by new developments: globalisation, the growth of trade, the phenomenal progress of technology, and also global media mergers, European integration and enlargement, and the resurgence of nationalism and xenophobia.

Increasingly, too, people are anxious to rediscover their roots and cultural affiliations.

These two trends, global and local, may appear contradictory, but are in fact complementary: they reflect the diversity, the shifting pattern and the challenges of human relations.

However, people do not enjoy equal opportunity in the matter of cultural practice, language use and language access; the world's linguistic heritage is deteriorating as the result of an irreversible process, which is already well on the way to eliminating several thousand languages.

The Emperor Charles V is supposed to have said:

“I learnt Italian to speak to the Pope,
Spanish to speak to my mother,
English to speak to my aunt,
German to speak to my friends,
and French to speak to myself.”

This seems a good example of the many different reasons which lead people to learn languages.

But which language(s) do we need to know – and therefore to learn?

Between 7 and 8 000 languages have already died out for good in the world at large. Let us at least do something to ensure that this kind of thing does not

happen in Europe, where some 40 languages are spoken, but only eleven are officially recognized for EU purposes. As the EU expands, satisfying the demands of certain European regions will involve laying on interpretation in something like 25 languages, requiring the presence of 100 or more interpreters at meetings.

We must beware of institutionalising a language-use hierarchy; let us, instead, bring regional and minority languages, whether used by immigrants or natives, into the picture.

Also worth mentioning are the languages used in the suburbs of Europe's major cities, where coded forms of speech are developing, with their own self-generated, ever-changing rules, but providing – for the people who speak them – a genuine means of communication.

Europe is enriched by its cultural diversity, its past and its multiple traditions. It must never become a continent with a stateless, homogenised culture, employing Anglo-American as its standard idiom.

“Language follows power”, and it is the USA's economic and technological might which is imposing English on us as one of our shared instruments of interaction. We must act to ensure that, in particular, education systems and public life offer lifelong language-learning opportunities on a sufficiently effective, varied and permanent basis.

A knowledge of foreign languages fosters social cohesion, allows ideas and people to circulate freely, and is an element in citizenship – just like the right to use one's own language and enjoy one's own culture.

In today's multicultural societies, improving our knowledge of other people's languages and cultures helps us to get rid of stereotypes and combat all forms of exclusion.

In jeder Sprache sitzen andere Augen [Every language sees the world through its own eyes]

Herta Müller
Germany/Romania

In the German dialect of the Banat village where I grew up, we used to say “Der Wind GEHT” (literally the wind is going) for “The wind is blowing”. In the High German we were taught at school this became “Der Wind WEHT” but to the impressionable 7 year-old that I was at the time it sounded to me as if the wind was hurting itself. In the Romanian that I also began to learn in school at that time we said “vintul bate” (literally the wind is striking) and this time it sounded as if the wind was hurting someone else. And there were just as many differences when the wind died down as when it was blowing. In German we said “Der Wind hat sich gelegt” (literally the wind has lain down) whereas in Romanian we said “vintul a stat” (the wind has come to a standstill). This example is only one of the constantly varying images which are used to represent the same situation in two different languages. Every sentence amounts to a view of things which is formed in a particular way and no other by those who speak it. Every language looks at the world in a different way and has founded its entire vocabulary on the basis of this different viewpoint, even incorporating it into the fabric of its grammar. The words in every language see the world through different eyes.

The gender of the Romanian word for rose, *trandafir*, is masculine. In German roses are feminine and there is no doubt that, to German eyes, “die Rose” looks different from “der Rose”. In German a rose is a lady, in Romanian it is a man. For people who are aware of both ways of looking at a rose they become intermingled in their head. The feminine and masculine viewpoints are erased and the rose becomes an object in which man and woman intertwine, creating a surprising and bafflingly ambiguous form of poetry. The object acts out a minor drama within itself because it is not entirely sure about its own identity. What is a rose in two simultaneously expressed languages? It is a woman’s mouth in a man’s face, it is a man’s heart rolled up in a woman’s ankle-length evening gown. It is a woman’s glove and a man’s fist combined. When the two words for a rose meet, the fixed image of the rose in each language is transformed into an enigmatic, never-ending story. This bilingual rose will always have more to say about itself and the world than a simple monolingual one.

