



European Economic and Social Committee

SOC/229
New framework strategy for
multilingualism

Brussels, 26 October 2006

OPINION

of the

European Economic and Social Committee

on the

**Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European
Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

– A new framework strategy for multilingualism

COM(2005) 596 final

On 22 November 2005 the Commission decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 262 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A new framework strategy for multilingualism
COM(005) 596 final.

The Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 6 September 2006. The rapporteur was Ms Le Nouail Marlière.

In view of the renewal of the Committee's term of office, the Plenary Assembly decided to vote on this opinion at its October plenary session and appointed Ms Le Nouail Marlière as rapporteur-general under Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure.

At its 430th plenary session, held on 26 October 2006, the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 105 votes to one, with five abstentions.

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1. **Conclusions**

1.1 The EESC recommends that:

- the Commission should give *the Member States* precise indications about the *links which could be established and additional measures which could be taken in the national plans*, stressing that multilingualism or plurilingualism can help to promote cultural and political integration, and foster understanding and social inclusion;
- in order to achieve long-term results, *the language training on offer* needs to be coordinated at EU level, with the potential pool of language skills spanning a wide range of languages;
- *multilingualism in the professional, cultural, political, scientific and social fields should be developed and promoted*;
- *the experts involved in this work should be drawn not just from the ranks of specialists in social and scientific disciplines but should also include linguists, interpreters, translators, teachers and other language professionals*;
- greater account be taken of today's young and older adult generation in developing this action, via *life-long learning* and, when the Commission reaches the programming stage, through *their cultural rights*;

- the Commission not only draws on university research but also on the work carried out by the networks of *associations working* in this area, and that it supports the grassroots initiatives taken within the civil society network.

2. **Introduction: Summary of the Commission's communication**

In its communication, the Commission defines a new framework strategy for multilingualism and reaffirms its own commitment to multilingualism. This document is described as "the first communication in the history of the Commission to tackle this subject". The communication examines various aspects of European policies on the subject and proposes a number of specific actions.

The Commission calls upon the Member States to play their role and to promote the teaching, learning and use of languages. The Commission launches the event by bringing into operation a new institutional consultation portal, available in 20 languages.

In this initial policy document dealing with the subject of multilingualism, the Commission sets out a new framework strategy, backed up by proposals for specific actions in the social and economic fields and in the field of relations with citizens. The Commission is pursuing the following three objectives: to encourage language learning and to promote linguistic diversity in society; to promote a healthy multilingual economy; and to give citizens access to European Union legislation, procedures and information in their own languages. The Commission draws attention to the fact that the Barcelona European Council in 2002 highlighted the need to promote the teaching of at least two foreign languages. In the light of this call, the Commission asks the Member States to take the following steps: to adopt action plans for promoting multilingualism; to improve the training of language teachers; to mobilise the necessary resources for enabling pupils to learn foreign languages from the earliest possible age; and to step up the teaching of subjects through the medium of a foreign language. The Commission draws attention to the fact that European enterprises need people skilled in the use of the languages of the EU and those of its trading partners throughout the world and points out that language-related sectors of the economy are undergoing rapid development in most European countries; in the light of these considerations, the Commission proposes a number of actions designed to strengthen the multilingual aspect of the EU economy. With regard to its own multilingual communication policy, the Commission plans to strengthen the multilingual nature of its many Internet sites and publications by setting up an internal network with responsibility for ensuring that linguistic practices are applied in a coherent way by the Commission's departments. The Commission also proposes the establishment of a High Level Group on Multilingualism, made up of independent experts, to help it analyse the progress made by the Member States. It makes two further proposals: to hold a ministerial conference in the near future on the subject of Multilingualism to enable the Member States to take stock of the progress which they have made in this field; and to

prepare a new communication setting out a comprehensive approach to multilingualism in the European Union.¹

3. General comments

- 3.1 The EESC endorses the Commission's initiative and notes that this strategic framework is described as a new departure and the communication is defined as the first policy document on the subject of multilingualism. In this context, the many references made to the former strategic framework² fall short of what is required to provide a clear appraisal of this strategy. In the EESC's view, it would be helpful if the Commission could summarise the contribution which the new framework strategy is expected to make in terms of added value and summarise its comparative impact. Will an impact assessment be made, along the lines defined in the inter-institutional agreement between the European Commission and the EESC³ and as part of the drive to bring about legislative simplification and to simplify governance? The EESC suggests that, by itself, the communication might fail to give the proposed measures the prominence required by the Member States to enable them to approve the programmes in question which are, furthermore, not binding. Although the framework strategy has been requested by the Council, harmonisation is required in order to make optimal use of the resources which may be allocated by both the Member States and the EU itself. Such harmonisation can only take place if there is a clear awareness of the measures which have already been carried out by the Member States and the EU.
- 3.2 The Commission "reaffirms [its] commitment"; the EESC therefore notes that this commitment has already been expressed on an earlier occasion. The EESC notes that the state of play as regards internal practice at the Commission with regard to multilingualism does not give rise to unanimous satisfaction both within the Commission's departments and in its relations with outside bodies.
- 3.3 The EESC notes the discrepancy and lack of equal treatment between the Institutions, on the one hand, and European civil society in all its component forms (autonomous social dialogue and civil dialogue), on the other hand. All the memos, studies and documents which are both useful and necessary for drawing up European legislation and holding consultations and discussions on this legislation are produced and are available to a disproportionate extent in English. Likewise an increasing number of internal meetings organised by the Commission are held in English. In order to work as a Commission expert one therefore has to speak English, and the same applies in the case of persons wishing to represent civil society in

¹ Bulletin EU 11-2005 Education and culture (7/13).

² COM(2002) 72/ COM(2003) 449/ COM(2005) 24 of 2.2.2005/2005/29/EC/ COM(2005) 356/ COM(2005) 229 and 465.

³ Protocol of cooperation between the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee (November 2005), CESE 1391/2005.

Brussels. Furthermore, many of the statistical and qualitative studies referred to in this opinion are available only in English⁴.

