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de Bot, K.; Kroon, S.; Nelde, P.; Van de Velde, H.

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Institutional Status and Use of National Languages in Europe
Contributions to the Development of a European Language Policy

Kees de Bot, Sjaak Kroon, Peter H. Nelde & Hans Van de Velde

1. Introduction

The Frisian municipality of Lemsterland in the Netherlands some time ago reached a negative decision regarding a request from the "Netherlands-German Dialogue" foundation to provide German translations of documents of the municipal council regarding touristic and recreational affairs. This provision should be a service to the approximately 1,500 Germans owning a holiday house in the old fishing village Lemmer with 8,500 inhabitants. The municipality already did provide at that time some German leaflets on permanent and non-permanent residence, but the council decided that the translation of its documents into German was not necessary (*NRC-Handelsblad*, 23.9.1998). The implication seems to be that German guests are supposed to learn the national language.

Consciously or not, the decision of the municipal council of Lemsterland is a language policy decision. Facing a "language problem" that ultimately relates to the unification of Europe, the council takes the position that, for the time being, no German translations are needed for the German summer guests. The language problem of Lemsterland is not a unique or isolated problem, nor is it limited to the Netherlands. The unification of Europe and the coinciding processes of internationalization and exchange bring about large-scale, though varying processes of language contact. This language contact leads to individual and societal reactions and to changes in the status and use of the various languages involved. These reactions are in one way or an'ther related to 'anguage policy decisions at a national or international, i.e. European, or even global level. One of the main lessons taught by Cooper's (1989) seminal introduction to language planning is that such policy decisions, in order to be pertinent, should ultimately be based on a full fledged analysis of national and international political, economic, sociological and linguistic processes and forces that are involved in the concrete language planning situation under study. Without empirical data to support policy decisions, language policy easily runs the risk of becoming outdated and obsolete even before being fully developed and implemented. It is exactly against this background that the *Nederlandse Taalunie* (Dutch Language Union) asked the editors of this book to organize an international scientific conference on Institutional Status and Use of National Languages in Europe (Brussels, March 24-26 1999), aiming at an inventory of research avenues and results that, at least from the perspective of the Nether-

lands and Flanders, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium, would be relevant for formulating a national contribution to a European language policy.

In this introductory chapter we try to delineate the field of language policy relationships in which the present and future countries of the European Union are potentially engaged. In doing so we will first of all pay attention to the different minority and majority languages and language groups in different ways affected by European language policy making. Next we will focus more specifically on the threatened position in this respect of the medium-sized and smaller national languages. Finally we give an overview of the aims and outcomes of the conference on Institutional Status and Use of National Languages in Europe; this section also serves the aim of introducing the contents of this book that contains a selection of the papers that were read at this conference.

2. Minority and majority languages

Modern-day Europe is characterized by large-scale processes of internal and external internationalization. The economic, financial and political unification of Europe, the harmonization of legislation and the abandonment of a number of national borders are important elements in this respect. At the same time, particularly in Eastern Europe, we can see an erosion of existing national states and the formation of new entities that are increasingly oriented towards the European Union (Rees et al. 1996; Groenendijk 1997). These processes are accompanied by extensive international migration and an increasing dominance of the English language in a large number of sectors in society (Ammon 1996). These developments entail various forms of language contact. From a linguistic and language-political perspective, in European language contact situations various groups of languages can be distinguished.

