

## WG6 Language Management report

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## 1. Introduction/goals

Due to the fact that in a European collaboration environment, the question of language(s) cannot be overlooked, the cEVU project devotes a special chapter to this particular issue. The central question is: if we assume there is a specific problem in e-learning with respect to language, what could be the support. However, given the specific focus on ICT resources, our analysis of the language problem needs to be at least twofold. Before coming to the possible added value offered by ICT resources, we are supposed to know how the language situation looks like from the point of view of international cooperation when we deal – just and only – within the so-called traditional university, i.e. without taking into consideration the actual use of ICT.

On the basis of previous research<sup>1</sup> and previous experiences, various partners from the EU collected the necessary data for a mapping of the actual situation, in view of realistic and efficient guidelines for cooperation frameworks in e-Learning. Needless to say that such guidelines may transcend the area of e-Learning and prove to be useful also in other teaching and learning environments.

Another initial warning is related with the complex linguistic and cultural map of the European Union, not at the least its academic landscape, i.e. its incredible complexity and heterogeneity, and the not predictable links between nations on the one hand and their universities on the other hand. An obvious consequence of this heterogeneity is that the possible planning of intercultural communication and the language policy as part of it on behalf of academic authorities is extremely erratic. Hence the very different treatment of many possible or real situations on the academic campus in Europe

## 2. General philosophy

In most cases where societies, their politicians, scholars and even everyday citizens deal with language problems, they refer to certain particular areas of the language issue which will be referred to as “language policy”. But other angles may be envisaged. One among them being the idea of “language management”. Since it is not difficult to imagine that in international environments the management will inevitably meet the “language problem”, we prefer to fully recognize it as part of management as such, instead of discovering its central role afterwards only. Let us call it a proactive approach to the language issue.

By "language management", we refer to a new approach to languages<sup>2</sup> i.e. an approach distinct from "language policy" (where the use of national languages is accepted as an agreement between nations and their national language) as well as from "language planning" (see the journal **Language Planning** published by John Benjamins<sup>3</sup>). By language management in (international) (e-Learning) curricula we want to stress the need to embed the approach to language into the general management of curricula and international ventures on

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<sup>1</sup> Previous projects that touched this topic were the Virtue project and the Transcult project and more specifically the Euroliterature project. Information on these projects can be found on the EuroPACE website [www.europace.org](http://www.europace.org).

<sup>2</sup> José Lambert & Van den Branden Jef : "Cultural Issues Related to Transnational Open and Distance Learning in Universities". (BJET. Special Issue on Cultural Issues in New Technologies")

<sup>3</sup> John Benjamins, Language Problems and Language planning, edited by Probal Dasgupta and Humphrey Tonkin, electronic journal, ISSN: 0272-2690  
E-ISSN: 1569-9889

the basis of flexible and pragmatic agreements between the partners involved and on their traditions. Rather than adopting one of the extreme options, i.e. the use of a "lingua franca" on the one, or the "national language policy" on the other hand, we suggest to examine in a differentiated way how various partners can combine their skills for efficient interaction. It is assumed that e-Learning deserves to be treated with new principles, given among others to make use of new ICT-based linguistic resources such as combinations of written/oral communication or a better distinction between active and passive use of several languages.

Rather than introducing "language management" as a brand new or tabula rasa type concept, we are convinced that in actual situations many variants of traditional language policies are already in use on our campus and even beyond campus life, in international relations of all kinds.

### 3. Concrete approach

Given the specific focus on ICT-based intercultural communication, one of the first evidences was that in most universities the planning of intercultural communication/mobility does not really distinguish between ICT-based and other kinds of planning (which does not necessarily mean that ICT is not made use of) and secondly, that the ICT-component is not simply nonexistent, but hardly ever made explicit.

An additional initial observation is that hardly any university has an explicit agenda for the approach to language(s), whether within traditional or ICT-based environments.

This is why we first have been obliged to re-examine the question of language(s) in "traditional universities".

In order to get an overview of the approach traditional universities adopt towards language, the working group tried to map the situation in the institutions of the working group members. The idea was to first carry out the research as a small-scale operation, within specific institutions belonging to the cEVU network, involving at the same time institutions that had already cooperated within this area with the cEVU institutions. More specifically, a core group of institutions was selected, while preparing at the same time a larger group of partners along the principle of concentric circles. Taking into account the limited scope of this cEVU project the analysis could only be a qualitative analysis rather than a quantitative one. In the selection of target groups, our analysis scheme tried to take into consideration the cultural and linguistic traditions as well as those situations that were specific to particular disciplines. For example, medicine and engineering are subject to constraints that are very different from, say, the ones characteristic of physical education, ancient philology, modern languages or translation/interpreter training. In a similar way, the institutional traditions of countries and their universities were taken into consideration. For example, certain "big countries" had exchange traditions long before ERASMUS started up, whereas given countries are quite more peripheral in ERASMUS exchanges than others.

Hence the first questions applied to panoramic questions or issues such as:

- What are the dominant partners/partner countries/institutions for exchange?
- What are the official (theoretical) traditions in a given situation? And to what extent are such traditions operational on both the central and the local level (i.e. panoramic questions will be combined with microscopic questions)?
- What are the principles of language behavior and the explicit theoretical positions of:

- students participating in exchanges;
  - staff members;
  - administrative staff;
  - technical staff
- both in traditional exchange programs and in e-Learning based programs?
  - What kind of new trends can be observed at this very moment (the dynamics of the situation)? And how?

As a first step, the members of the working group looked for statistical data available at their universities. The central services of their universities were contacted to provide information on the exchange level of their students (in the framework of the Erasmus exchange program and others) and of their staff, including the administrative and technical staff. Foreign students do not only need to get in touch with their peers and professors, they will inevitably have some contact with the administration and technical staff at the host university, who might not be so fluent in foreign languages, especially because of the fact that the language domain that they need can be rather complicated and specific. (For example, imagine a Russian student who needs some information on the Greek social security system )

Official lists with statistics about exchange programs and the number of foreign students, are often established by the university administration on a yearly basis and are available at simple demand. Wherever possible, statistics were asked per faculty and department. We also tried to interview some key people in international services at the different institutions, such as the head of international university programs, the head of international relationships etc. For this purpose a specific questionnaire was developed. <sup>4</sup>

As a next step, the language policies (both explicit and implicit<sup>5</sup>) of the institutions and their relation with the policies of the country/countries involved were examined. Information brochures and other documentation towards foreign students (flyers, documentation maps, etc.) were studied. The confrontation and the difference between theory and practice proved to be especially interesting; so were the differences between traditional learning and e-learning. (Are there any new strategies with regard to e-learning, any new problems, new solutions, new trends, new rules?).