- 3.4 A number of documents are not always available in the language of the institutional rapporteurs or the players who are usually consulted, which shows that the agreement on the use of the three pivot working languages of the EU institutions is far from being respected, whether at an institutional or at an informal level; the upshot is that several interlocutors can easily find themselves excluded from an increasing number of debates. It is therefore not surprising to discover in the various statistical studies presented that the sample of persons questioned prefer to pursue their studies in English, since this is *de facto* the language which is likely to be increasingly used when taking key decisions. This is exactly the line of reasoning which has led several generations of parents and governments to focus on the learning of English as the preferred language and it has also brought about the present situation.
- 3.5 Furthermore, the annex to the present communication demonstrates that the "foreign" language most commonly used in the EU is not the one spoken by the largest mother tongue group. The most commonly used language in the EU is said to be spoken (and the term "said to be" is employed because Eurostat does not specify the definition used with regard to the level of knowledge or vocabulary deemed to be required before people can be regarded as speakers of the language in question) by 47% of the sample of persons questioned, even though it is apparently the mother tongue of only 13% of them.
- 3.6 In the EESC's view, this situation represents a *de facto* impediment to the right of citizens and their representatives, i.e. the European Parliament and the consultative committees (EESC and CoR), for direct and indirect democratic participation in drawing up the rules that apply to them. In reality, when rapporteurs within the institutions, who as representatives of civil society are asked to give their views as members of democratic, legal bodies and institutions, they are frequently only able to grasp what the Commission is proposing at the price of undue effort and guess-work. How can the fact that citizens have, at no point, had proper access to information, be overlooked? This situation is particularly illogical in the case of a communication on this subject. Finding a way out of this collective, intellectual and cultural predicament and this economic dependence at the expense of essential good participation requires resources and a political will.

The EESC is therefore pleased to note that the Commission intends to mitigate these problems by setting up a more effective portal; this portal does however concern multilingualism, rather than all its communication. The objectives presented by the Commission in the chapter entitled "Multilingualism in the Commission's relations with citizens" are not very clear when it comes to institutional communication: the communication might just appear to be an extension of Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate. Communicating in 20 official

⁴ See footnotes [2], [12], [17], [19], [24], [25], [26], [30], [31], [32], [37] in the communication under review COM(2005) 596.

languages does not change the nature of institutional communication which takes place retrospectively and is based on decisions in which citizens do not participate; such communication does not, in itself, strengthen public involvement.

- 3.7 Many observers have pointed out that the first pages of the institutional portals or websites may contain documents which appear to be multilingual but, on further consultation, turn out to be available only in English.
- 3.8 The EESC stresses that all languages are rightfully part of the cultural human heritage and observes that imposing the use of English for technical reasons rather than as a cultural asset could be detrimental to it if, despite being widely used, it is poorly mastered. The EESC has taken its cue from this observation to set out, further below, specific comments on language status and use.
- 3.9 The EESC notes that there is an imbalance in the restrained approach based on the economic aspects of multilingualism (consumers, the information society, professions and industries, and the knowledge-based economy) and that it could be skewed more towards human, social, sociological, cultural and political considerations. If it is the case, as mentioned during the press conference which launched this Commission communication, that what lies at the heart of the difference between human beings and other animals is language and the exchanges between human beings which it gives rise to, then the communication should duly bear in mind that human exchanges are not solely geared to trade or the defence of existing territory and its resources. The communication would thus benefit from referring to the work carried out by UNESCO in this field, with a view to putting forward positive recommendations⁵.
- 3.10 The EESC endorses the link between the Lisbon strategy, its implementation, the European employment strategy and the new framework strategy but proposes that the Communication define in greater detail the concrete measures which have to be taken (with more coordination between the Commission's internal departments and the DGs responsible for employment, culture etc.). The EESC asks the Commission to give the Member States precise indications about the links which could be established and the additional measures which could be taken, stressing that multilingualism or plurilingualism can help to promote EU political and cultural integration and foster understanding and social inclusion. A sectoral impact assessment should cover the number and quality of jobs that are preserved or created and the real impact on wages which is expected to occur.

The EESC supports the call for Member States to "establish national plans to give structure,

⁵ UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted on 2 November 2001; Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (10 December 2005) – these Conventions underline the need for linguistic diversity and diversity as regards means of expression with a view to establishing diversity and cultural pluralism as inalienable, universal rights which are inseparable and interdependent. The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, which was adopted in Barcelona at the World Conference on Linguistic Rights held between 6 and 8 June 1996, and which was signed by 66 national and international NGOs and legal networks, must also be mentioned.

coherence and direction to actions to promote multilingualism..." but observes that, in order to achieve long-term results, this must be coordinated at EU level, in order to draw on a potentially much wider pool of language skills.

Within the framework of the strategy aiming to create "the most competitive knowledge-based [European] economy in the world", it would seem appropriate – in order to ensure that the European Union does not become constrained by its language barriers - to think along the lines of the full range of languages present within the European Union and ensure that this figure exceeds the number of languages currently available and used within the internal market.

The right of immigrants to learn the language of their host country should be exercised in tandem with the right to maintain their own language and culture⁶. The European Union should consider these languages as additional human resources in its quest towards "global competitiveness". A number of enterprises have already contemplated these issues, but workers, trade unions and targeted consumer associations should be involved as well. Advantage should also be taken of support provided by local authorities which have introduced concrete measures, such as reception services aimed at promoting "integration" and made available in the languages most commonly spoken by recent immigrants.

- 3.11 Another area of the economy which should be further developed in the communication is that of the needs of workers and ways of motivating them in the pursuit of their respective occupations and in consultative bodies, such as the European Works Councils. It is in the EESC's view regrettable that the communication is able to envisage advocating harmonised programmes which fail to take account of these particular needs. Such a wide-ranging communication should propose areas which would provide enterprises and workers with both the prospects and the means of becoming the principal agents for building the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, whilst fully respecting the remit of social dialogue and fundamental rights⁷.
- 3.12 The EESC recognises that multilingualism makes the EU special⁸. Nonetheless, Europe is not the only continent, country or political entity where a large number of different languages are spoken.

⁶ CoR opinion CdR 33/2006 adopted at its 65th plenary session, 14 June 2006, rapporteur: Mr Seamus Murray, point 2.7.

