



European Observatory on Plurilingualism
European Conference on Plurilingualism

Newsletter N°17 (July 2008)

<http://www.observatoireplurilinguisme.eu/>

(Translator: Tala Chami)

Translations in [German](#), [Italian](#), [Spanish](#) and [English](#) are available online

1) The gathering event [Intellectuals and artists for multilingualism and cultural diversity](#) which took place on June 23, 2008 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, organized by the EOP under the high patronage of UNESCO, in collaboration with the Permanent Delegation of Romania to UNESCO and the support of the UNESCO Culture Sector, is now available online. You can catch up by listening to and downloading all sessions. [The call for contribution](#) to the Guestbook still under elaboration, and which you can browse, is extended **until July 20**. The year 2009 will be the European Year of creativity and innovation. In anticipation, we have wished to testify that multilingualism and cultural diversity are critical determinants of creativity. Every creation is indeed a "singular universal" (Porcher), which reveals itself through linguistic and cultural diversity. "For more than four billion years, the history of life has been following a single path, that of its own survival. It carries out a single strategy, that of diversity." (Jacques Attali, Amours, 2007, Fayard Ed).

- 1) Intellectuals and artists for multilingualism and cultural diversity
- 2) Last website updates
- 3) The three dimensions of multilingualism
- 4) How to support the EOP ?
- 5) Issues
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2) **Among the latest site updates**

- [Videos of the seminar "Conflicts" organized by ERIAC \(Research group on identities, affects and conflicts\) , 2006-2008 \(publication\)](#)
- [The ELLUG, Literature and language editions of Grenoble University of Grenoble \(Announcement\)](#)
- [The handbook of multilingualism and multiculturalism \(release\)](#)
- [Gordon Brown: nostalgia for the Empire](#)
- [Over the past ten years, Walter Kramer has been fighting for the preservation of German language](#)
- [The Bulletin of the CRATIL, the ISIT research centre \(release\)](#)
- [Communication issues, 13, 2008 \(release\)](#)
- [Enterprise, national cultures and globalization \(release\)](#)
- [The Guestbook stays open until July 20](#)
- [No one will deprive the Germans of the freedom to produce their own words!](#)
- [A documented compilation about the topic of regional languages in France](#)
- [Information Statement of the collective on the right to use French language to work in France](#)
- [Languages: The Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie plays it safe !](#)
- [The prevailing of French language in enterprises based in France: another sentenced company](#)

- [The Italian teachers react against the all-English teaching!](#)
- [A "salutary Challenge": what future for the Maalouf report?](#)
- [No to English at the office!](#)
- [Bad German rather than good English](#)

3) The three dimensions of a multilingualism policy

The contexts in which man is not in a situation of monolingualism are infinite. Whenever there is exchange, the issue of language within a language represented as unique, arises. Multilingualism could thus be seen as a kind of natural state dispensing with any voluntary action. However, modern technology and complexity, as well as power relations, require political action in favour of multilingualism and cultural and linguistic diversity. We believe that a policy that promotes multilingualism and cultural diversity must be conducted in three areas: symbolic power, education and production.

- Symbolic power: institutional multilingualism

Symbolic power remains linked to political power, which in Europe lies in the States and in the European Union institutions. The European Commission does not have sufficient awareness of its symbolic power and its communication policy bears the unfortunate mark of all the ambiguities of the European construction. When the Oath of Strasbourg was sworn in 843, Louis the German and Charles the Bald, grand-son of Charlemagne, made there pledge in the language of the other's kingdom, before addressing their troops in their respective languages. Addressing European citizens in their own language is a rule emanating from the European treaties and restated in the Council Regulation 1958 / 1, which built the fundament of the European Union language regime. This principle is increasingly ignored by the European Commission. Over the course of a long series of violations, the latest up to the minute one is [the announcement of 112](#), emergency call number for all citizens of countries of the European Union. The announcement is only in English. So there are two categories of citizens, those who master English and the others. We cannot but connect this behaviour to the [speech of Gordon Brown](#), on January 18, 2008 entitled «English, the World's language", which striking colonial miasmas were far from passing unnoticed.