Differences between oral and written interaction, public and private interaction and differences between various departments and disciplines were studied where possible. On the basis of this panoramic description, a more detailed analysis of some well selected programs and curricula was made.

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<sup>4</sup> see Annex 1

<sup>5</sup> It is an important indication on the language awareness that certain universities have: (1) explicit statements about their language policy; and/or (2) organize debates on the issue; (3) with/without participation of their community. As far as 3<sup>o</sup> goes, there has been a debate in both Holland and Flanders on the matter since a public declaration by the Dutch Minister of Education, some 5 years ago. The fact that research is (not) undertaken is an additional barometer, the more since (certain) universities tend to claim that all their (important) decisions are research based, which is supposed to be a basic principle of the distinction between universities and Higher Education.

As a final step in the mapping process, a few in-depth interviews<sup>6</sup> were made, where the attitudes and motivation of various well-situated subjects were screened. The positions, principles and explanations that were given at institutional level were systematically confronted with the experiences of staff at different levels and particularly to the experiences of both local and foreign students. We tried to examine the language use during “the 24 hours of a student” questionnaire, studying at a foreign university: which language does he/she use for shopping, in which language does he/she order a drink in a bar, etc. ).<sup>7</sup> Members of the working group interviewed some of their students and invited their students to contact foreign/local students for some limited field work.

**The fore mentioned steps in the analysis are logical steps, but they have not been carried out by all the researchers in a chronological way. Some of the reports of the universities give a summary of their findings without distinguishing those 3 steps explicitly.**

## 4. Results and hypotheses

### Introduction

Before the real investigation started, the working group formulated some hypotheses about the possible outcomes of their work on the basis of their day-to-day experiences in their institutions.

One of the initial hypotheses was the following:

- Foreign students are more than likely screened upon arrival in terms of languages (“Which languages do you master?”) by the international services of the universities. However, this information is not being used by directors of programs / the university. They do not distinguish between the various kinds of students: they simply say which the language in a given course or program will be.
- In certain cases the directors and their staff have decided to be more open and to offer at least two languages (e.g. for exams and tests). Why exactly is this decision taken? Who decides? And how does a university come to the point of having different options without being aware of it? What’s the impact or the result of this approach?

In order to find statistical data on the students in the various institutions, the central administrative services were contacted and the websites of the various institutions were examined to find relevant information.

A few warnings:

- As we shall indicate further on, one of the misleading impressions is that “foreign students” (and staff) are necessarily linked with ERASMUS programmes. Not only shall we notice how very limited the ERASMUS delegations are in comparison with other groups of mobility students and staff, but it will also become clear that the very

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<sup>6</sup> Apparently the language issue is rather sensitive: in some institutions colleagues were very reluctant to cooperate, refusing interviews or refusing to fill out a questionnaire, which in itself is rather significant. We decided to change our approach and confront these colleagues with the results ( i.e. the fact that foreign students are (not) in trouble with the actual regulations) of a limited investigation.

<sup>7</sup> see Annex 2

linguistic position of ERASMUS students is not representative of the general picture, given the direct link with the EU promotion of languages and foreign language learning.

- The comparison between so-called minority languages and dominant languages is also misleading, since the “stronger” target languages tend to be more attractive, hence reduce the language barriers, whereas the so-called smaller languages, with their well-known linguistic flexibilities, may quite paradoxically strengthen the lingua franca options more than the so-called monolingual traditions (Germany, France, UK);
- The coincidence between universities and their language policy, on the one hand, and the so-called country or population is another delicate issue, since universities tend to be generally speaking more conservative than the European Union (would like them to be): buying a glass of beer in 4 languages in university towns may be easier than being treated in two/three languages by academic communities.
- It is an interesting point that many universities have changed their language behaviour/tradition in recent years in another way than the surrounding community (cf. Spain, Portugal, Flanders, where French has gradually disappeared from the academic campus, and where (the older generation in) society has still access to French; hence the conflict between the external/international image of societies and their universities on the one hand, and actual language policy on an everyday basis.

## 1. K.U.Leuven

### *a. The K.U.Leuven website*

On the K.U.Leuven website (<http://www.kuleuven.ac.be/studinfo>) information on local and foreign students is easily accessible. There are tables with the number of students per program and per year and an overview of the number of foreign students per country of origin. These figures show that students from 64 different foreign countries are studying in K.U.Leuven, however no information could be found about the concentration of foreign students per program. The examination of the statistical materials on the website lead to some further questions and hypotheses:

- Why do students choose to start or continue their studies at K.U.Leuven? What is their motivation? It could be imagined that the Dutch language could be a motivation for people coming from South Africa, Indonesia and maybe Denmark.
- What is the difference in demand/offer?
- One of the surprises is the complexity of student mobility. We are so familiar with the idea of mobility that we are convinced it is a European phenomenon. K.U. Leuven has however only 700 Erasmus students on a total of 3000 international students. A new trend could also be observed: the immigration of Asian students, a trend that is not restricted to Belgium but can be observed worldwide.

When examining the implications for the use of language policy/management, we can imagine that most people find the use of English (self-) evident (university level; visitor's

point of view), but that no real screening takes place. The hypothesis is that the university does not examine what the linguistic competence of incoming students are and does not try to make any use of these competences. All these students/countries/languages are probably only given one language option (maybe 2, 3?) irrespective of their ability and willingness to join other groups/options. One could imagine that the language competences of foreign students could be used in classes dealing with cultural matters in a broad sense, not just limited to the study of languages and literatures, but classes in which there is a direct contact with other languages and cultures (e.g. history, sociology, medicine, agriculture, engineering, law). Officially, K.U.Leuven is a monolingual Dutch speaking university. However, with the introduction of the Bachelor/Master structure, students will have the possibility to take a master in one country and continue somewhere else. This puts pressure on all European universities to have at least a multilingual approach.