⁷ Article 21 of The *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union* stipulates that any discrimination based on the grounds of language shall be prohibited and Article 22 stipulates that the Union shall respect cultural, religious and *linguistic* diversity. There are already court cases involving instances at the workplace where these rights, though guaranteed by national law, have not been respected (General electric medical systems GEMS, judgment of the Versailles Appeal Court, 2 March 2006, France).

⁸ Point IV.2 of the communication.

4. Specific comments

4.1 The debates and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe⁹ must not hide other issues, such as:

- a) The status of languages: Languages may be classified as: official, working, Community, minority, dominant, languages used in various forms of exchange – cultural, scientific or commercial, institutional and diplomatic – languages in everyday use and languages for professional use (in the fields of health, education, construction, industry, fashion industry and arts, etc.). Respect for linguistic diversity, which the European Union recommends and defends, dictates that different and balanced solutions need to be proposed in order to respond to these situations and needs: a single proposal which treated the language issue solely in terms of education/jobs, or of "language use – new products market – internal market" would miss the objective of ensuring that every EU citizen is able to speak two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue, and paradoxically could reduce the number of languages that are effectively mastered or spoken within the European cultural area. The EESC recommends that all professional, cultural, political and scientific use within its area be allowed and encouraged, and it supports the large number of grassroots initiatives that have originated within civil society. Accepting and supporting written or oral communication in the original language extends the public area of freedoms, without however necessarily requiring recourse to translation or interpretation. The issue of the number of languages in use is thus not contingent on language translation, interpretation or teaching costs.
- b) The degree of social power which is conveyed by the ability to use a given language or languages. Access to, and the distribution of, multilingual-learning resources determines to a certain extent social exclusion or inclusion and material or cultural poverty since language knowledge provides access to professional, social, and particularly, cultural and solidarity networks. The fact of belonging to a network also contributes towards greater individual autonomy, while constituting an aspect of integration in contemporary society. Some population groups will be excluded if an effort is not made, as of now, to extend multilingualism at all the relevant levels of society, including vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.
- c) Democracy: The EESC supports the recommendation to ensure that people are able to speak in or have a working knowledge of two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue; however, how many people today have a realistic chance to achieve this in their lifetime? Even for the professional, political and economic "elite" of the current adult generation, this is a difficult objective to attain in the framework of the 2004-2006 action plan Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity and the Culture 2007

⁹ *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* of 5 November 1992, which was ratified by 21 members of the CoE, 13 of which are EU Member States.

programme (2007-2013)¹⁰, both for EU and national institutions, but if the ambitious target of "every citizen" is maintained, the EESC would stress the extent of the challenge involved. We know, for example, which foreign language has gained the upper hand at the earliest level of foreign language learning. The rare or less common languages¹¹ are known by a smaller number of people because, in these cases, language-learning starts at a later stage in school or university courses. The EESC thus supports the recommendation that people be given the opportunity to learn a foreign language from the earliest possible age, provided that the choice of languages on offer is devised as part of an overall framework, which should be the main issue to be addressed by the communication. What is at stake here is the future of the EU and the kind of society which we pass on to future generations.

- d) The survival of languages as Europe's linguistic heritage: Wanting to see a large number of people learn a second or third language is not the same as wanting to ensure the survival of a large number of European languages in Europe or the world. Whilst these two goals do not clash, they nonetheless require two separate approaches and means of implementation. In this particular context, the Commission's initiative in respect of standardisation, aimed at making the use of languages compatible with the new information and communication technologies, should take account of the danger of linguistic impoverishment if the efforts are concentrated disproportionately on this particular field¹². The EESC recommends that the experts involved in this work should be drawn not just from the ranks of specialists in social and scientific disciplines but should also include linguists, interpreters, translators, teachers and other language professionals. The abovementioned UNESCO declarations and conventions clearly demonstrate, among other things, that too few languages are already used on the internet, bearing in mind the global linguistic heritage, and further demonstrate that this limited use of languages has an effect both on the quality and the number of languages which still exist.
- e) Conservation of the use of minority and/or regional (or even local) languages in Europe should not be evaluated in terms of teaching-cost criteria. Not only – as supported by a large body of literature - does language teaching at a very young age foster an intellectual flexibility which develops cognitive capabilities that are useful for future learning, but it also serves as a bridge to learning sister or cousin languages. Thus, it is not enough simply to preserve the linguistic heritage by teaching a language at a very early age or by rehabilitating it in both private and public spheres; in order to survive, a language must be spoken and it needs to have the right conditions so that it can thrive in the public and social domain: it serves no purpose to learn languages at primary school if one has to give

10 COM(2004) 469.

11 "Minority languages"

12 Les processus de modernisation dans l'enseignement des langues pour adultes (*The process of modernisation in adult language teaching*), thesis of Ms Judith Barna, Charles de Gaulle University, Lille, France, 2005.

them up in the secondary years because no course is provided¹³. Economic dynamics can be taken into account in education systems if the necessary links to other languages are developed and if the learning of a minority or regional language can be harnessed in the later school years as support towards a second language. To this end, the study of the links between languages is as vital as the number of languages spoken¹⁴.

- f) Proximity: This term does not only imply making official and institutional texts accessible via the internet; it also means enabling EU citizens living in countries which are geographically in close proximity to get to know each other and to acquire a better understanding of their respective mother tongues and to engage in exchanges, since language is not just a channel of communication but also a representation of the world. Language shares this characteristic with other media, such as painting, music, the graphic arts, mime and dance, and the plastic arts. These same citizens must be enabled to learn and communicate in languages belonging to different linguistic groups, whilst respecting the cultures and identities which make up the European identity (and underlie European values). The EESC stresses the positive role of exchanges and twinning schemes mentioned by the Committee of the Regions¹⁵ and stresses that, irrespective of the strategy involved, when it comes to learning languages, demand is just as necessary as supply. The motivation for learning languages should therefore be considered from other standpoints than solely that of how useful a language is (in terms of the economy and employment).
- g) Needs: Our needs in terms of cohesion and European identity do not involve just commercial aspects or identity aspects. There are also real needs for mutual understanding, which are felt by people who may or may not share the same geographical, social and cultural backgrounds. No impact assessment has been carried out to take stock of the way in which different aspects have been taken into account, including even minor aspects which may turn out to be important in the long term. The time frame in respect of supply and demand in the field of language training can be measured in terms of years and generations.