Every time one and the same object passes from one language to another it undergoes transformations, whatever the languages involved. The mother tongue perspective confronts the different view of a foreign language. There is practically no personal effort involved in the acquisition of a mother tongue. It is a kind of free gift which comes along unnoticed. Any language which is added later and acquired in a different way puts the mother tongue in perspective. The element of chance in the words we speak suddenly becomes glaringly obvious. From now on our mother tongue is no longer the only manifestation of objects, and its vocabulary is no longer the only measure of things. True, the mother tongue's position is unassailable. By and large people still go by what it says even though it is put in perspective by the new language. People know that, though it has been produced by chance, this yardstick is the most reliable and essential one they have. It stands at the ready, to be used free of charge without being consciously learnt. A mother tongue is quite simply and incontrovertibly there, just like your own skin. And it is just as easily wounded as skin if it is undervalued, disregarded or even prohibited. In Romania anyone like me who left their dialect-speaking village with the baggage of the halting high German they had learnt in school had a hard time coping with the Romanian national language of the city. For most of my first two years in the city it was easier for me to find the right street in an unknown district than it was to find the right word in the national language. To me Romanian was like pocket money. No sooner had I seen an enticing object in the shop window than I realised that I didn't have the money to pay for it. What I wanted to say had to be paid for in the corresponding words but there were many of them that I did not know and the few I did know failed to occur to me in time. Now I know that this faltering, step-by-step process, which always made me express myself in a way that did not live up to the level of my thoughts, also gave me the time to wonder at the transformation that Romanian effected on objects. I now know that was my good fortune. What a different view the Romanian language has of the swallow, which it calls the *rindunica*, literally the "sitter-in-rows". There is much more to this word than the German or English term. Within the name of the bird lies the observation that swallows assemble on wires in silhouetted, closely-packed rows. Before I knew the Romanian word, I had seen this every summer in my home village. It took my breath away that the swallow could have such a beautiful name. It became ever more frequent for Romanian words and expressions to be more meaningful and more in tune with my sensibilities than my mother tongue. I became addicted to the teetering thrill of these transformations and adopted them in my speech and writing. I have yet to write a single word of Romanian in my books but it goes without saying that there is always an element of Romanian in what I write because it has become ingrained into my view of things.

It never does a mother tongue any harm for its chance element to be revealed in the light of other languages. In fact, holding our language up for others to see fully vindicates our relationship with it and allows us to love it intuitively. I have always loved my mother tongue because it is the language most familiar to me, not because I think it is the best.

Our instinctive trust in our mother tongue can nonetheless be suppressed. After the extermination of the Jews under National-Socialism, Paul Celan had to live with the fact that his German mother tongue was the language of those who murdered his mother. Finding himself in this bitter pass, he could not shake off his native language. For German was ingrained in the very first word that he had said when he learnt to speak. It was the first language he had known and trusted and it had to stay that way. Even when it reeked of the smokestacks of the concentration camps, Celan had to accept German as his most intimate form of expression, although he had grown up among Yiddish, Romanian and Russian speakers, and French had become his everyday language. It was quite different however for Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt. For decades after the Holocaust, he wrote in French, refusing to have anything to do with German. But he did not forget his German. And his last books, written in German, are such virtuoso masterpieces that most other German books seem dull by comparison. It could also be said that, for a long time, Goldschmidt was robbed of his mother tongue.

Many German writers happily believe that, if it came to it, their mother tongue could compensate for the loss of everything else they have. They have not yet been in a situation to test their theory but basically what they are saying is that "LANGUAGE IS HOMELAND". It irritates me that authors whose homelands stand intact and unchallenged but ready for action and whose homes have never been faced with anything life-threatening can say this. Any German who says that "LANGUAGE IS HOMELAND" has a duty to establish a link with those who first invented this expression, namely the migrants who escaped Hitler's massacres by fleeing. Applied to them, "LANGUAGE IS HOMELAND" is reduced to a bare piece of self-affirmation. It simply means "I still exist". For emigrants in a foreign land without prospects, saying "LANGUAGE IS HOMELAND" was simply intended as a fillip to themselves. People whose homeland lets them come and go as they wish should not be bandying the expression around. They have solid ground under their feet. When they say it, they are suppressing the tragedy of those who fled. They seem to think that the emigrants could ignore the collapse of their lives, their loneliness and their irreparably shattered identity because the mother tongue that they carried in their head like a portable homeland made up for everything. You cannot decide

whether or not to take your language with you, you simply have to. Only if you were dead would you not have it with you anymore – but what has this got to do with homeland?

I believe more what Jorge Semprun once wrote. It was in his book “Fredrico Sanchez Says Goodbye” and is a résumé of Semprun’s experiences in the concentration camps and as an émigré living abroad during the Franco dictatorship. Semprun says “NOT LANGUAGE IS HOMELAND BUT WHAT IS SPOKEN”. He knows to what extent people need to agree with the content of what they are saying to feel comfortable with it. How could Spanish be his homeland during Franco’s Spain. The content of his mother tongue was at variance with his life. At the most wretched time in life, Semprun’s insight that “HOMELAND IS WHAT IS SPOKEN” provides food for thought rather than the simple comfort of identifying with the idea of homeland. Just think how many Iranians are still thrown in prison today for uttering one sentence in Persian and how many Chinese, Cubans, North Koreans and Iraqis can never for one instant feel at ease with their own mother tongue. When Andrei Sakharov was placed under house arrest, did his Russian provide him with a homeland?

When everything is wrong with life, then words come crashing down as well. Added to this is the problem that all dictatorships, whether left-wing or right-wing, atheist or God-fearing, employ languages for their own purposes. In my first book about my childhood in a German Banat village, one of the many things that the Romanian editors censored was the word “Koffer” (“case”). It had become an emotive word because the emigration of the German minority was supposed to be a taboo. This expropriation obscured people’s view of certain words and attempted to blot out the understanding of languages inherent in them. The decreed language became just as hostile as the abasement itself.

Translated literally the Romanian for the palate, *cerul gurii*, means the sky of the mouth. This does not sound absurd in Romanian. In Romanian, it is possible to swear using a constantly reinvented series of unexpected expressions strung together into long oaths. German is very prim by comparison. I have often thought that in a language where the roofs of people’s mouths are as high as the sky, there is plenty of room for invention and curses can become poetically malicious diatribes of embitterment. At the time I used to say to my Romanian friends that a successful Romanian curse was like a rebellion against the palate. The population felt no need to protest against the dictatorship because they could vent their anger through their swearing.