When we have a look at the linguistic status of the K.U.Leuven website, we see that it presents itself as being a bilingual website in Dutch and English<sup>8</sup>. However, this bilingual status is not maintained everywhere: some parts of the website have not been translated into English and are consequently only available for Dutch speakers<sup>9</sup>.

Research done by Jan Derboven<sup>10</sup> shows that the theoretical construct of bilingualism is partly fake. The official position is in favour of bilingualism, but there is a big difference between practice and theory.

Helena Agarez, a doctoral student at K.U.Leuven is conducting research on language policies in websites of universities all over Europe. Her research is still ongoing and will probably continue after this project has ended. Some of her results can however be found in the annexes of this report.

### *b. The “employer’s approach”*

In interviews with staff members of the K.U.Leuven International Program<sup>11</sup> and in the VESTA reports<sup>12</sup> that were written by them, it became clear that they anticipated many components in our research by starting up their own research. This research was very systematic and useful, but had of course different and broader goals than our investigation, which focuses on the language issue and the social components of the integration of the foreign population on visit at K.U.L. The VESTA research reports provide us with the material and the conclusions of a systematic investigation about the experience of the foreign population and K.U.Leuven. Questions range from housing and/or money matters to the evaluation of social contact or teaching and scholarly evaluation. This investigation could be

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<sup>8</sup> In fact, K.U.Leuven has known - and this is nowhere explained anyway - is the gradual shift from a bilingual French/Dutch university, where English was not common at all, until the end of the 1960s, into a so-called Dutch/English bilingual university. This tradition of bilingualism may also explain why the new bilingual option (Dutch/English) is taken for granted, and simple, whereas the actual level of operational and high level bilingualism is not obvious at all, neither in terms of individual people nor in terms of documents and administration.

<sup>9</sup> In comparison with EU policy, having only a bilingual website at K.U. Leuven, in such a “multilingual society can be considered to be rather disappointing!

<sup>10</sup> Jan Derboven is a student from the Cultural Studies program

<sup>11</sup> Ms. Marie-Thérèse Deloddere, head of the Office for International Students and Scholars and Leen Wyndaele, staff member at the International Relations department of K.U.Leuven.

<sup>12</sup> Enquêtes VESTA. Verwerking – survey buitenlandse studenten. Vesta-rapport, Studentenbeleid, Bureau Internationaal Onthaal. K.U.Leuven, September 2000. Vol.1 – written and edited by Leen Wyndaele, Vol.2 – written and edited by Katrien Willekens.

called a quality assessment evaluation. We envisaged this component in our own cEVU research as the participation of the “employer”, i.e. the K.U.Leuven institution.

We also studied the brochures<sup>13</sup> that K.U.Leuven hands out to all visiting students and staff. These brochures can be often considered as the first official contact they have with K.U.Leuven. At present the total population of these visiting university members amounts to 3000. Almost 600 to 700 are linked with ERASMUS exchange programs, though many non-Erasmus people may still be EU members.

We approached this input under various perspectives:

1. as the self-perception and the effort at self-perception of K.U.Leuven as one of the partners involved in exchange;
2. as part also of the behavior to be analyzed: questions asked/not asked as well as their formulation (including their verbal/linguistic formulation) are part of our topic;
3. the insights, provided during the analysis offered by this partner group, were also taken seriously.<sup>14</sup>

Main insights as such:

- Most of these brochures and also most of the international courses are offered in English.
- Where languages other than English are used, additional information/justification is offered: this is the “exception” that requires further explanation. However, the fact that English is the “first choice” is not, generally speaking, under discussion, nor the unilateral shift from French into English as the lingua franca.
- No further importance is devoted here to the kind of English used / not used. It could be demonstrated that the English used in most cases is not simply unproblematic, though according to experts, it certainly is “good English”
- The analysis needs to reach a certain degree of specificity before the language questions are discussed. In that case the language question is limited to the question whether visiting students and staff are able to function well during their didactic and scholarly activities and how help can be provided in view of facilitating this efficiency.

From this point of view, we could conclude that language is not seen at all as unproblematic by the employer; and this is a viewpoint, which was confirmed by the interrogated interviewed students and staff.

Language is seen as an important and rather difficult component in the social, didactic and intellectual integration and measures are taken into consideration for (better) handling the problem. In other words, the university is aware of the problem, but the impact of this awareness is still very limited. There’s still a gap between practice and theory.

The fact that there is such a gap is not astonishing at all, on the contrary. The question is rather: where are there any gaps, and what kind of assumptions do they reveal?

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<sup>13</sup> These are standard information brochures available in 2003 for visiting students/scholars/professors/any staff: *Visiting Leuven, Travelling to Leuven, Studying in Leuven, International Study Programmes*

<sup>14</sup> One of our further tasks will be to deepen the questions and insights by developing (deepening / widening) also the confrontation. This means that the “users” will be invited to comment on some of the results of this research.

At K.U.Leuven, there are 60 programs in English; some courses are bilingual. In exceptional cases, 3 languages are used (Dutch, English and French). The general feeling is that this university has something like a bilingual status, which also shows in the website (Dutch/English).

In the enquiries about the actual integration of foreign students/staff, one of the main conclusions is that the general level of satisfaction of the visiting population at K.U.Leuven is (very) high. This is why it is rather striking that the component “social integration” (with professors, staff and the local community) is low and even surprisingly low. The language component is considered to be one of the “obstacles” in this integration process.

Now one of the most striking observations – on our side – is that the linguistic integration problem pops up and is almost everywhere and always reduced to the strictly didactic and academic component, i.e. to the “class situation”. Questions, answers or even comments about the possibility (and the difficulty) of improving integration by linguistic activities or efforts outside of class situations are missing almost everywhere, except in the case of explicit language training. In terms of language training jargon, one could say that there is no hint at all at the so-called “immersion” didactics, where students are supposed to “live in a given language from morning to evening”. This means that this important component of (almost any) stay abroad and of academic exchange (or almost any exchange) is obviously underdeveloped, if not nonexistent.

Such a component of the stay abroad has nothing to do with ICT as such. But the fact that ICT is hardly ever linked with the linguistic and cultural integration makes us assume that the real integration of ICT into academic everyday life, in particular in intercultural networking, has still to take place. Or that where such an integration has already taken place the academic community is unaware of it. Which also implies that the distinction between traditional and ICT-linked academic societies is not really taken into consideration either.