From a more general standpoint, the commitment expressed in the communication lacks a reference time frame: are we talking about a commitment in the past, the short-term future, the medium term or vis-à-vis future generations?

The same considerations apply in the case of the following aspects: humanitarian and cultural aspects; asylum and immigration; the needs and the role of local authorities in this field; and

13 Opinion of the CESR of Aquitaine-France, adopted at its plenary session on 14 December 2005, *Langues et cultures d'Aquitaine*, rapporteur: Mr Sèrgi Javaloyes.

14 Council conclusions on the European Indicator of Language Competence (OJ C172 of 25.7.2006).

15 Abovementioned opinion, CdR 33/2006.

socio-economic aspects. The socio-economic partners (UNICE, the European Centre of Public Enterprise (ECPE/CEEP) and the ETUC), together with NGOs working in the field of human, social and cultural rights and universities and administrations, should all be consulted on an equal footing, thereby developing a strategy which, far from excluding them, is decided jointly with them and by them. This would guarantee the wide-ranging consensus that is required for these ambitious initiatives to succeed. The successful implementation of the Council's "1 + 2" strategy¹⁶ requires resources that transcend the institutional framework. The largest possible number of EU citizens must be able to participate and feel personally concerned.

The EESC approves the action framework to promote the teaching and learning of languages and observes that its success will depend on the support of those most immediately concerned with the issue, i.e. the teachers themselves and the students.

Accordingly, before embarking on new initiatives, the Commission and the Council should consolidate the strategy by ensuring that the general public and young people are more fully aware of the specific reasons which led them to choose the path of multilingualism, rather than promoting the use of a single common language, whether living or dead, modern or artificial.

The main reasons can be summed up as follows:

- Encouraging the use and propagation of a hegemonic living language gives rise to unfair economic advantages for the main country of origin and can undermine cultural rights and the world heritage.
- The cost of learning and disseminating a scientifically and artificially designed European language such as Esperanto would be less (learning time and converting the current language¹⁷) than that for a living language but, to date, the political and cultural conditions in the European Union have not been met¹⁸.

16 Mother tongue and two foreign languages, Barcelona European Council, 15-16 March 2002, Presidency Conclusions, Part I, point 43.

17 L'enseignement des langues étrangères comme politique publique (*Teaching foreign languages as public policy*), François Grin, 2005.

18 Grin, 2005, cf. abovementioned work, footnotes 59 and 84 "it has been forgotten that a large number of states had, at the time of the League of Nations, supported the introduction of Esperanto as an international language, and that UNESCO, at its plenary sessions in 1984 and 1985 adopted resolutions in favour of Esperanto. At the time (September 1922), France, which had banned teaching and advertising [Esperanto] on the grounds that it was a dangerous instrument of internationalism and that it would diminish the strength of the French language on the international scene" had rejected the document. Moreover, Mr Umberto Eco, who held the European Chair at the Collège de France, Paris, delivered his inaugural lecture on "the quest for a perfect language in the history of European culture" in 1992.

The EESC would like to point out that the so-called dead ancient languages have gradually ceased to be taught. Nonetheless, over and above the issue of researching which *lingua franca* (common language) would potentially best respond to the requirements of contemporary European society, these languages provided the foundation for easier mutual understanding between Europeans, given that a large number of European languages – Indo-European and Finno-Ugric – have their roots in these languages; furthermore, knowledge of these ancient languages is a help when learning other languages.

- The compromise scenario which involves *increasing the number of languages that are spoken and used* in the European geographical and political area needs to be consolidated by *increasing the number of people speaking them*.

In view of the above, the EESC recommends that future measures take greater account of today's young and older adult generation, via life-long learning and, when the Commission reaches the programming stage, through their cultural rights.

Young people should be informed about and motivated to seek jobs involving multilingual or plurilingual 21st century media¹⁹. More should be done to promote professions which require an in-depth knowledge of languages (linguists, interpreters, translators and teachers): one sure step towards achieving this is to recognise their social role and to involve the current practitioners.

As the Commission itself fully recognises, its recommendation to start learning languages at an early age requires resources and properly trained staff, and that parents support the diversified choice on offer.

The EESC also recognises the positive role of the family in promoting language learning at an early age and stresses the cultural support of "mixed" culture families, such as when the parents come from different countries. These families generally have a culture of openness and tolerance extending over several generations, which has been confirmed by several European and Canadian studies.

- h) With regard to the chapter dealing with translators and interpreters, the EESC draws attention to the fact that needs do not arise solely in the institutional, professional and economic fields; the views of other stakeholders must also be heard. Social and cultural requirements deserve to be taken into account, both as basic human rights and as essential components of the internal market.

By way of example, everywhere one goes, one hears that translation and interpreting requirements cannot be met either because of a shortage of interpreters and translators or for financial reasons. In the light of this situation, the EESC proposes that consideration be given to the responsibilities of both the Member States and the EU in respect to the following aspects: provision of training for an adequate number of interpreters and translators; language diversification; the cost of providing training and paying salaries and costs linked to statutes. The EESC would refer, once again, to all the various aspects which it raised earlier in this

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There are several definitions of plurilingualism and multilingualism. For some, plurilingualism defines the personal skill of being able to speak several languages, whereas multilingualism refers to the social environment of a given geographical area where several languages are in use (European Conference on Plurilingualism, 2005). For others, the inverse is true (Grin, 2005). The Commission considers that multilingualism refers to both individual skills and the community.

document and would also point out that this sector is not the only one to suffer from a shortage of trained professionals; the demographic deficit cannot be blamed for all these shortages. The balance between supply and demand in this segment of the labour market has undoubtedly not been adequately foreseen, even though the European venture and successive EU enlargements, together with the issue of globalisation, would have provided scope for learning lessons from the past.

To sum up, the EESC recommends that the Member States make an active contribution towards shaping the future in this context and it endorses the views expressed by the Commission on this point.