Even after I had long since learnt to speak Romanian fluently and correctly, I was astounded over and over again by the daring analogies I heard. Words were secret expressions of carefully concealed yet pinpoint-accurate political viewpoints. Many of these words contained stories that were told without having to be spoken. Like every poverty-stricken country, Romania was full of cockroaches and so the cockroaches were called Russians, while bare light-bulbs without shades were called Russian chandeliers and sunflower seeds were Russian chewing gum. Ordinary people expressed their hostility towards their Russian big brother every day through pithy, scornful associations of meaning. And when the only thing left to buy in the shops were smoked pigs' trotters where you couldn't see the meat for the hooves, they were given the name gym shoes.

A friend from southern Germany once told me a story from his post-war childhood. The long-fused firecrackers which even small children let off on New Year's Eve were called "Judenfürze" (Jews' farts). Whenever my friend heard this word he thought that what people were saying was "Judofürze" (Judo farts), believing that the name of the firecrackers had something to do with judo. He went around under this illusion until he was 17 and for all those years, at home and at the shops when he was buying firecrackers, he asked for "Judofürze". In all this time neither his father nor his mother nor a single shopkeeper had corrected him. When he discovered the firecrackers' real name, he looked back in shame at every single one of those firecrackers he had let off. His father had already died when he finally discovered the anti-Semitic name. His mother is still alive today but he says he has never yet been able to ask her how, after Auschwitz, she could still openly call New Year's Eve firecrackers "Judenfürze".

Even in democracies language cannot be cordoned off from politics. Language is an inherent part of life. We have to listen carefully to what it does to people.

The international dimension of the medical profession: Do doctors understand each other?

Todor A. Popov
Medical University in Sofia, Bulgaria

For the past dozen years or so I have been actively involved in international activities related to my medical profession. I have tried different positions: passive listener at international meetings, lecturer and participant in round-table discussions, reviewer of papers, submitted to international journals. I have always wondered what is the actual level of understanding between people with different background, culture and ethnic psychology. Certainly, the common denominator for physicians would be their profession and the problems they share in relation to their patients and the organisation of health care.

Medical doctors have traditionally been a closed professional circle with its own rules, ethics and language, surpassing state borders. European medicine has inherited most of the art of ancient Greek and Latin healers, which accounts for the etymology of the basic terms and concepts carried through the ages and rooted in contemporary medicine. However, extinct languages could not sustain the advance in the field and gradually English imposed itself as a means of communication with its vivacity, rationality and links to other scientific fields. It further extended its role around the globe, serving as go-between the western styles and practices and the traditional schools of medicine in the Far East.

Is English meeting the needs and expectations of the medical community? International communication and exchange is a very dynamic process. Not long ago regional medical conferences provided simultaneous translations to their participants. Gradually English became the only official language for any event labeled 'international'. This makes things easier for the organisers, but discriminates the participants depending on their level of command of the language. Certainly, English native speakers are at an advantage, but it does not necessarily mean, that the audience best understands them. British and American lecturers usually make their presentations in a very elegant and sophisticated way, but beyond the grasp of part of the non-English listeners. Interestingly, speakers presenting in 'foreign' English will be often top ranked by widely inhomogeneous audiences.

The mix, which can be referred to as ‘foreign’ English, is exclusively relevant to spoken English. Formally, one will not discern major differences between scientific articles of different origin: they have been subjected to the scrutiny of linguistic experts prior to submission. Still, sometimes, submitted papers will disclose substantial differences between the standard English expression and the linguistic rules of the native language of the sending authors (one can almost see a hieroglyph here and there in the manuscripts stamped somewhere in the Far East). It appears to me, that each language has its own philosophy, which underlies a corresponding ethnic behavioral pattern. This philosophy marks with a specific tint any translation into foreign English, thus giving a new angle of vision to the discussed topic.

Recently the concept ‘brain-storming’ has gained wide acceptance. The most fruitful brainstorming sessions I have taken part in had gathered at one place the most diverse mix of individuals from countries far apart. No wonder it is becoming increasingly popular among physicians to create ‘International Guidelines’ for the management of the major chronic diseases. Many of those have recently evolved into ‘Global Initiatives’ and are disseminating lines of action to the worldwide medical community. Usually national committees will then review these documents, so as to make them feasible for the specific country. It is noteworthy, that once the international guideline has emerged, the national bodies of experts can add very few (mostly insignificant) things, proving in this way the power of global multilingual thinking.

The ultimate goal of medicine is to take care of the physical and mental welfare of all human beings living on our planet. Their genetic diversity constitutes the potential of our civilization to develop and adapt to new challenges. I do not believe, that the billions of people will be using a single universal language (I will be personally saddened to see this happen over the next few centuries). However, the medical community will have to use its own language (some may call it slang) so as to insure maximal understanding: the advance in medicine is pendant on the experience of the whole mankind.

“Unius linguae uniusque moris regnum imbecile et fragile est”

*Joseph Poth,
UNESCO, France*

Our descendants will certainly not live in a monolingual world. The fanatical advocates of monolingualism – even international organisations have them – should remember that the Romans already regarded “the rule of a single language” as “absurd and fragile”.