This insight is more important since explicit additional questions addressed to students about their knowledge of the “local population’s language” revealed that such a contact and such a knowledge is not nonexistent altogether, but rather not (really) active.

It is also interesting to note that the actual participation in the media (print, broadcast and electronic) is very widespread. Though many visitors at K.U.Leuven continue to use their own press and media, most of them know a few basic things and have basic ideas about the local press and media. They also tend to use some (very basic) Dutch when shopping.

This (more or less) non-integration of the language component in the exchange program as such is confirmed by the fact that the K.U.Leuven brochures never devote one single word to the “language landscape” of the country and the population, information that you do often find in tourist brochures. The fact that K.U.Leuven split in the sixties because of a language problem is not even mentioned in the information brochures for students. In the information they receive, there is no reference whatsoever to recent cultural and political shifts or even to the linguistic situation in Belgium. This may be due (also) to the fact that the K.U.L. brochures as such do not tend to play any cultural, political or tourist information role.

It is a specific difficulty of this university, in its academic environment, that it does not realize how strongly the international academic community still approaches it on the basis of traditions from the 1960s.

Whatever the explanations may be, it is clear at least that the issue of “social and everyday life” is not really part of the organized exchange, and that the visitors do have problems, as they say themselves, with linguistic integration. It is also obvious that the possibility of using sports and the media as an integration channel, is not really exploited.

### Conclusion and further approach

Given the fact that even universities such as K.U.Leuven, located in a so-called bilingual country, with a rich potential of foreign students and staff and with a sophisticated approach to the organization of the visiting population seem to mainly reduce the language problem to that of a “class problem”, the question is what the actual behavior of these foreign populations is, in particular in the area of use of ICT, but more generally speaking in their entire “social behavior”. Through questionnaires and interviews we examined – in a next step- what the “24 hours of a foreign student “ look like, especially in view of a better knowledge of:

- their social/ linguistic contacts with the “local” population (do they shop in the local language, and how exactly? Do they swim/play soccer together?);
- their contacts / non-contacts with local partners in terms of intellectual life: press / literature / e-mail / ICT.

### Observations

- While investigating the social behavior of students, we should bear in mind the fact that there is a difference between doctoral students and undergraduates with regards to social immersion. In general, doctoral students have already established a social network, which is not the case with undergraduate students.
- The idea of foreign language acquisition by full immersion is not encouraged at K.U.Leuven. The situation might be different in other universities. (For example, Spanish is the language of social integration in Granada, whereas Dutch does not have the same function in Belgium)

### *c. 24 hours of a foreign student: case study: foreign students at the H. Geestcollege in Leuven*

The questionnaire “24 hours of a foreign student” gave us a lot of information we could not get before. Jan Derboven investigated the social integration of a particular group of foreign students, amongst themselves and with Flemish students. The interviews were all carried out in one student home where foreign students (about 40% of the total population) live together with local students. Most of the foreign students come from Africa (Nigeria, Congo, Ghana) and India and are PhD students from the faculties of theology and philosophy.

Both the the communication at the university itself (face-to-face communication in seminars and classes and through ICT) and the communication outside the university (in their day-to-day life) were studied.

In face-to-face communication at the university, English is used as the “lingua franca” by both students and professors. This approach is completely in line with the language policy of

K.U.Leuven itself. Foreign students who consider studying at K.U.Leuven have to have a 'good command of the English language, both spoken and written'; they have to prove that at least a part of their former studies were in English or otherwise they can take a proficiency test. Also in the communication between students the English language is used, unless, of course, students have the same mother tongue.

The use of English is however not unproblematic, especially with regard to pronunciation. A lot of students from India, who are used to the typical Indian variant of English, fail to understand the English spoken by their teachers or, for instance, by their African fellow students, coming from different regions in Africa. Moreover, the use of English as the lingua franca also gives the native English speakers a lot of advantages.

Students nonetheless accept the use of English very well; the majority of the students is convinced that it is the only possibility for intercultural communication in an international context. This is also valid for the use of English in ICT. Even students who share the same mother tongue use English to write their emails, because of the fact that their language does not use the Latin alphabet. Although there are solutions for this problem, using English is often seen as the most practical solution. There is some frustration about the K.U.Leuven website, the English version of the site is not complete and there are often links to Dutch pages without warning. A similar frustration exists about the email communication from the faculty of Theology: Dutch mails that are meant for Dutch-speaking students only are systematically sent also to all foreign students.

Some (mostly African) students were surprised they could not use French at the university (in courses, websites, etc.). For example, questionnaires coming from the university can be filled out in English and Dutch only. In practice however, they do often use French. Some African students even think that people at university are "not willing" to speak in French and that this phenomenon can be linked to the history of K.U.Leuven. This situation has even negative political implications: in their interpretation, the "non-willingness" of people to speak in French is strange and compromising and they even see a link with political movements such as the Vlaams Blok.

The language most frequently used outside the university context is English also. Students who decide to take up another foreign language other than English, tend not to choose Dutch, but German and/or French instead. Because they need those languages for study purposes, the Dutch language seems less important to them. Students often say they are in favour of the idea of an (obligatory) Dutch language course, but they simply lack the time to learn another language. Other important reasons are the fact that the Dutch language is no longer useful to them once they have ended their studies in Belgium and the fact that they have no problem using English in the city of Leuven, even for their day to day life. In their opinion, knowing English is sufficient; some students are even discouraged to learn Dutch because of the fact that when they make attempts to speak in Dutch, the local people switch to English.

## 2. The university of Granada: a case study on language use for communication with students

### *1. Some background information on the university of Granada*

It is a fully monolingual university. A few specific departments, offices or individuals may use some other languages in very specific situations, but communication may become quite difficult for foreign students if Spanish is not spoken at all.

Teachers (not all of them) in departments such as Philology as (Language and Literature) in foreign languages (French, English, German, etc.) may (sometimes, not always) use the foreign language the corresponding for their lessons. A special case is that of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, having three B (first foreign) languages (English, French and German) and several other C (second foreign languages) such as Greek, Chinese, Dutch, Arabic, Russian, etc.; so several languages are used in class. However, only foreign language teachers use them regularly in their lessons.