- 4.2 Lastly, the EESC urges the Commission to collate the information which it has or could have at its disposal as regards follow-up to the earlier language policies pursued by the Member States in order to be in a position to make an appraisal of the actions to which it is committing the Member States.
- 4.3 The EESC acknowledges the efforts made by the Commission and endorses its intentionally innovatory approach. It supports linguistic diversity in its role as an instrument for promoting cultural, social and political diversity and pluralism, and is aware of the counter-productive risk that the use of a limited number of languages will be further institutionalised. The EESC expects that, in connection with the next communication announced on this subject, a broader consultation of civil society players will be carried out.
- 4.4 The EESC endorses the Commission's initiative to increase support for university research on higher education under the 7th research framework programme and suggests drawing not only on the university research but also on the work carried out by the networks of associations that are involved in the area²⁰.

In the Appendix to this opinion, the EESC sets out the proceedings of the European Conference on Plurilingualism, which was held in November 2005 by civil society organisations²¹ in conjunction with the Forum of Cultural Institutes²². The conference drew up a European Charter on Plurilingualism, which was posted on the ASEDIFRES website for debate. This association intends to present the charter to European parliamentary and

20 For example: Linguamón – Casa de les Llengües (House of Languages), an organisation with the aim of protecting languages in danger of extinction, linguamon@linguamon.cat; Babel, which is an organisation that brings together translators and interpreters working within international and regional social forums on a voluntary basis; ASEDIFRES www.europe-avenir.com, the association which co-organised the European Conference on Plurilingualism held in November 2005.

21 Details of participants, results and records of proceedings are posted on the website mentioned in footnote 20.

22 The forum comprises the following members: Alliance française, Swedish Institute, Italian Language and Culture Centre, University of London Institute in Paris, Camoes Institute, Cervantes Institute, Finnish Institute, Goethe Institute, Hungarian Institute and Dutch Institute <http://www.forumdeslangues.net>.

institutional representatives. In its role of "bridge between civil society and institutions", the EESC supports and encourages such initiatives, as they constitute identified good practice.

Brussels, 26 October 2006.

The President
of the
European Economic and Social Committee

The Secretary-General
of the
European Economic and Social Committee

Mr Dimitris Dimitriadis

Mr Patrick Venturini

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N.B.: Appendix overleaf

APPENDIX

GE21
Génération
Europe 21
APFUE

**European Conference on Plurilingualism
Paris – 24/25 November 2005
Draft European Charter on Plurilingualism**

ASEDIFRES AEP
<http://assisesplurilinguisme.affinitiz.com/>
email: assisesplurilinguisme@neuf.fr
DGLFLF

This text, drawn up in the light of the proceedings at the European Conference on Plurilingualism, is designed to be presented, under the petition procedure, to the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, in the form of a Draft European Charter on Plurilingualism. Initially, it will be translated into at least six languages, namely: German, Spanish, Italian, English, Polish and Romanian. It will then be posted on the website of the Observatoire Européen du Plurilinguisme for a period of six months where it will be the subject of a discussion forum.

Preamble

In the text below we agree to use the term "plurilingualism" to mean the use of several languages by an individual and the term "multilingualism" to mean the coexistence of several languages within a given social group. A plurilingual country or society is one which comprises a majority of individuals who are able to express themselves, at various levels of competence, in several languages.

Why do we need plurilingualism?

Plurilingualism is a vital tool for promoting democratic citizenship and is also the most desirable and the most effective means of communication in public debates since it enshrines the values of tolerance and acceptance of differences and minorities.

Plurilingualism is inseparable from the concept of active European citizenship and, taken together with cultural diversity, it is a basic component of the European identity.

Language continues to offer the pre-eminent means of access to all cultures. Translation, for its part, can never offer an exhaustive or perfect means of access and cannot replace direct recourse to forms of expression in the original language.

Because language enshrines culture, it provides access to different visions of the world.

Plurilingual skills therefore underlie mutual comprehension. Rather than having recourse to the language of a third party in exchanges between two people having different mother tongues, the degree of understanding – both from the point of view of conveying information and with regard to communicating on an emotional level – will always be better when one of the two speakers uses the language of the other. Genuine mutual understanding can only be based on the pooling of cultural languages.

Utilitarian objectives must not determine the fate of languages. Having one overriding vision of globalisation tends to lead to a situation in which one single language monopolises communication. We must therefore underline the superiority of a plurilingual approach, based on the use of cultural languages.

Biodiversity is becoming a matter of major concern. Against the current background of an ambiguous system of globalisation, should not cultural and linguistic diversity be regarded in a similar light to biodiversity?

Are these two issues not inseparable?

The principles of plurilingualism have been set out in various declarations, manifestos and national and international instruments having varying degrees of legal scope; the present declaration and action programme wish to make reference to a number of these measures, in particular:

At the level of international organisations:

- The statutes of these organisations: Council of Europe, the United Nations, UNESCO, WHO, IOC
- Resolutions in favour of bilingual education adopted at the 18th and 19th General Conferences of UNESCO (1974-1976)
- The establishment by the UNESCO Executive Board, in October 1998, of an advisory committee on plurilingualism and plurilingual education
- A resolution adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on 6 November 1999, on the implementation of a global language policy based on plurilingualism
- The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted on 2 November 2001 and, in particular, Article 6 of the Declaration and the guidelines for an action plan for implementing this Declaration (Articles 5, 6, 7, 10 and 13 of the Declaration)
- The Resolution on Multilingualism adopted at the UN's 54th General Assembly

- The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages adopted by the Council of Europe on 24 June 1992; this Charter calls upon states and regional authorities to give regional language communities and minority language communities the requisite resources to ensure their continued existence, as linguistic groups, whilst looking after the interests, of national languages, which ensure homogenous communication throughout the respective states.

At EU level:

- The Motion adopted by the Council of Ministers of Education of EU-12 in 1984 recommending "a practical knowledge of two languages in addition to a person's mother tongue"
- The Motion adopted by the Assembly of European Regions (AER), in Madrid on 2 June 1989, proposing that a further provision be added to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, setting out the right of everyone to have a bilingual education
- The Council Resolution of 31 March 1995 on improving and diversifying language teaching, aimed at ensuring that, as a general rule, all pupils are able to learn at least two other EU languages in addition to their mother tongue
- The European Commission White Paper, published in 1995, on Teaching and learning – towards the learning society
- The Conclusions of the European Council of 12 June 1995 on linguistic diversity and plurilingualism in the European Union
- The Council Resolution of 16 December 1997 on the early teaching of European Union languages
- The Declaration and programme on education for democratic citizenship (CM (99) 76), Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, 7 May 1999
- Decision No 1934/2000/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 July 2000 on: 2001 – European Year of Languages
- The Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 23-24 March 2000, which include foreign languages in a European framework for defining basic skills
- Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, proclaimed at the EU Summit in Nice, which states that the European Union will respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity
- The EU Council document (programme of work) No 5680/01 of 14 February 2001, setting out "the concrete future objectives of education and training systems" (p. 14)
- The Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 on the promotion of linguistic diversity and language-learning with a view to achieving the objectives of the European Year of Languages 2001.