Small indigenous minority languages such as Frisian, Breton and Welsh, and regional languages or dialects such as the Lower-German dialects (as spoken in Northern Germany) and the Limburg dialect (as spoken in the Dutch and Belgian provinces of the same name) have always been part of the European mosaic of languages. Partly in response to the European unification, they appear to have obtained a higher - and still growing - status in a Europe of regions. The position of the former category has predominantly been defined through historically hard-won forms of language-political recognition on a territorial basis (see Nelde / Strubell / Williams 1996; Ó Riagáin 1977). In this context, important documents of the Council of Europe are the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992) and the *Framework Convention on National Minorities* (1994). Although the Charter, in Article 1, explicitly excludes from its considerations "dialects of the official language(s) of the State" it is considered and used, at least in some circles, to provide a language-

political foundation for the symbolic and/or material recognition of regional dialects. In the Netherlands for example, apart from the regional language Frisian, also the Lower Saxon and Limburg dialects have gained recognition through the Charter, whereas in Flanders the recognition of the Limburg dialect, mainly as a consequence of a policy advice of the *Nederlandse Taalunie* to the Flemish Government, is a matter which is still object of discussion (*De Standaard*, 8.2.2000). The Framework Convention, just as the Charter, is still in the process of ratification. Article 5 of the Convention states that the participating countries promise to "undertake to promote the conditions for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage". This treaty, however, is not very imperative when it comes to concrete applications.

In the past few decades, the linguistic landscape of Europe has been greatly enriched. As a consequence of decolonization, labour migration and the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers the number and variety of languages in Western European countries has greatly increased. In the Dutch Province of Noord-Brabant, for example, more than 20% of primary school children come from a family in which instead of or apart from Dutch another language is spoken. In a city like The Hague this even applies to some 45% of all pupils in secondary education. Litterally dozens of different non-indigenous minority languages are involved in these processes (Broeder / Extra 1999; Aarssen / Broeder / Extra 1998). These non-indigenous minority languages are in contact and competition with the dominant language of the host country. They are therefore potentially subject to processes of language shift and language loss, possibly also in connection with processes involving the preservation and loss of ethnic identity. Language attrition is a phenomenon that occurs at the level of an individual. It can be considered a form of erosion of the mother tongue as a consequence of diminished use. Language shift is a group phenomenon. It occurs when language minority groups in the course of two or three generations shift from their "own" language to the majority language (Klatter-Folmer / Kroon 1997). In many European countries, learning the national language as a second language is seen as a high priority, but there is an increasing awareness in education of the need to foster minority languages as well. Facilities are now being established for teaching minority languages and for second-language teaching. Obviously, the provisions and regulations for second language teaching are much more developed than the provisions and regulations for minority language teaching (Kroon / Vallen 1997; Broeder / Extra 1999).

In our perspective it is remarkable that European policy documents dealing with minority languages, almost exclusively focus on indigenous non-dominant languages, thereby implicitly or explicitly excluding non-indigenous non-

dominant languages. The recent *Declaration of Oegstgeest "Moving away from a monolinguals habitus"* (2000), making a plea for non-exclusive acknowledgement of the existence of regional, minority and immigrant languages within the context of multicultural Europe as sources of linguistic diversity and cultural enrichment, in this respect marks the change in attitude that is taking place at the moment. Although indigenous and non-indigenous non-dominant languages attract a great deal of attention in language policy circles, at least in Western Europe, the *Declaration of Oegstgeest* as well as documents such as *The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities* (1996) and *The Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities* (1998), both issued by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoel, show that there is still a long way to go before "linguistic human rights" are generally recognized and enforced (Skutnabb-Kangas 1997).