English is taught as an instrumental language in several faculties (Science, Computing, Medicine, etc.), but the teacher rarely uses English as the main tongue for his/her lessons. Finally, in all the aforementioned cases, hardly any other staff (administrators, technical staff, etc.) speaks any foreign language.

## 2. *Communication through web pages*

Different websites of the university were analyzed:

1. The website of the Office for International Relations (in charge of international exchanges and agreements) is only available in Spanish. Some special documents are available in other languages. The Foreign Students' Guide is available in English; the list of international agreements is available in German, French, English, Italian, and Portuguese.
2. The University of Granada general web page is available in Spanish, English and French.
3. The website of the Department of Translation and Interpreting is available in English, French and German (B languages of the Faculty).
4. The website of the Department of English Language and Literature (as an example of point 2 above) is only available in Spanish.
5. The web page of the Center for Modern Languages, which is linked to the University, is only available in English (although there are students studying many other languages).  
This centre offers a course on basic Spanish to all foreign students coming through international exchanges (there is a special page in English for this course).
6. The Secretariat for Information Technologies in Education (CEVUG) is an interesting case, as it is carrying out a strong effort to make some parts of the contents that are offered at the University virtual. Their web page is in Spanish, while a brief (summarized) version exists in English.

### *Case study*

In Granada there is a large Arabic community, which has an enormous impact. To prove this one should only look at the fact that the translation of Spanish immigration law into Arabic was completely sold out. This community has two complaints:

- They can not use French (cf. the complaints students had at K.U.Leuven)
- They have a hard time finding keyboards

### 3. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (+ Cyprus)

#### 1. Some background information

Thessaloniki is a monolingual university; departments are not allowed to use any other language than Greek. Only in international study programs the use of other languages is allowed. PhD dissertations have to be written in Greek, whereas only students of the language departments (English, French, Italian and German) can choose to write their PhD dissertations in the corresponding language. Furthermore, the use of language seems to be strictly controlled; at the School of English, the staff was once asked to stop writing memos in English.

The situation is similar in Cyprus. At the university, Greek and Turkish are allowed, but because of the political situation, Turkish is not being used at the moment.

There is quite a large number of foreign students, often of Greek origin (living in the former USSR) that come to Thessaloniki and more specifically to the “School of Modern Greek” at Aristotle university, with the objective to study the Greek language.

From interviews with university staff about the language policy at their institution, it can be concluded that when it comes to (mostly Erasmus) incoming students, there is always flexibility in contradistinction to the official language policy at Aristotle University. In other words, most staff members seem to realise that the Greek language, apart from being a «weak» one, is difficult to learn during the short period of time allotted to incoming students.<sup>15</sup>

Flexibility – and good will for that matter – can be and is realised in many forms depending on the faculty or school or department involved and on the postgraduate studies and/or academic and research contacts of individual staff members. Sometimes students are allowed to take exams in their own language (when possible), to have reading lists in other language than Greek or to ask assistance from those Greek fellow students of theirs that know foreign languages.

#### 2. The university website

The web pages of Aristotle University can be found at the following address: <http://www.auth.gr>. There is an option of seven (7) languages, i.e. *Greek, English, French, German, Spanish, Italian* and *Russian*. Not all faculties or schools, however, provide pages for all seven languages. In other words, all seven options are provided up to a certain point. For example, for all faculties we can follow the procedure below:

We select *Academics* (initial page in all seven languages), we go on to *Faculties and Departments* (in all seven languages), then to *Faculties* (in all seven languages), from there to *Departments/Schools* (in all seven languages) and finally to *Departments* (whose titles are given in all seven languages). From that point onward however, if we select a certain Department, we are given information either in Greek only or, in several cases, in both Greek and English.

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<sup>15</sup> Language policy flexibility can be found also in the case of the optional reading lists recommended to Greek students at various schools and departments.

### 3. «MAPPING the 24 HOURS in the socio-linguistic behaviour of a “foreign” academic»

If we look at the data from Thessaloniki university, apart from the obvious observation, i.e. the “supremacy” of the English language, we can observe the following:

- Foreign students coming to Greece for a short period of time either do not manage or do not bother to learn Greek to the point of using it exclusively outside their academic activities.
- They tend to make friends with foreign students, rather than Greeks.
- When we have students coming from the same university/country, they tend to stick together, although they, too, make friends with foreigners rather than Greeks. This observation may not be obvious to the rest of our working group, but this has been the case with the students (Erasmus) that come from the same university/country and have answered the questionnaire.
- Those who have stayed in Greece for a longer period of time, for over a year, use the Greek language for shopping, make Greek friends and communicate with them in Greek, but also make friends with foreigners from various countries. Moreover, they seem to prefer their own country-men, whom they probably come to know through some nationality-oriented “unions”.

The underlying reason for the first three observations has most probably to do mainly with the fact the foreign (Erasmus) students stay at certain dormitories, which host only foreigners. When the Erasmus students were asked why they did not have any Greek partners for their outings (etc.) and if their Greek fellow-students did not try to make contact with them outside classrooms, they explained that it was more “convenient” for them to “hang around” with other foreign students. They also added that the foreign students they stayed at the same dormitory with were always available, and that they had the same “wishes”, which were obviously the wishes of people who felt more like tourists and less than permanent residents. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule-like tendency, especially in relation to the issue of making friends with Greeks. Such an exception is a student from Romania, whose best friends are two Greek students. However, this particular student, apart from being an extremely extrovert personality, who has been travelling all over Europe and making friends with natives, has managed a considerable degree of integration through a Greek-English-Romanian (!), who has been staying and studying in Greece.

### 4. Some data of the European Union

There are a few publications on student and staff exchange in the EU and there have been some research initiatives. As far as we know no panoramic figures are available for the external population of the EU. Such figures are certainly available country per country.

#### *Preliminary Comments:*

The first very important observation relates to the terminology that is used at the EU and at the universities.

On the one hand we have to observe that the figures and indications that we can deduce from our university websites and from the students’ administration never refer to the EU Erasmus

population; they refer to foreign (regular) students; on the basis of the EU rules, Erasmus students are not recorded as our "own" students.

Figures that are provided in the documents from the EU, on the other hand, refer to the EU (Erasmus/Socrates) population rather than to the entire foreign population of any university<sup>16</sup>.