Furthermore, despite the fact that no explicit reference is made to linguistic rights, it is clear that the cultural rights covered by a large number of national and international legal instruments also involve freedom of movement of ideas, expressed in words and images, and that these instruments therefore postulate the existence of linguistic diversity.

Plurilingualism and European identities

Europe has a rich geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity. This diversity does not, however, preclude intensive exchanges and the emergence of a European conscience, rooted in a long, rich and turbulent history, frequently involving conflict.

As languages are inseparable from culture, European identity is based both on culture and language.

The existence of Europe is therefore inconceivable without respect for the languages used on this continent. Europe cannot be confined within the strict limits of a simplistic economic interpretation of human behaviour.

Proposals

At institutional level:

Plurilingualism should be an integral part of the affirmation of a political Europe.

In respect of the operation of the European Institutions:

Opting for plurilingualism implies that clear choices have to be made with regard to the use of working languages. We cannot simply content ourselves with affirming the principles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights which promote plurilingualism. The question of pivot languages has to be resolved in a way which is both fully operational and is in line with the options which characterise European identity in all its diversity. The option which appears to best satisfy this condition is to use the following languages as pivot languages: French, German, English, Italian or Spanish and a Slav language, Polish. This choice should be backed up by other measures designed to consolidate the use of other national and regional languages.

It is therefore proposed that all legal documents relating to procedures such as invitations to tender and contracts should be drawn up in (a) all the official languages, (b) the working languages or (c) a language specifically linked to the subject in question.

Although the field of culture must continue to be a national responsibility, the EU should carry out a large number of actions designed to provide a stimulus and to capitalise on the cultural wealth of the EU, which is seen as its greatest asset.

The principle of plurilingualism must be enshrined in the instruments of accession to the EU.

The obligation for new Member States to submit their accession dossiers solely in English should be dropped. Once a language has been selected for the presentation of these dossiers, the same language should continue to be used throughout the accession procedure.

Governments must set an example.

A code of good conduct for members of government and senior civil servants must be adopted in respect of the use of languages at international events.

Plurilingualism – a means of getting to know and recognise other people

Language is the main means of getting to know people and, as such, it should not be reduced to the level of an impersonal code. Language may address objective facts but it does, above all, provide a channel for interpersonal communication in respect of matters relating to the memory, values, sensitivities, feelings and behaviour, i.e. everything which goes together to make relations between people original, profound and cultural. Furthermore, languages express concepts for which there are not always equivalent terms in other languages and which cannot be translated without redesigning the intellectual and cultural reference frameworks. Language diversity ensure the richness and pluralism of representations of ideas.

Using a single language as a vehicle for international communications, on the other hand, in no way ensures that people can understand and get to know each other.

Proposals

It is proposed that studies and research be pursued at European level on the subjects of comparative semantics (cf. *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies*, the result of a research programme conducted by CNRS, France) - including mathematical concepts - and cultural variations in forms of speech.

It is also proposed that language-learning be linked to personal experience, going beyond the strictly functional aspects of language learning; teachers should be trained in the use of this approach. Experiences designed to "stimulate language awareness" should be organised with a view to enabling students to distance themselves from own mother tongue by being confronted with several living languages; the use of this approach places students in a situation which is more conducive to the learning of other languages.

The establishment of international sections at high schools makes it possible to compare the points of view of speakers using different languages, thereby facilitating mutual enrichment.

Vigorous efforts should be made to expand cooperation between schools in different countries; such cooperation should be based on teaching projects involving language activities which exploit the new technologies and the internet to the full.

Plurilingualism and freedom

Plurilingualism represents a freedom since the right to fully master one's own mother tongue is a fundamental freedom.

Language provides the only means of understanding the world. Knowledge of one or more foreign languages enables individuals to broaden their field of vision to a considerable extent and provides a means of bringing about a better understanding of contemporary societies and problems.

Proposals

One possible course of action which could be undertaken in this field is to change the position of language in respect of the scale of values and understanding of the role of education. Mastery of one's own mother tongue and, where appropriate, two further mother tongues, is a fundamental freedom. In the case of both children and adults, language is inextricably linked to thought and communication; it represents empowerment and the initial stage of freedom.

The knowledge of several languages – irrespective of the degree of competence involved – represents an additional freedom in a world in which people are free to travel.

This message must be conveyed by language teachers and a special effort must be made to convince the media of the fundamental role played by language in maintaining a healthy social fabric. It is essential to underline the importance of language at all levels.

Plurilingualism and Europe as a political entity

Although Europe as a commercial entity can accept the use of a single vehicular language, Europe as a political entity cannot exist if the peoples of Europe do not have a knowledge and understanding of each other. The only way in which this knowledge and mutual understanding can develop is through the medium of languages of culture.

Proposals

Europe cannot be represented by just one single language, all the more so if such a language is that of the world's only superpower which, whilst maintaining friendly relations with Europe is nonetheless part of Europe. Furthermore, the language in question is a minority language in Europe. Plurilingualism offers a means of underlining the permanence of national and sub-national entities against a background of globalisation. This point needs to be asserted unambiguously by all political leaders in both their words and their deeds.

In the case of national officials whose work requires them to address various international bodies, a high level of language skill should be demanded, in accordance with the criteria dictated by European plurilingualism.

In the case of European civil servants, there is a need to strengthen their language skills, too, in order to ensure strict application of the principal of pivot languages and to preserve other national languages. Notices of job vacancies should no longer include the requirement "English native speaker or equivalent only", as this is an infringement of the principle of equality.