The latest resolutions adopted by national representatives on intergovernmental bodies concerned with this issue reveal a **general trend towards institutionalised trilingualism**, which may well become the norm in the next 20 years. Several countries have already put this into practice in their education and training programmes.

This basic multilingualism usually comprises three elements:

1. **a familiar “mother” tongue**, which tends to be the “national” language, e.g. Letzeburgesch for Luxembourgers;
2. **a neighbouring or local language**, e.g. French or German for Luxembourgers;
3. **a language for communicating internationally**, e.g. English, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. for Luxembourgers.

There is no reason why further languages should not be added to this basic mix, and the spread of the new communication technologies is bound to strengthen this trend in the future. Again taking Luxembourg as an example, **it is not unusual for people to speak four languages**, even if the home labour market usually makes do with three – a level which other European countries can only dream of. (A survey of job vacancies advertised in the “*Luxemburger Wort*” showed that 54% of employers asked for three languages, and only 12% asked for no foreign languages).

Outside Europe, multilingualism based on the use of four or even five different languages is **commonplace**, and may well be the shape of things to come in other regional contexts.

For example, the “linguistic experience” of African adults has a number of complex components, characterised by the use of several languages with **specific functions in individual communication strategies**. Typically, the African model of multilingualism is based on:

- **a mother tongue**: the language learnt by a child in the course of social interaction with members of the community to which he/she is linked by blood;
- **a community language**: a dominant language which is used outside the immediate ethnic area, but not on a national scale;
- **a national language**: an official local language or, more usually, any local language;
- **an interafrican language**: a language used across national borders in Africa (e.g. Swahili, Hausa, Fulfulde, Dyula).
- **an international language**: languages such as English, Arabic, French or Portuguese, which are used in communication between various countries within Africa and outside.

Not enough people in Europe are aware that **Africa is way ahead of Europe** in terms of linguistic diversity, and that the possibility of the North’s picking up methodological pointers from the South in this area should not be systematically ruled out.

As for the role of languages in the future, it is fairly safe to say that linguistic diversity will continue to be seen as highly positive. In the face of galloping globalisation and the sad levelling-out of distinctive features, mother tongues, minority or otherwise, will continue to provide a refuge for individuals and communities who refuse to be standardised.

Embodying the identity of peoples and forming an **integral part of their heritage**, linguistic diversity is a fundamental human right and, as such, **cannot be governed by market forces**. The threats hanging over vulnerable mother tongues as a result of unchecked globalisation are clearly perceived, especially by developing countries, whose cultures are directly at risk, because of their fragile economic situation. Hence the strongly felt need for an “**area**” for **linguistic diversity**, permitting the production and dissemination of endogenous cultural items, for which there is a potential market in most countries.

Generally speaking, and even if their **exact role still needs to be clarified**, the major regional and inter-regional organisations seem the right place to discuss linguistic diversity and explore it in the long term. This being so, the idea of adopting a UN declaration to give this **world study of linguistic diversity an official reference framework** should be revived and implemented – disregarding the failure of earlier attempts to do this, which were thwarted by the unfounded fears of certain countries with problems of political instability.

How many languages...

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas

University of Roskilde, Department of Languages and Culture, Denmark

If biocide and linguistic genocide continue at today's pace, our great great great greatgrandchildren have very little choice in terms of languages – if the planet exists in the first place, there will not be many languages left.

Most of the world's languages are spoken by relatively few people: the median number of speakers is probably around 5-6 000. More than 95% of the world's spoken languages have fewer than 1 million native users; half of all the languages have fewer than 10 000. A quarter of the world's spoken languages and most of the sign languages have fewer than 1 000 users. More than 80% of the world's languages are endemic: they exist in one country only.

Europe is poor on linguistic diversity. If we discount recent immigrants, we have only some 3% of the world's languages. Two countries, Papua New Guinea with over 850 oral languages and Indonesia with around 670, have together a quarter of the world's oral languages. Another seven countries have more than 200 languages each and these 9 countries together have more than half of the world's oral (and probably also sign) languages. Adding the next 13 countries, those with more than 100 languages each shows that 22 megadiversity countries have around 75% of the world's languages – and not one of them is in Europe (if Russia is not counted as a European country). For information about the world's languages, see **The Ethnologue** <<http://www.sil.org/ethnologue/>>.

Languages are today being murdered faster than ever before in human history. Optimistic realistic prognoses claim that only half of today's oral languages will exist around 2100; pessimistic but realistic accounts say that 90% of the world's oral languages may be dead or moribund (no longer learned by children) in hundred years' time. The media and the educational systems are the most important direct agents in language murder today. Behind them are the real culprits, the global economic, military and political systems. The Western world is, together with elites in the rest of the world, to a large extent responsible.

Why should linguistic and cultural diversity be maintained? There are many epistemological, philosophical, linguistic, cultural, psychological and sociological arguments for maintaining linguistic diversity. I would like to discuss an

additional, less well known argument, the diversity argument (which has to do with the relationship between linguistic diversity and biodiversity).