What are the consequences of this distinction between “European” versus “other” students?

First of all, we need to distinguish between EU students and non-EU students. This means that students coming from one of the member states and enrolling in a neighbour country, not as Erasmus/Socrates participant, simply as full-fledged student, are considered in the EU documents as non-EU students!

Why is this distinction made? The financial, social and administrative status of EU students is specific, given the agreements: students get support, they keep working as members of their home university, they are abroad for a short period of time. Thus the goal/motivation is supposed to be very different from students who leave their country in order to study abroad. The reasons why these students study abroad and the period of time that they spend there are crucial in this respect.

The responsibility of the partner university, their staff, students, the agreements about language approach have a (rather) clear status. In the case of "foreign" students as such, the visiting population is supposed to (fully?) adapt to the given standards of regular students at the same university and in the same society. An additional component is related to culture and language. The languages (of origin) that are represented are more likely to be more different in the case of non-EU countries. On the other hand, quite a few EU countries have a colonial past and attract more students who happen to have no real language problem in their new academic country (France, UK, Spain, Holland, Portugal, even Italy, Greece, Belgium have such student populations).

### *Analysis of the data*

In various reports from the European Union, there are interesting figures and considerations about the specific question of language. We shall use these data, of course, and refer to the reports whenever they have been provided. As we can guess, these reports deal with EU students' exchange only, not with the international (worldwide) mobility as a whole.

As far as we know for the time being, there is no research available on our so-called "language management", i.e. on the real-life data on the field, or on the impact of the language component in terms of efficiency and motivation.

Of course, the more explicit focus of cEVU, i.e. the resources of possible ICT-based innovations in language management, indeed seems to be rather new so far.

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<sup>16</sup> Just one example to give an idea: at K.U.Leuven there are now, say, 600 to 700 EU students, and a total number of say 3.000 foreign students (out of, say, 26.000). Number of countries: more than 80.

## 1. Some initial questions

Some of the initial questions that need to be asked when studying student mobility are:

- What is the motivation for student mobility?
- What kind of patterns can we observe?
- Where do our students like to go?
- Who is (more) welcome in the receiving countries?
- To what extent is the language a decisive component at all? (Do Dutch students prefer to go to Flemish universities, and vice versa, or would they rather go to countries of different languages? Do Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French students rather go to each others' universities because of the - Romance – language advantage, or rather because they find more/less sun in some of these countries?)

## 1. HOME countries

Table 2.11 in Teichler 2002: 41 indicates the absolute/relative figures for Erasmus students per academic year and per home country (i.e. which country the students come from).

TOTAL	95/96		97/98		98/99		99/2000		number
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	
AT							12.860		2,1
BE							25.115		4,2
DE							98.803		16,5
DK							13.496		2,3
ES							77.413		12,9
FI							21.993		3,7
FR							96.634		16,1
GR							13.550		2,3
IE							10.831		1,8
IT							54.881		9,2
LU							117		.0
NL							31.589		5,3
PT							16.084		2,7
SE							21.159		3,5
UK							78.202		13,1
CH									
IS							823		.1
NO							8.344		1,4
BG							98		
CY							310		
CZ							2.649		
EE							350		
HU							3.150		
LT							432		

LV	339
PL	4.731
RO	3.938
SK	533
SI	240

A very important observation is that the distribution per country does not simply reflect the level of interest in studies abroad; the distribution depends on budgets available per country. Are these results significantly different as far as the selection of countries (the target countries) is concerned?

## 2. TARGET countries

In Table 2.15 in Teichler 2002: 45, it becomes clear that although the EU tries to establish a balance between outgoing and incoming students; certain countries attract (much) more students than they send out.

To give an example: the UK has a ratio of 15.737 vs. 10.255 (1993/94) against 20.938 vs. 10.582 (1997/98). The same applies to Ireland: 2.155 vs. 1.455 (93/94) and 2.844 vs. 1.509 (97/98)

This could mean that the language component (in the case of English) plays an important role. Of course this hypothesis has to be confirmed by investigation on the motivation of students. The situation of France has changed over the years. In 93/94 it was more or less like UK (12.375 vs. 8.590), but in 97/98 the figures are almost in balance (15.193 vs. 15.263). Germany, like most countries has more outgoing students<sup>17</sup>.

## 3. Language as a motivation for student mobility

According to Table 4.2 in Teichler 2002: 88, the language factor - ("Why do you want to study abroad") -as one of the key motivations among students is extremely high among all students, from all areas (from agriculture, business, etc. to Law, Medicine, etc.); hardly ever is it lower than 75 %.

It is also confirmed that many such students take several language courses, which means that not only bilingual, but also multilingual considerations play a role.

On the basis of the available data, it is however impossible at this stage to indicate to what extent the selection of the target country is influenced by the selection and priorities of given languages rather than by other ones, apart from English, to a certain degree. It would be worth investigating what exactly the role of language is in the selection of the country, whether, for example, Spanish students would prefer going to France/UK/Germany, just because they have the general tendency to prefer, say, French to German, or vice-versa.

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<sup>17</sup> Greece 820 vs. 1424 (93/94) and 994 vs. 1.431 (97/98)

Italy 3.944 vs 6.643 (93/94) and 5.697 vs 9.334 (97/98)

Belgium is rather even in 93/94, sending more out in 97/98

Spain is almost even: 6.560 vs. 6.873 and 11.426 vs. 12.468

The more detailed schemes (per field of study) will be forwarded in electronic form.

From our limited research, we can draw some conclusions. Foreign students in Spain learn Spanish, but foreign students in Flanders do not necessarily learn Dutch. Language as a motivation for mobility seems to be strong for Spanish, French and English, but weak for Greek, Dutch and Finnish.

What part of the motivation has to do with really wanting to learn Dutch, Greek or Finnish? Most foreign students staying in the respective countries do not want to, but some students do. What is clear however, is that the knowledge of Dutch, Greek or Finnish could be stimulated a lot better.

During our research we noticed also some strange phenomena, such as the fact that German students come to Belgium to learn English, and this for a financial reason: it is a lot cheaper to live in Belgium than the U.K.

A lot depends also on the length of their stay. Erasmus students still belong to their universities and do not stay for very long in the host country. This means that their attitude towards language differs. When students stay in a foreign country for less than six months, they might not feel the need to study the local language.