"Minority" and "majority" are related notions in the sense that no minorities exist without the existence of a majority. This "majority", in our case, is formed by the national European languages. Since 1995 the European Union consists of fifteen member states France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg (1958), Great Britain, Ireland, Denmark (1973), Greece (1981), Spain, Portugal (1986), Austria, Finland and Sweden (1995). Possible future members are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Cyprus and perhaps Malta, and in a more distant future Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Rumania, Slovakia and Turkey. According to the (slightly adapted) overview in Smeets (1999: 382) the fifteen member states share eleven official languages and working languages (in alphabetical order) Danish (official in Denmark; non-dominant in Germany), German (official in Germany, Austria, Luxemburg and Belgium; non-dominant in France and Italy), English (official in Great Britain and Ireland; non-dominant is Scottish-English in Scotland), Finnish (official in Finland; non-dominant in Sweden), French (official in France, Belgium and Luxemburg; non-dominant in Italy), Greek (official in Greece; non-dominant in Italy), Italian (official in Italy, non-dominant in Slovenia), Portuguese (official in Portugal), Dutch (official in the Netherlands and Belgium; non-dominant in France), Spanish (official in Spain), and Swedish (official in Sweden and Finland). Additionally, in Ireland Irish is the national and first official language; although in the beginning for Irish the status of official European Union language was not requested, the Irish governement now is in favour of securing its position in the European Union. In 1984 it was decided that Letzebuergesch is the national language of Luxemburg; this does not imply, however, a plea for upgrading the language's role in Luxemburg or the European Union (see also Davis 1994). In the autonomous region of Catalonia in Spain Catalan is upgraded as well as in some European institutions; Basque

and Galician in Spain show the same development (Smeets 1999). It will be clear that every possible extension of the European Union will lead to a considerable growth of its number of offical languages and will therefore pose a threat to all languages except for English and maybe French and German.

The main majority languages within the European Union are German, English and French. Given the large number of people who speak these languages (German has approximately 92 million speakers and English and French 60 million speakers each; Smeets 1999: 384) and the cultural and political positions and economic power these languages represent, German, English and French will undeniably be the most used, and have the highest status, at the individual and institutional levels in a united Europe (Ammon 1996). English as the language of international information and communication technology, science and entertainment industry will undoubtedly have the best qualifications in this respect.

Nowadays, it is for example impossible to imagine Dutch TV commercials without English one third of the messages are partly or totally in English (Gijsbers et al. 1998). As a language of science English by now has an almost omnipresent and unassailable position. The question "*Ist Deutsch noch internationale Wissenschaftssprache?*" which is the title of a recent German study (Ammon 1998) is in the subtitle of this very study implicitly answered as follows "*Englisch auch für die Lehre an den deutschsprachigen Hochschulen*" English as a language of instruction in German higher education - the only thing that is still missing is an exclamation mark. The commotion that was created some years ago in the Netherlands by a ministerial plea for using English as a medium of instruction in university education and the since then ensuing discussion in that perspective seems somewhat outdated and showing little awareness of the existing situation (De Bot 1994; Kroon / Sturm 1994).

A second group of majority languages is formed by the medium-sized European national languages such as Italian (57 million speakers), Spanish (39 million speakers) and Dutch (21 million speakers), and the smaller languages such as Portuguese (10 million speakers), Greek (10 million speakers), Swedish (8.3 million speakers), Danish (5 million speakers), and Finnish (5 million speakers) (Smeets 1999: 384-385). In this categorization Dutch is considered the smallest of the medium-sized languages; one could, however, also imagine a categorization in which Dutch is the biggest of the smaller languages - depending of the message, of course, that one might want to communicate.

It is generally assumed that the smaller and medium-sized national languages will come under considerable pressure in a unified Europe, especially at the institutional level. This concerns the use and position of these languages in

general, and their position and use within the institutions of the European Union in particular.

Article 6 of the 1958 *Council Regulation No 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Community* says that "The institutions of the Community may stipulate in their rules of procedures which of the languages are to be used in specific cases" (Coulmas 1991: 38). As a consequence of this article, in European institutions, the eleven official and working languages of the European Union are not all used to the same extent. The following overview of official languages used in European institutions is based on the inventory by Smeets (1999: 386-387).

Citizens of member states have the right to address the institutions of the European Union in one of the eleven official languages and in Irish or Catalan, and they have the right to be answered in the same language. Also the European Court of Justice accepts the official languages. The European Parliament, which is elected by the European citizens, in its meetings is using all official languages. In its various commissions and bodies and its bureaucracy, however, less languages are used. Other European institutions, generally speaking, use less languages than the Parliament; documents, however, that are binding to all member states, are published in all official languages and in Irish. The European Commisson, the Council of Europe and NATO in their meetings use English and French; the European Free Trade Association uses English as a working language, Eurocorps German and French, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe English, French, Italian, Russian and Spanish, the European Trade Mark Office French, German, English, Italian and Spa-nish. In order to ensure mutual understanding within and between European institutions extensive interpretation and translation services have been esta-blished.