Plurilingualism and citizenship

Languages, which provide a means of getting to know other people, also provide a means of gaining recognition as a citizen. Citizenship postulates an awareness of the need to share common values and a joint destiny. Active European citizenship is inconceivable if it does not involve a multiplication and intensification of exchanges between peoples and individuals, the main channel for these exchanges being language.

The degree of involvement of citizens in the preparation of EU policies depends on their ability to participate in the public debate and the political debate in Europe. A prerequisite for such an ability is "plurilingual skills, i.e. the ability to interact effectively and in an appropriate way with other citizens of Europe".

The desire to master languages, be they one's own mother tongue or the languages of others, may become a powerful lever for promoting accession to the EU and closer links with the EU if the languages in question become common languages.

Proposals

It is proposed that education for citizenship be broadened to include inter-cultural dimensions, and therefore also plurilingualism, as a basic source of civic awareness, even though linguistic unity has traditionally provided the basis for national unity and citizenship.

What does this all mean in concrete terms?

We should re-examine school teaching programmes in respect of history, geography, "foreign" languages as well as languages which serve as a medium for teaching and civic education, in order to ensure that the inter-cultural dimension, which is peculiar to Europe, is adequately taken into account. There is also a need to encourage teachers to engage in inter-disciplinary work in order to show students how the culture which they acquire is regarded in foreign countries where other languages are spoken.

There is a need to support cultural events comprising inter-cultural elements.

Steps should be taken to promote an increased supply of inter-cultural television programmes, along the lines of Arte or Euronews. Growing awareness of plurilingualism is likely to promote increased demand for such programmes.

The history of European nations and cultures should be written about and taught as an integral part of European history.

There is a general need to enhance people's knowledge of European languages and foreign languages, in line with the objectives of the Lisbon process.

Plurilingualism and international relations

Plurilingualism can change people's perception of international relations. In view of the fact that plurilingualism intrinsically implies an openness toward others, it has the effect of replacing the psychology of confrontation and a clash of interests by a spirit of dialogue with a view to constructing a shared future.

The way in which public opinion and governments behave is determined by the way in which the parties concerned view the world. For this reason, plurilingualism, which implies inter-cultural awareness, may bring an influence to bear on the course of international relations. For this reason, too, the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue - a major political, economic and cultural project - should also be backed up by action to promote plurilingualism.

Plurilingualism is one of the ways of tackling the "clash of civilisations" and the various forms of political, cultural and economic hegemony.

The use of a single language as a vehicle for international communication does not, in any way, ensure mutual understanding.

On the contrary, such a language becomes a language of domination.

Proposals

The use of several languages should be promoted in all international bodies and at all international political, economic, cultural and scientific events and meetings. The procedures involved should be defined and adjusted in the light of the respective contexts.

The tendency to employ a single language as a means of international communication and as a working language in the international institutions should be discontinued, irrespective of the circumstances involved.

Plurilingualism offers a realistic alternative, provided that an adequate level of linguistic competence has been reached. On a day-to-day basis, the ability to take part in multilingual exchanges (each of the speakers opting to speak in one of the languages understood by the other participants) and the linguistic skills of international officials should be properly indicated (by means of directories or other

means of identification, such as badges) and these skills should be given a higher profile in professional terms.

Plurilingualism and scientific development

As the level of scientific development varies according to the different cultural and linguistic fields involved, scientific research cannot restrict itself to the use of one single language as a means of communication and publication. Promoting understanding and interaction between various areas of research belonging to different cultural spheres represents a source of progress and requires plurilingualism. Plurilingualism is therefore a key element of scientific innovation.

Proposals

Research workers are very often polyglots and their linguistic ability is rarely limited to the mastery of just one foreign language. At scientific meetings, wherever possible, the principle of passive understanding should be applied, i.e. speakers may use the language in which they have the greatest fluency, provided that the language in question is understood by the other parties involved.

The production of scientific research in the author's own mother tongue and the translation of such work into several languages should be encouraged.

There is a need to establish, at European level, a referencing structure for scientific work designed to correct the linguistic bias brought about by the current methods.

A differentiated approach to plurilingualism

At the stage of development currently reached by mankind, we can state that all languages, in their capacity as testimonies of human experience, should be preserved.

Whilst it is clear that all languages cannot fulfil the same role in the fields of science, commerce and international relations, all languages do, nonetheless, deserve to be studied, used and taught as they provide an accessible intellectual and cultural reference system. Whilst affirming the value of inter-cultural awareness and plurilingualism, it should be pointed out that regional and minority languages must not be protected and encouraged at the expense of official languages and the need to learn them (Reference: the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages).

Proposals

All languages cannot have the same status in respect of the statutes and working procedures of the international institutions. In practice, the necessary balance must be found in order to enable languages spoken by only a small number of people at national and international level to be fully recognised.

Plurilingualism and economic efficiency

As plurilingualism provides the basis for getting to know other people, it is, by definition, conducive to the development of trade in a peaceful world.

Plurilingualism, which ensures economic progress, also offers fundamental advantages to the individual by virtue of the access to cultural and intellectual spheres which it provides.

Once people have a mastery of their own mother tongue, plurilingualism gives them a sense of personal achievement which is, in turn, conducive to the social and economic success of every individual.

Proposals

In the case of monolingual individuals and enterprises, learning a second language clearly represents a considerable step forward. It is equally clear that learning a second, third or even additional language represents an ever greater step forward. Although it has been scientifically proven that the level of investment in learning languages is tending to decrease, taking account also of the progress which has been made in methods of language teaching, the investment made in learning languages has been shown to be profitable.

It has been profitable for workers and heads of enterprises and also for enterprises themselves in cases where they work to a large extent with other countries or have offices in these countries.

The economic future will clearly be marked by plurilingualism.

The change which is expected to take place concerns the behaviour of enterprises. The need for proper communication provides an important lever.

Economic reality is, however, the decisive factor. There is a need for specific research to be carried out into the economic impact of the action taken by enterprises in connection with the use of the languages. Enterprises which flourish whilst pursuing a successful plurilingual approach should be cited as examples.

The establishment of development plans for language-learning in enterprises should be encouraged by means of tax deductions.

There is a need to explain more effectively to families that, whilst learning English constitutes an essential minimum requirement, it by no means guarantees that their children will have successful careers. It also needs to be made clear to families that learning living languages, including the cultural dimension of these languages, is not just a luxury but is something which brings readily understandable benefits.