Another striking phenomenon is that international students use a country such as Belgium for further integration into the Western society. In some cases there is a clear misuse of the student status in order to enter and stay in (legally or illegally) a European country.

#### **4. Conclusions**

We need to be aware of the differentiation: Who is exactly involved? Who comes? Where do they go? Why?

The underlying reasons are different: a lot of Erasmus students that take on the Erasmus exchange program, they do so because of the language (they want to study a new language). This does not seem to be the reason however why international students come to European universities. Not only is the motivation different, but so are the financial resources. (e.g. special conditions for Erasmus students, who are able to claim money for language studies). Another aspect of motivation that certainly cannot be underestimated is that of the “tourism” factor. The primary objective of a lot of the students who go to a warm and sunny country like Greece or Spain might simply be the fact that they want to spend a good time at the tourist resorts of the target country. At Granada University, teachers see their students gradually disappearing to enjoy the good weather. In other countries such as Finland on the other hand, foreign students want to discover the Finnish society, so they’re generally not interested in the language either, but for another reason.

#### **5. Some general conclusions**

Due to the timeframe and the limited funding, the conclusions that were reached by this working group are rather limited. It was for instance impossible to have a real comparative analysis between all partners of the cEVU project, but although one could argue that these conclusions and remarks are not representative, the results are nevertheless valuable and sometimes surprising. However a lot of questions remain, whereas some areas have not been studied. For example:

- How do these people organise their private life?
- How does ICT support play a role in the entire mobility program?

- Is ICT used for better linguistic interaction within the teaching/learning environment or outside?

What is clear is that new research is needed; it would be recommendable to dedicate an entire sustainable project to the language issue.

Some conclusions:

- Investigation has so far been based on the situation of students within traditional settings of students. What we have to consider however, is ICT supported or ICT based education. It seems that what is experienced as a problem in physical mobility, will be an even bigger problem in virtual mobility.
- At all investigated universities there is an awareness of the language problem<sup>18</sup>, but there is a gap between practice and theory. There are attempts to organise courses on a multilingual basis, but these attempts remain exceptional. So far courses seem to be organised in English or in the local language, whereas other options are not taken into account. After all, this binary option English/local language is offered in all the countries that participated in the project, but it is realised differently.
- The role of ICT in education is still very peripheral. Universities still behave as traditional, monolingual universities. One of the reasons why the focus is still on on-campus teaching is that they cannot cope with the language problem. In other words, you cannot develop ICT based learning if you don't handle the language problem.
- ICT support is active in this area, but is mainly used in a mono-directional way (only from universities to students). As soon as it becomes more individualised, the real activity gets less frequent. The use of ICT is not completely integrated in the international organisation of mobility programs. The actual use of ICT support used by students is probably much richer than universities can imagine. Universities are not aware enough of the situation in the field and do not make use of the available resources<sup>19</sup>.
- The actual use of ICT resources for foreign language training, for instance, is still relatively primitive. Foreign language classes still take place in traditional settings. Students who study Spanish in Belgium for instance, often chat in Spanish, have Spanish friends, but their professors are not aware of that. In a way computers are used to keep the world outside the classrooms. There are however examples of good

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<sup>18</sup> In a number of countries the language issue is totally denied, just by the fact that everyone “knows English” e.g. in Scandinavia or in Holland. This has also to do with the nation - state model that needs to be monolingual. To give a significative example: all constitutions have been translated, but no state allows that to be said.

- <sup>19</sup> One of the main conclusions of the Barcelona conference (on teachers-ICT) was that the problem is often not a lack of willingness but a lack of time. In the actual teaching situation teachers have to do their “normal” job *plus* e-learning. It should be possible to package the necessary information and give it to them, so that the whole process will not be time-consuming. Structures should be developed to make sure that this kind of work is similarly appreciated in academic environment as teaching or research work. It could be a mutual responsibility of the teacher and the institution.

practice to contradict this situation: in the cEVU project the course on Academic English can be one of the examples. It combined online contact moments (an online classroom) with off line work. Due to the fact that it was well managed, the course proved to be a huge success for both the teacher and the students.

## 6. Recommendations (with examples of good practice)

### Areas for further study:

Given the fact that we *suppose* that the status of *all partners involved* is very different, explicit research should be made on various cases and situations, while also taking into consideration that the various countries involved may have very different habits in relation to "immigrants" of all kinds (and their languages).

Another interesting subgroup that is worth studying in the future is the group of students coming from and going to the new member states of the European Union.<sup>20</sup>

### For the EC

- Given the importance of the language issue, it would be highly recommendable to study this further within a larger European project, devoted only to this topic.
- From the moment our universities and governments want to get into the post-Bologna process, the integration of ICT in education with regard to the language component, is a “must”. It should be part of their structures. The EC could decide that a given percentage of the money available goes to this aspect, planned in such a way that it reaches all layers within a given university .
- The EU might give special credits, benefits, awards to universities with students that know more than one language. A similar system has been initiated at the UCL (Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium). For a Masters degree in European Literature, one of the requirements is that students should defend their work in 2 or 3 languages. This is also the case in Italy (a European PhD as a kind of “first class” Phd) and it is spreading all over Europe. This means language is recognised as an important component of the PhD.
- It should be possible for the virtual Erasmus environment to work out suggestions or criteria for selection of funding that are similar to the ones in the physical Erasmus scheme, with respect to a minimum of language proficiency level. Another suggestion could be that students follow some virtual courses as a preparatory step to virtual Erasmus.
- The EC should support studies on cultural identification, the awareness of students and the feeling of “being European”.

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<sup>20</sup> This aspect has not been studied in this report, but there is evidence from other cases/studies. For example, colleagues teaching in Vietnam - mathematics, film studies, etc. have very precise comments on the interactivity/communication problems between teacher and student.