3. Medium-sized and smaller national languages

Whereas the large dominant European languages as well as the indigenous and non-indigenous minority languages are the object of considerable scientific and political interest, remarkably little attention from the side of language policy has been paid so far to the medium-sized and smaller national languages in Europe. This becomes even more remarkable against the background of the potentially threatened position of these languages in terms of status and use, and their growing number as a result of the European Union's future expansion.

At the language-use level, the languages in question are threatened in two ways. On the one hand, the process of European unification and the increase in scale may lead to a situation in which the national state and its language as historical points of reference and identification for the individual citizen, are replaced by

the region and the regional language. Where the national context becomes rather vague and the international context has not yet fully crystallized, the individual will most likely opt for identification with his immediate social environment. The ongoing media campaign that accompanies the introduction of a European currency may have succeeded in making European citizens believe that "the EURO belongs to all of us"; when it comes to language, however, people rather seem to prefer something of their own. On the other hand, there is also the possibility that some - or all - of the citizens will actually take the step towards identification with the larger context of the Union and that the national language will consequently have to compete with - and will eventually be replaced by - major European languages such as English, German or French emerging as a linguae francae. (The chances of Esperanto or any other artifical language getting this position are negligible; cf. Eco 1995.) The growing interest, at least in the Netherlands and as yet especially in the higher social classes, for international schools and bilingual secondary education with En-glish as a language of instruction in parts of the curriculum can be considered a forerunner of this development. Or this may be a reflection of an undercurrent that parents and schools may have perceived earlier and more clearly than policy makers. Until now, no empirical research has been carried out to reveal which of the two scenarios concerning the language attitudes and language use habits of individuals and groups is the most likely one. Furthermore, it is still not clear to what extent studies into the status and use of different types of minority languages and large national languages are relevant to medium-sized and small national languages.

Apart from the consequences for the language use habits of individuals and groups, the above-mentioned developments may also have consequences for the institutional status and use of these languages in the European Union. The labelling of food products is a clear example of this. In 1994 the Netherlands, as a member of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the European Community, voted against a Belgian proposal to oblige producers to inform consumers about their products by label information in their own language. As has been mentioned above, eleven national languages are at the same time the working languages of the European Union. Despite this equality, conflicts and competitive struggles are frequent, and obviously the larger languages "win" them more often than the medium-sized and smaller ones. The question is what will happen if more countries join the European Union. The countries that have applied for membership so far will considerably broaden the spectrum of medium-sized and smaller languages. The costs of institutional multilingualism in the European Union are now already considerable 15% of all European Union personell is engaged in interpretation and translation services (Ammon 1996) and the costs of these services varies from 60% of the administrative budget in

case of the European Parliament to 35% of the European Commission budget (Smeets 1999). And still, according to Ammon (1996), complaints by member states concerning language discrimination are considerable. Costs and complaints are likely to increase even further when new countries join the Union. It is therefore not inconceivable, also for reasons of a utilitarian and financial-economic nature, that there will be a shift in favour of the exclusively institutional use of one or more "large" languages in the Union in the long term. Given the more or less presupposed central interrelationship between language and identity and the desire to maintain this identity also in a united Europe, which may be regarded as a *Europe des patries*, it is beyond doubt that, at the national and Union levels, such a shift - independent of the chosen language - will lead to hardly empirically based but heated language-political debates.