With regard to communication with citizens, there cannot be the slightest concession. As to internal activity, it is clear that we cannot operate permanently with 23 languages. In any case, this matter can neither rely on the arbitrary nor on [sociological gravities](#) of recruitment criteria. A balance of languages should be initiated and controlled considering the inefficiency of [the repeated reprimands from the European Ombudsman](#).

- Education

Education is fundamental because future generations will end up adopting the languages they would have learned. The target being 1 language (mother tongue) + 2, the same old stereotype of European policy since the motion voted by the 1984 Council of Ministers of Education, two opposing patterns: FL1 (1st Foreign Language) English + FL2 or even FL3 or FL1 non-English + FL2 or even FL3 (including English). Some argue that these 2 schemes are of similar value although this is scientifically false. Starting with English is more of a hindrance to the teaching of other languages, as shown for example by German Franz Joseph Meissner in [The modern languages 1 / 2008](#). Moreover, the first scheme cannot achieve the target 1 +2, while the second allows not only to achieve the target 1 +2, but even a more ambitious target that is 1+2⁺ which is what requests the EOP (the capitalized potential multilingual skills in learning FL2 facilitates other learning opportunities throughout life).

Therefore the EOP calls for a Copernican revolution, in accordance with the Maalouf report, [A salutary challenge](#):

- In providing language education, by encouraging families to make the choice of a FL1 other than the dominant world language of communication, ie English.
- In pedagogy, in order to integrate multilingual learning in education, following the guidelines of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

- Production

The issue here is about language usage. This area covers all aspects of linguistic practices. It particularly includes:

- the protection and promotion of cultural expressions diversity
- languages in enterprises strategies and work relationships

We believe there are functional territories for the use of languages. To justify the immoderate and indiscriminate use of English (see the [recent conviction of the INSERM](#)), it is common to hear that vehicular languages have always existed. As true as this can be, vehicular languages however, never invaded all aspects of social life. Never have vehicular languages been used for purposes of domination by any political power. Hence, the importance of conceiving languages as an asset to the company and using languages according to adequate contexts. This analysis is developed by [Wendelin Wiedeking](#), CEO of Porsche in [Süddeutsche Zeitung](#), read [entirely on the site](#).

4) How to support the EOP? [Click here](#)

- ***The handbook of multilingualism and multiculturalism***, Claire Kramsch (University of California in Berkeley, USA), Danielle Levy (University of Macerata, Italy), Geneviève Zarate (National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations, Paris, France) are involved in directing the work of young researchers and training of language teachers trainers at a national as well as European and international levels. Ninety teachers/researchers, representing 68 institutions, have joined them to work on this project. [For more info](#).
- ***The European Framework: What stage has it reached?*** No. 2 / 2008 of the magazine Modern Languages of APLV, number per unit: 14 euros for packaging and shipping within France. For other countries, for extra shipping costs information, contact the administration office: APLV, 19 rue de la Glacière, 75013 PARIS, aplv.lm @ gmail.com, 01 47 07 94 82. For subscriptions download the [subscription form](#). The summaries of articles can be read [on this page](#).
- ***Enterprise, national cultures and globalization***, coordinated by **Joel Brémond** and **Joel Massol**, Lecturers at the University of Nantes, CRINI Editions, Collection La question nationale, Size: 16 x 24, 451 pages, ISBN: 2-916424-13-X, 30 €, 25 € TTC for students upon presentation of proof. [Download order form](#).
- The Conference Proceedings of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the ISIT, *Understand, translate, interpret: intercultural management*, in the [bulletin of the CRATIL](#), research centre of ISIT, No. 1, June 2008.
- [Videos of the seminar "Conflicts" organized by ERIAC \(University of Rouen\)](#)

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