- It would be interesting to work out different models of language combinations and maybe coordinate this on a European level. (e.g. website: [www.europeanlanguages.com](http://www.europeanlanguages.com))

For universities

### ***Organisation***

- We recommend a more explicit planning of virtual and physical mobility and a possible improvement of both. Mobility programs are still worked out as if ICT were nonexistent. There should be a better integration of ICT in international programs and a better integration of international programs into management as such.
- The integration of ICT in education should be more investigated and better promoted. One of the aspects that deserves attention is how ICT can be used for socio-linguistic integration of the mobility population.
- It is a necessity to create rewarding systems and incentives for staff working with ICT; their work should be accounted for (as part of an assignment). An additional question is how to cope with the diversity of ICT skills.
- There should be adequate resource allocation both locally and regionally. For example, a brand new language lab would be useless at a law school, but valuable/functional at a school of interpreters. The same amount of money can be very effective in one place but useless elsewhere.
- There is often no time, no space and no budget for recycling (unless in “important” fields, like medicine). Training the trainer is considered to be something for the corporate world, but it could also be useful at universities to have a hands-on training for all teachers to make an analysis of which problems they encounter and how to solve them. Such a training should include cultural aspects and language (integration of localisation aspects).
  - Example of good practice: Lund: IT Tutors: teachers are released from their jobs to work in a central support unit for 2, 3 years. This central support unit specialises in media, technology and pedagogy. Their task is dual: to develop their own materials and to help colleagues at their faculties.
- Language management should be integrated into the quality management system. A distinction should be made between active and passive language skills and oral and written skills. (Small countries have an advantage in passive knowledge.) Some concrete examples could be the following
  - Euroliterature,
  - Galatea.
  - In Spain, PhD students are obliged to write part of their thesis in another European language and have to write a long abstract in another language.
  - In Italy there is a European PhD program on Social Representations and Communication: students have to work in 3 different countries (2 European countries other than their country of residence) and have to write the full report of their dissertation in the language of their main supervisor, or if different, in a national language of the country where the doctorate is being pursued. Moreover, a short version in English has to be written in order for it to be

submitted to international journals and evaluated by a European Board of Examiners.

- Psychology of Religion is **also** a multilingual program.
- CETRA: the advanced Masters: at least 3 universities are involved.  
Remark: **All** these programs are quite expensive, but in comparison to fees and overall expenses in the UK or the US, the cost is still reasonable. A special funding program could be initiated specifically for this purpose or we could suggest that the existing funds to be extended.
- Spanish students of the University of Granada have to spend one year in the UK or France in order to get an English or a French degree.
- Necessity of paying attention to the building of learning communities in such a way that people do not feel isolated when coming into a course. (This is also an argument in favour of multicultural curricula; often the mere experience of taking part in a multicultural curriculum can be more enriching in itself than the subject area that is dealt with within the program).
- Languages could play a role in the financial support schemes for development of material in universities: The language argument could be an additional criterion for the selection of projects. For example, the material could be used in international setting. Any program that takes this into consideration should have a more positive rate over other programs.
- Universities should encourage extra curricular activities for European students in multilingual environments.
- Websites are often written in foreign languages by universities themselves and sometimes they are full of mistakes. Universities are constantly evaluating themselves, but do not know how to cope with the language problem. This should be a very simple recommendation in quality management. Web writing should be one of the areas for special training sessions. For example: International information management, which involves technical writing, that is, web writing, web localising for universities, etc.
- ICT environments are worked out in monolingual environments and should be redesigned.
- Universities should invest more in their websites, which should be truly multilingual (as opposed to their current superficial level)

### *Staff*

- We could recommend that at least one civil servant in each administrative body of the university speaks or at least understands one foreign language (e.g. English). This requirement should apply to all levels. It is not enough for people of the international office only to be “multilingual”. Foreign students who have to work with software of the host university have to contact help desks; this means there is also a necessity for a multilingual approach at that level.
- Valorise the language competence of the university staff at all levels.
- Permanent self-assessment in language skills for university staff and students should be available somewhere on the website of the university.

## *Students*

- Multilingual interactivity should be stimulated. It should be possible to have multilingual exams, diplomas, certificates and degrees. One could think of giving rewards to multilingual university students. Students could even be involved in the organisation of their host university (by using their competences in their mother tongue)
- The principle of immersion should be encouraged and improved by the use of ICT. ICT should be used for socio-linguistic integration of mobility population. How this should be realized still remains to be studied.
- Another suggestion for language teaching could be the of peer reviews in the target language: students who study a particular language should be able to get in contact with peers who are native speakers of the target language. This could be a useful exchange.
  - In Vicenza a website has been made in all languages that are taught at the institute. This website is systematically reviewed by students.

## *Courses*

- There are examples of multilingual courses. In the “Literature and Cinema” course, also a pilot course within the cEVU project, students coming from Spain and from Belgium used 4 different languages. It is important to stress that at the level of the course content, an effort was made to initiate the students in the cinematographic culture of the partner country. The course was simultaneously taught at the university of Granada and at K.U.Leuven; students from both universities used the discussion forums to collaborate in a networked way, which means that they made their assignments in collaboration with the students of the other university. The course also included some videoconferences. The students were screened in advance on their language competencies. A distinction was made between the active and the passive knowledge of languages and between the oral and written language skills. Students were strongly encouraged to use other languages besides English. In the virtual learning environment Galatea, the course documents were made available in Spanish, French and English; in most cases parts of the original texts were translated (or summaries were made) into the other languages. In the discussion forums, used for intensive group work, students could choose the language in which they wanted to contribute (also Dutch was used) and during the videoconferences students spoke in the language they felt most comfortable in, taking into account of course basic communication rules.
 

The course also entailed a teaching exchange. In 2003 the Belgian teacher went a week to Granada and gave several lectures (in Spanish, which was appreciated by the students). In 2004 this exchange will become a two ways exchange.
- Another example is the “translation sciences” course. Most of the documents are available in English, while teaching is being done in French. Some courses are even taught in Italian for a target audience that does not speak Italian, but is able to understand it.
- In the EUNITE consortium, the following model has been worked out for a database of course materials shared by EUNITE members. Each university can post course materials, that are considered to be useful for other universities, in whatever language they want. As soon as a joint development of courses is considered on the basis of the

materials that have been made available, an English version is made, leaving it up to the partners to make a national adaptation if necessary.

- Models for multilingual co-writing of courses should be worked out for a mutual exchange of text production between academic partners.

#### societies/countries

- In some countries, such as Spain, people in high positions do not consider languages to be an important skill. They should be encouraged to learn and use foreign languages.

- **REFERENCES and Sources used (main sources):** some of the EU sources have been used in the Dutch version; in many cases the English/French/other version can still be requested from the Commission.

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