4. Contributions to a European language policy

One of the many objectives of the *Nederlandse Taalunie* (NTU, Dutch Language Union), a 1980 treaty between the Netherlands and Belgium, more specifically Flanders, is "to pursue, in an international context, a common policy in relation to the Dutch language and literature, particularly in the European Communities" (*NTU Treaty*, Article 4, par. f). Such a policy can only be sound and effective if it is based on empirical data and scientific knowledge regarding the nature and consequences of the outlined processes of language contact. By facilitating the organization of the international conference on Institutional Status and Use of National Languages in Europe and the publication of this book, the NTU hoped to contribute to the establishment of a scientific knowledge base that may be relevant for the formulation of a European language policy that takes into consideration various types of dominant national languages as well as various types of non-dominant languages.

As far as the policymaking work of the NTU itself is concerned, the important question is what factors play a role in present and future shifts in status and use of national languages. Is it possible to map out these factors accurately? What effect may policy have on these developments? Which policy instruments are required? How can the effects of policy be measured in this respect? Scientific knowledge in this area may lay the foundation for the formulation of a NTU policy aimed, first of all, at defining the position of Dutch in the European as well as in a larger international context.

The conference for that reason had a dual objective. Taking the institutional position of Dutch as a medium-sized national language in the changing European linguistic landscape as a point of reference, it first of all wanted to encourage a scientific debate about the language-political position of national languages in the European Union. By starting from scientific insights and em-

pirical research data, it was attempted to transcend the unilateral ideological context in which such discussions often take place. The scientific knowledge and research data that were presented deal with the changes in status and use of national languages in institutional contexts, and the formulation, implementation and evaluation of language-political measures in this connection. Secondly the conference aimed at the evaluation of the presented knowledge and research data in terms of policy and their translation into national and/or European positions and interventions in language policy which may influence and prevent the decrease in status of a medium-sized national language such as Dutch.Throughout the conference, the two key questions were (1) what does the information presented add to the language-political knowledge base, and (2) what does it teach us about policymaking regarding the status and use of medium-sized national languages in Europe, and more particularly, about the status and use of Dutch in institutional contexts in the EU?

Apart from the plenary opening lecture of the conference by Abram de Swaan that outlined a general conceptual framework for language-political research and policymaking in relation to the position of national languages in general and the European Union in particular (De Swaan 1999), in parallel presentations, the conference theme was subsequently approached from two different angles. The first angle is that of the various schools, movements, theoretical approaches and conceptual perspectives in the scientific study of language policy. Representatives of these perspectives were invited to make a contribution, the only explicit requirement being that their specific viewpoint be applied directly to the central questions formulated above. The following perspectives were represented at the conference the eco-linguistic or linguistic-human-rights approach (respresented by Harald Weydt and Mart Rannut), the economic-linguistic approach (represented by *François Grin* and *Theo Bungarten*), and the sociolinguistic approach to language politics (represented by Gunther Kress, *Miquel Strubell*, *Georges Luedi* and *Rosita Rindler-Schjerve*). The second anglė did not take the theoretical position of a researcher or school as a starting point, but rather his or her actual research object. This involved the presentation of language-political case studies from various countries, in which the emphasis was not on the case itself, but on the contribution it may make towards answering the questions formulated at the conference. Cases that were discussed from a comparative perspective include France (represented by Claude Truchot) and Germany (represented by *Georg Hansen*), the Scandinavian countries (represented by *Mikael Reuter*) and Belgium/Brussels (represented by *Kas Deprez*), Switzerland (represented by *Raphael Berthele*) and Luxembourg (represented by *Nico Weber*), Catalonia and Wales (represented by *Sue Wright*) and the United Kingdom (represented by Steven Hagen). The names of the contributors whose presentations finally lead to an article in

this book are in italics. The articles from the theoretical perspective can be found in Part II of the book, the case studies in Part III (in alphabetical order).

At the end of the conference the Secretary General of the NTU, *Koen Jaspaert*, in a plenary address took stock of the results that could be drawn from the conference from a Dutch/Flemish perspective with respect to the development of a European language policy and the formulation of research desiderata that may support such a development. His contribution can be found in Part IV.