Linguistic diversity is disappearing relatively much faster than biodiversity. Linguistic and cultural diversity on the one hand and biodiversity on the other hand are correlated – where one type is high, the other one is too, and vice versa. New research suggests that there is mounting evidence for the hypothesis that it might not only be a correlational relationship. It may also be causal: the two types of diversities seem to mutually enforce and support each other. If the long-lasting coevolution which people have had with their environments since time immemorial is abruptly disrupted, without nature (and people) getting enough time to adjust and adapt, we can expect a catastrophe. If we during the next 100 years murder 50-90% of the linguistic (and thereby mostly also the cultural) diversity which is our treasury for historically developed knowledge, including knowledge about some of the most vulnerable and most biologically diverse environments in the world, we are also seriously undermining our chances of life on earth. For connections between biodiversity and linguistic and cultural diversity, see Terralingua's website <<http://www.terralingua.org>>.

I and others have examined the present provisions in human rights law to assess to what extent they contain linguistic human rights, especially in education, rights which are necessary to counteract the threat towards linguistic diversity. The result of the examination is that the most basic linguistic human rights for maintenance of linguistic diversity, specifically the right to mother tongue medium education, are not protected. Language rights, especially linguistic human rights in education, get a much poorer treatment in human rights law than other human characteristics; languages disappear after the prefaces, or Articles about language have many more modifications and opt-outs than other clauses (see my website for references).

What happens today in the education of both powerless 'majorities' and, especially, indigenous peoples and minorities (i.e. those who are the main guardians of the world's linguistic diversity), violates human rights and contributes to linguistic genocide, as this concept has been defined in the United Nations' documents (see below). Learning new languages should be additive rather than subtractive. It should add to people's linguistic repertoires; new languages, including *lingua francas*, should not be learned at the cost of the diverse mother tongues but in addition to them. In this sense, the 'killer languages', and English as the foremost among them, are serious threats towards the linguistic diversity of the world. Linguistic human rights are more needed than ever. What these rights, among other things, need to ensure is that there is no forced language shift. Linguistically, formal education is today often 'forcibly transferring children of the group to another group' (one of the definitions of

genocide in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article II(e)). There are some (but very few) recent positive developments. Educational and other language policies reflect linguicism (see below).

If there is time, I would also like to mention the creativity argument for maintaining linguistic diversity. It is one aspect of the economics of high levels of multilingualism and important for educational language planning, especially in those parts of the world which are poor on linguistic diversity. High-level English language skills will soon be like basic literacy hundred years ago or computer literacy today in the West, a necessary requirement, a self-evident prerequisite for any jobs, but not sufficient for anything. When a large part of a country's or region's or the world's population have a high competence in English, theories on supply and demand predict that the price goes down. High levels of multilingualism are necessary. The educational systems in the West do not prepare majority group youngsters for this well enough, and try to prevent minority youngsters from reaching high levels of multilingualism. Suffice it to say that in 100 years time we multilinguals may place people who are voluntary English monolinguals (i.e. people who chose to stay monolingual) in pathological museums. Creativity, cognitive flexibility and divergent thinking (all enhanced by high levels of multilingualism) are necessary prerequisites for innovation, and investments follow innovation. In the future information society those countries will do well where multilingualism, even among people with little or no formal education, is normal, accepted and widespread, countries with rich linguistic and cultural diversity, with various types of knowledges and ideas imbedded. Transforming this linguistic and cultural capital into economic capital presupposes that the multilinguals have access to developing and refining their languages and knowledges, something that may be perfectly possible in the future chips-driven thoroughly satellite-wired society. The West will be the loser. Empire fights back.

Definitions; genocide, linguistic genocide, linguicism:

(LINGUISTIC) GENOCIDE:

Article II(e), *'forcibly transferring children of the group to another group'*;

Article II(b), *'causing serious bodily **or mental** harm to members of the group'* (from 1948 UN International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (E794, 1948; emphasis added).

Article III(1) *'Prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group'* (from the final Draft of the Convention; voted down in the UN General Assembly in 1948). Even when the states members of the UN in 1948 voted down the Article about linguistic and cultural genocide, there was wide agreement about how to define the phenomena. My claim: 'Prohibition' can be direct or indirect. If there are no minority teachers in the pre-school/school and if the minority language is not used as the main medium of education, the use of the language is indirectly prohibited in daily intercourse/in schools, i.e. it is a question of linguistic genocide.

LINGUIICISM, an analogous concept to *racism, sexism, classism* etc. (and coarticulating with these): "ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988, 13).

For more detail, see Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove (2000). **Linguistic genocide in education – or worldwide diversity and human rights?** Mahwah, NJ & London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; 818 pages. My website <<http://babel.ruc.dk/~tovesku/>> has an outline and a list of contents.

Appendices

Appendix 1: **List of participants / Liste des participants**

Principality of Andorra / Principauté d'Andorre

Maria Teresa Cairat Vila, Directrice générale de l'Ecole d'Andorre, Ministère de l'Education

Austria / Autriche

Gunther Abuja, Zentrum für Schulentwicklung, Bereich III: Fremdsprachen, Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur

Christos Alexandris, ao. u. bev. Botschafter, Griechische Botschaft

Erika Amsz, Bundesministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten

Peter Bierbaumer, Institut für Anglistik der Karl-Franzens-Universität

Gary Cash, Eurostar Automobilwerk GesmbH

Gintė Bernadeta Damusis, Ambassador, Botschaft der Republik Litauen

Anton Dobart, Sektionschef, Leiter der Sektion I, Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur

Rudolf Ebner, Abteilungsvorstand, Magistrat Graz, Abt. Finanzwirtschaft

Marie-Claude Farizon, Institut français, Gemaltes Haus/Herzoghof

Ulla Hauke, Internationaler Dienst der Parlamentsdirektion der Republik Österreich

Dagmar Heindler, Zentrum für Schulentwicklung/Abt.III: Fremdsprachen, Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur

Monika Hoekerek-Fritz, Vorstudienlehrgang der Wiener Universitäten

Waltraud Klasnic, Landeshauptmann

Hans-J. Krumm, Institut für Germanistik der Universität Wien, Deutsch als Fremdsprache

Ambros Lackner, Vizepräsident, Kurator, Wifi Steiermark

Francois Laquière, Conseiller culturel, Ambassade de France en Autriche

Horst Lattinger, Präsident, Landesschulrat für Steiermark

Edith Matzer, Zentrum für Schulentwicklung des BMBWK, Abt. III: Fremdsprachen

Emo Meister

Siegfried Nagl, Stadtrat der Landeshauptstadt Graz

David Newby, Institut für Anglistik, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz

Herbert Paierl, Steiermärkische Landesregierung

Hermine Penz, Institut für Anglistik, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz

Peter Piffl-Percevic, Amt der steiermärkischen Landesregierung

Johann Popelak, Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur

Martina Reisinger, Montanuniversität Leoben, Institut für Bildungsförderung und Sport

Karl Rieder, Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes in Wien, FB Humanwissenschaften

Enrique Rodriguez-Moura

Johanna Schicker, Bundesrätin, Mitglied der Österreichischen Delegation zum Europarat

Ilse Schmid, Stv. Vorsitzende des Österreichischen Verbandes der Elternvereine

Ursula Stachl-Peier, Institut für Dolmetscherausbildung

Alfred Stingl, Bürgermeister der Landeshauptstadt Graz

Heinz Tichy, Ministerialrat, BMWVK

Barbara Wedrac, Montanuniversität Leoben, Institut für Bildungsförderung und Sport

Anneliese Wolfartsberger, BM für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur

Andrew Wood, Institut für Dolmetscherausbildung, Karl-Franzens-Universität

Belgium / Belgique

Mireille Cheval, Attachée linguistique, Centre Européen de Langue Française, Alliance Française de Bruxelles

Manja Klemencic, Director, ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe

Alain Mouchoux, General Secretary, European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)

Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie et Herzégovine

Claude Kieffer, Office of the High Representative, HRCC

Bulgaria / Bulgarie

Todor Popov, Clinical Centre, Allergology

Canada

Réjean Auger, Directeur du Laboratoire d'analyse de données et de formation en mesure et évaluation, Université de Québec

Denise Lussier, Directrice des programmes d'études de premier cycle, Département d'éducation en langues secondes, Université McGill

Croatia / Croatie

Mladen Dolenc, Senior Advisor, Department for International Co-operation,
Ministry of Education and Sports

Cyprus / Chypre

George Papadopoulos, Assistant to the Director of State Institutes for Further
Education (Foreign Language Training), Ministry of Education and Culture

Czech Republic / République tchèque

Pavel Cink, Director, Department of International Relations and European
Integration, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic

Denmark / Danemark

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, University of Roskilde, Department of Languages and
Culture

Estonia / Estonie

Suliko Liiv, Head of the Department of Germanic-Romance Languages, Tallinn
University of Educational Sciences

France

Bernard Mis, Chargé de mission, Ministère des Affaires étrangères - DGCID,
Direction de la coopération culturelle et du français

Joseph Poth, Directeur de la Division Langues, Unesco

Geneviève Zarate

Germany / Allemagne

Klaus Eichner, Oberstudiendirektor, Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder

Nikky Keilholz-Rühle, Leiterin der Abteilung Spracharbeit Ausland, Goethe Institut, Zentralverwaltung

Herta Müller

Greece / Grèce

Niovi Trifona-Antonopoulou, School for Modern Greek, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Hungary / Hongrie

Gábor Boldizsár, Conseiller général d'administration, Département des affaires européennes et des relations internationales, Ministère de l'Education

Iceland / Islande

María Gunnlaugsdóttir, Head of Section, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

Latvia / Lettonie

Baiba Sermulina, Project Co-ordinator, Academic Programme Agency

Liechtenstein

Guido Wolfinger, Amtsvorstand, Schulamt des Fürstentums Liechtenstein

Lithuania / Lituanie

Loreta Zadeikaitė, Head of the Division of Lower and Upper Secondary Education, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania

Luxembourg

André Wengler, Chargé de mission auprès du SCRIPT (Service de coordination de la recherche et de l'innovation pédagogiques et technologiques), Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle et des Sports

Malta / Malte

Frank Gatt, Inspector for French, Director, French Resource Centre, c/o Gian Frangisk Abela Junior College Complex, Msida

Netherlands / Pays-Bas

Nicki Bos, European Cultural Foundation

Frans Lander, Special Delegate for International Policy, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

Norway / Norvège

Heike Speitz, Telemark Educational Research

Aanund Tveita, Head of Section, The Network Norway Council

Poland / Pologne

Krystyna Kowalczyk, Inspecteur principal au ministère de l'Education, Ministère de l'Education Nationale, Département de la formation continue des enseignants