Plurilingualism and the right to work

Every worker has the right to work using the language of the country in which he or she is living. This is a matter of respect for the individual; the use of foreign languages cannot be imposed upon people. It is also a matter of safety at the workplace since a proper understanding of orders, instructions and information on how to use equipment is a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring safety. This criterion makes it necessary to use the language which is most readily spoken. It is, in the final analysis, a question of economic efficiency.

Proposals

Imposing the use of a foreign language as the working language at the workplace constitutes discrimination between workers on grounds of their linguistic skills since being fully conversant with the language in question is not essential to the task or role to be carried out.

Although there is a need to introduce legislation in this field, laws by themselves are not sufficient.

Trade organisations, trade unions and enterprises need to be very attentive to this matter. Adopting a solution based on obliging all employees to learn just one foreign language must be rejected.

This matter now represents an aspect of the social dialogue.

Plurilingualism and education

From nursery school to university, and also including lifelong learning, the educational system must have the task of developing plurilingual education and conveying the skills required for independent learning in order to enable people to engage in lifelong learning of new languages. This task is, by no means, designed to promote the use of a single foreign language as a minimal channel of communication, having a commercial rather than a cultural objective.

Proposals

European educational systems record very differing results in the field of language learning. Appraisals should be carried out to establish best practice in this field which should provide a model for other systems with a view to providing students with real skills in all aspects of language use.

In this field, as in others, diversity and exchange are plus factors which promote efficiency and ensure progress.

The key requirements are as follows:

- to reaffirm – and to accept the consequences of this reaffirmation – that learning to read and write, provides the foundation stone for the learning of all other subjects; to stress the

benefits of learning living languages at an early age with a view to helping students master their own mother tongues and other school disciplines (e.g. scientific disciplines);

- to draw the consequences from the recognition of the fact that an educational system which fails to provide students with effective teaching of living languages at an early age – and also does not enable them to engage in life-long learning of languages – does not provide students with equal opportunities;
- to be able to cope with learning two mother tongues;
- to make arrangements for learning two living languages, in addition to one's mother tongue, at an early age;
- to avoid starting the process of teaching living languages by teaching students the most widely-used foreign language. Whilst no obligation can be imposed, step should be taken to encourage students to learn, at an early age, a language other than English;
- to introduce innovative teaching methods; examples which come to mind are methods such as those used in respect of Galanet (mutual understanding between speakers of Romance languages), E-tandem (tandem learning of the language of a student's study partner through the intermediary of the Internet), "Describe to me the colours of the world" (language learning programme based on making comparisons between cultures and languages);
- to make it possible for students to learn two or more languages as part of the same teaching programme; a number of different convincing experiments have already been carried out in this field (such as: measures to stimulate students' awareness of languages and the establishment of European sections and international sections in high schools);
- to provide students with the possibility of learning several languages in parallel, or one after the other, by making use of flexible courses, having a modular structure and tailored to individual requirements; in such courses students organise their own language-learning, on the basis of self-assessment. By way of example, a student who has reached the requisite level (Level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages, depending on the programmes involved) in a given language before completing his or her school education could either simply maintain their knowledge by following a limited timetable of language learning or, alternatively, make use of their skills to pursue courses taught in a foreign language, as it is the case in the European sections of high schools. Students could thus take advantage of free periods in order to learn other languages. The requisite conditions are already in place: the Council of Europe's portfolio of languages enables students to pursue courses based on self-assessment. Furthermore, assessment of language skills in the third-year class, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the (French) Higher Education Language Certificate (Certificat de Langues de l'Enseignement Supérieur) all permit a modular system of language-learning geared to the level which students have attained. The French plan for updating the teaching of languages (Decree of 22 August 2005, drawn up in accordance with the basic programme law on the future of school education in France) has the same aim in view;
- to increase the number of opportunities for language and cultural exchanges from junior school level upwards. These opportunities may take the form of systematic twinning and

may embrace more than two schools (cf. the proposed law presented by the Children's Parliament on 11 May 2002 and included in the French Senate Commission Report No 63 (2003-2004));

- to capitalise on multi-level identities and mother tongues other than French in the French educational system;
- to reactivate the provisions governing mother tongues and culture teaching, whilst enabling children having other mother tongues and cultures to follow the courses in question, in accordance with the guidelines pursued since 2001;
- to support cultural associations representing migrants with a view to promoting the provision of teaching in their mother tongue in the host country and to facilitating integration by teaching the national language of the country concerned;
- to provide incentives for teachers to engage in international mobility by introducing the requisite administrative measures;
- to provide teachers with better training in plurilingualism and multiculturalism. If we set the target of having students learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue, a lower level of qualification cannot be prescribed in the case of teachers. Teacher training is of course the main prerequisite for providing an adequate supply of language teaching. Incentive should be provided in this context;
- to ensure, via academic commissions for the teaching of foreign languages, set up by the basic law on education, that a consistent supply is made available, providing continuity between the levels of teaching;
- to promote the establishment of a European plurilingual baccalaureate, a hallmark of excellence denoting a baccalaureate which meets the requirements of plurilingualism;
- to make widespread provision for the teaching of languages in higher education establishments and to organise real plurilingual training courses, whilst maintaining a balance between language skills;
- to ensure that Erasmus courses are indeed geared towards plurilingualism. The language used in Erasmus courses should be the language of the host country;
- to ensure that Erasmus students attain a level of proficiency in the language of the host country which enables them to properly follow courses provided in that language. This goal should be fulfilled mainly by improving facilities for receiving students in the host country;
- to carry out a scientific study to determine whether the use of Esperanto could help to facilitate the learning of living foreign languages;
- to develop a real culture of self-training and self-assessment.

Plurilingualism and the media

The media must facilitate the expression of a wide range of cultures – which are a source of richness for the world – rather than broadcasting low-cost, programmes reflecting a one-sided culture.

Furthermore, the media should take account of the key role played by language in personality development and the establishment of social contacts.

Proposals

The establishment of a Festival of Languages and Culture should be promoted.

Steps should be taken, if necessary by establishing quotas, to promote the broadcasting of original language versions of films on television.

The media should be made aware of the linguistic aspects of social and economic problems.