Romania / Roumanie

Dan Ion Nasta, Directeur de recherche en didactique des langues vivantes, Institut des Sciences de l'Education

Slovak Republic / République slovaque

Danica Bakossová, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic

Slovenia / Slovénie

Zdravka Godunc, Counsellor to the Government, Ministry of Education and Sport

Spain / Espagne

Pedro Pérez Prieto, Subdirección General de Cooperación Internacional, M^o Educación y Cultura

Sweden / Suède

Ingela Nyman, Director of Education, National Agency for Education/Skolverket

Christoph Röcklinsberg, Linköpings University, Department of Language and Culture

Switzerland / Suisse

Abdeljalil Akkari, Maître-assistant, Département des sciences de l'éducation, Section française, Université de Fribourg

Gabriela Fuchs, Conférence suisse des directeurs cantonaux de l'instruction publique - EDK/CDIP - Section Affaires Internationales

Aline Gohard-Radenkovic, Professeur associé et directrice, Centre d'enseignement et de recherche, Unité Français Langue Etrangère, Université de Fribourg

Rolf Schärer

**“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” /
“L'ex-République yougoslave de Macédoine”**

Ekaterina Babamova, Head of Department of English, Faculty of Philology, Ss Cyril and Methodius University

Emilija Stavridis, Senior Adviser, Department for International Co-operation, Ministry of Education

United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni

Roy Cross, Deputy Director ELT Group, The British Council

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia / République fédérale de Yougoslavie

Ranko Bugarski, Professor of English and General Linguistics, Faculty of Philology / University of Belgrade

**Permanent Representations of member states
to the Council of Europe /
Représentations Permanentes des Etats membres auprès du Conseil
de l'Europe**

Ulrich Hack, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of **Austria** to the Council of Europe

Jan Svoboda, Représentant Permanent Adjoint de la **République tchèque** auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Piia Pumm, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of **Estonia** to the Council of Europe

Jacques Warin, Ambassadeur, Représentant Permanent de la **France**, auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Johann-Adolf Cohausz, Permanent Representation of **Germany** to the Council of Europe

Pietro Ercole Ago, Ambassadeur, Représentant Permanent de l'**Italie**, auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Solveiga Silkalna, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of **Latvia** to the Council of Europe

Victor Grech, Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of **Malta** to the Council of Europe

Iuliana Gorea-Gostin, Représentant Permanent de la **Moldavie** auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

W.-Karel Hoogendoorn, Représentant Permanent Adjoint du **Royaume des Pays-Bas** auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Knut Paus, Chargé d'affaires a.i. , Permanent Representative of **Norway** to the Council of Europe

Ilona Marczyk, Permanent Representation of **Poland**, to the Council of Europe

Paula Silva, Représentant Permanent Adjoint, Représentation Permanente du **Portugal** auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Andrei Magheru, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of **Romania** to the Council of Europe

Andrey V. Vdovine, Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire, Représentant Permanent de la **Fédération de Russie**, auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Juraj Kubla, Deputy to the Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of the **Slovak Republic** to the Council of Europe

Håkan Wilkens, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of **Sweden** to the Council of Europe

Stephan Winkler, Adjoint au Représentant Permanent de la **Suisse** auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

John Auld Webster, Permanent Representation of the **United Kingdom** to the Council of Europe

Council of Europe Secretariat

Private Office of the Secretary General / Cabinet du Secrétaire Général

Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General, Council of Europe

Verena Taylor, Council of Europe

Inauguration of the new premises of the European Centre for Modern Languages

**Directorate General of Political Affairs /
Direction Générale des Affaires Politiques**

Klaus Schumann, Directeur général, Direction Générale des Affaires Politiques,
Conseil de l'Europe

**Directorate General IV - Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and
Sport / Direction Générale IV - Education, Culture et Patrimoine, Jeunesse
et Sport**

Gabriele Mazza, Directeur délégué à Education, Direction Générale IV:
Education, Culture et Patrimoine, Jeunesse et Sport

**European Centre for Modern Languages /
Centre européen pour les langues vivantes**

Michel Lefranc,
Executive Director / Directeur exécutif

Josef Huber,
Deputy Executive Director / Head of Programmes /
Directeur exécutif adjoint / Responsable des programmes

Michael Armstrong,
Administrator / Administrateur

Appendix 2:
**Programme of the official inauguration
of the new premises of the ECML**

FRIDAY, 17 November 2000	
10.00–12.00	Guided tour : Graz – UNESCO World Cultural Heritage
14.00-15.00	Press conference with representatives of the ECML, Council of Europe, Austrian Authorities
15.00-16.00	Guided tour of the new premises; photo exhibition
16.00-18.00	Official inauguration ceremony : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe – Waltraud Klasnic, Representative of the Province of Styria – Alfred Stingl, Mayor of the City of Graz – Herta Müller, Writer, keynote speaker – Dagmar Heindler, Chair of the Governing Board of the ECML <i>Musical Programme : University of Music - Graz</i>
18.30	Reception of the City of Graz, City Hall
SATURDAY, 18 November 2000	
9.00-9.35	DEBATE Keynote speech: <i>In which languages will our children and grandchildren live ? Languages : their use and their roles in society</i> Moderation : Rolf Schärer (Switzerland) Podium : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ranko Bugarski (Sociologist, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), – Gary Cash (Senior Manager, Eurostar Automobilwerk GesbH, Graz/USA), – Manja Klemencic (ESIB, Slovenia), – Alain Mouchoux (ETUCE, France), – Herta Müller (Writer, Germany/Romania), – Todor Popov (Researcher in Medicine, Bulgaria), – Josef Poth (Former Director-UNESCO, France), – Tove Skuttnab-Kangas (Linguist, Denmark)
9.35-9.45	Break
9.45-11.15	Discussion groups
11.15-11.45	Break
11.45-13.15	Plenary discussion
13.45-15.15	Reception
15.30	Cultural Programme : Schloss Seggau : Wine tasting and dinner

Saturday 18 November 2000

A Saturday morning of debate

Keynote speech:

“In which languages will our children and grandchildren live?
Languages: their use and their roles in society”

Moderation and key expert: Rolf Schärer (Switzerland)

Arrival of the participants (8h00 – 8h45)

Introduction (9h00 – 9h10)

Welcome (Michel Lefranc)

Presentation of the programme (Josef Huber)

Keynote speech (9h10 – 9h35)

Rolf Schärer will address major aspects of the topic to provide impulses for the subsequent discussion groups.

Break (10 min)

Discussion groups (9h45 – 11h15)

Four or five discussion groups will be set up along language parameters for an animated discussion and exchange of ideas. The chairs will be asked to collect the three most striking ideas/ questions, which will then be submitted to the guests at the Round Table.

Break (30 min, Hotel/Hôtel Weitzer)

Round table (11h45 – 13h15)

Moderation: Rolf Schärer, Josef Huber

Guests:

- Ranko Bugarski (sociologist, University of Belgrade, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)
- Gary Cash (senior manager, Graz/USA)
- Manja Klemencic (ESIB, Slovenia)
- Alain Mouchoux (ETUCE, France)
- Herta Müller (writer, Germany/Romania)
- Todor Popov (researcher in Medicine, Bulgaria)
- Joseph Poth (former director, Unesco, France)
- Tove Skuttnab-Kangas (linguist, Denmark)

The guests from different walks of life will be asked to react to the presented (groups of) statements, some of which may be directed to particular guests and not to others; there will be three rounds of reactions and the audience will be given the opportunity to comment. For background information, the guests have provided a 2-3 page contribution for the pre-conference documentation.

Beyond Saturday morning

The results of the discussion groups and the round table shall be put onto the ECML website to animate a moderated discussion forum which shall be maintained throughout 2001, the European Year of Languages.

Appendix 3: **Biographies (alphabetical order)**

Ranko Bugarski, PhD, Professor of English and General Linguistics, University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Teaching, research and publication in English, general and applied linguistics, sociolinguistics. Twelve books and many articles in international journals. Past President and current Vice President, Societas Linguistica Europaea; past Vice President, Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée.

Gary W. Cash is the Managing Director of Eurostar and Jeep Grand Cherokee / Mercedes M-Class Manufacturing Operations; he has been living in Austria since October 1993. He studied Engineering Administration at the University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, USA and has since then been working in different positions in several countries. He is married and has two children.

Manja Klemencic is 26 years graduate in International Management from Slovenia. She has been working since January 1999 as Secretary General of ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe, based in Brussels, Belgium. ESIB represents, through its 41 members from 32 countries, interests of more than 8 million students at a European level. As a student, Manja Klemencic has worked as a co-ordinator of a debate network and trainer of formal debate in countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Caucasus.

Alain Mouchoux was born on 28 October 1938. After working as a teacher, he became a National Education Inspector in France. He has held trade union office both in France and internationally. He has also served as an administrator in the OFAJ (Franco-German Youth Office), and as Chairman of the French-speaking Trade Union Committee on Education and Training. He is President of the French aid organisation, *Solidarité Laïque*. From 1993 to 2000, he was Secretary General of the ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee for Education).

Herta Müller, writer, born in 1953 in Nitzkydorf, in the German-speaking Banat region of Romania. Following German studies she worked as a translator in an engineering works. For refusing to work for the secret services, she lost her job and was banned from publishing any more books in Romania. In 1987 she moved to Germany. She now lives in Berlin. She has been awarded numerous literary prizes including the Kleist Prize (1994) and the European Union's Aristeion Prize (1999). Her most recent publications are the novel "Heute wär ich mir lieber nicht begegnet" (Rowohlt, 1996) and the collection "Im Haarknoten wohnt eine Dame" (Rowohlt, 2000).

Todor A. Popov is a medical doctor, associate professor at the Medical University in Sofia. He is a specialist in Internal Diseases, Allergology and Clinical Immunology. He has also had some administrative experience as head of the 'International Relations' Department of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science. Presently, he is mostly focussed on teaching and research in his academic setting. As member of the Executive Committee of the European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology, he is responsible for carrying out the educational and research policies of this organisation in the region of South-Eastern Europe.

Joseph Poth, former director of the Language Division, Education Department, Unesco, France.

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, linguist, University of Roskilde, Department of Languages and Culture. Fields of interest: linguistic human rights, minority education, language and power, links between biodiversity and linguistic diversity, bilingualism, language policy, integration, ethnicity, racisms (including linguicism), gender issues. Her website: <<http://babel.ruc.dk/~tovesku/>>.