It would be an overstatement to claim here that the conference succeeded fully in its aims. It turned out to be rather difficult to first of all "force" representatives of the various fields of research that are obviously related to language policy questions to specify the relevance of their theoretical approach to the concrete question of status and use of (medium-sized and small) national languages in Europe, and secondly, to "force" specialists in a very specific region or language to generalize the relevance of their research findings to that very same question. We therefore refrain here from giving final answers but simply under three general headings make up an inventory of points that for some reason or another seem to be relevant when considering the development of a European language policy and conducting research in order to support such development.

Language policies for multilingualism, diglossia or triglossia

In developing national language policies the actors, i.e. governements or state agencies dealing with language planning, have to be aware of the dual tendency of losing their political grip of language and language education issues to supra-national bodies on the one hand, and to sub-national bodies on the other hand. This tendency seems to be related with the growing trend of both regional and local varieties and linguae francae to take over certain functions that hitherto indisputably belonged to national languages. This development potentially leads to a kind of functional triglossia in which the local/regional, national and international languages each have their own domain (Rindler-Schjerve). In order to be able to elaborate on this point, research is needed regarding the functional distribution of the three (types of) languages involved. The plea for research in this field becomes even more urgent in view of the processes of language maintenance and loss in which speakers of indigenous and non-indigenous non-dominant languages are involved.

The majority of countries in multilingual Europe are characterized by the fact that, apart from one or more national and international languages also local or regional indigenous and non-indigenous immigrant minority languages are spoken by their inhabitants. In this context it is not always very clear whether pleas for "multilingualism" or "using more than one language" are inspired by

mere "window dressing", by an unarticulate aversion to English, by a desire to promote the "own" minority language or by a sincere interest in the positive cognitive, social and economic sides of multilingualism (Truchot). An interesting finding in this context is the fact that European language policies promoting multilingualism are often confined to using other European languages and hardly include big languages from other parts of the world such as Arabic, Chinese and Japanese that already have an undeniable and still growing economic importance.

Language learning policies

There seems to be a lot of support for a model of multilingualism in which European citizens apart from knowing the official working language of their country through foreign language teaching acquire productive and receptive skills in a second language of the European Union and just receptive skills in a third Union language (Hansen; Commissie 1995). As far as civil servants in the European bureaucracy are concerned, the teaching of, for example, Dutch as a foreign language could follow the Swiss model of training in component skills, and focus on receptive oral and written language skills (Berthele). Research should be conducted, however, with respect to the usefulness of isolated component skills in real communicative situations.

Until now hardly any research has been carried out regarding the effects of language policy measures. Does, for example, their level of proficiency in English enable Dutchmen or Flemings to read and understand label information on food products in English? What, generally speaking, is the level of functional foreign language proficiency of European citizens, and how is this affected by national and European language policy measures?

A central point of attention for European language policy development has to be the field of acquisition planning, which "is directed toward increasing the number of users - speakers, writers, listeners, or readers" of a language (Cooper 1989: 33). This field not only has to be concerned with the organization of language teaching within the formal educational system, for example organizing national and foreign language teaching or facilitating forms of bilingual education for indigenous and non-indigenous minority languages as well as in border areas (cf. Hansen), but also and even more so "with the management of language instruction and language use outside the formal education system" (Lambert 1999: 3). This field, that mainly has to do with adult occupational language learning inspired by economic or professional needs or motives, seems to be mainly occupied by commercial language institutes. Empirical data regarding the economic relevance of learning (especially medium-sized or smaller) languages and the development of machines for automatic translation and lan-

guage specific computer software are not available.

From an economic-linguistic perspective on multilingualism it seems to be obvious that exclusive knowledge of English is not enough anymore for an individual in present-day Europe to gain access to higher jobs and income. The cost-benefit analysis of language policy options therefore has to get much more attention than it has received until now (Grin). This includes questions such as what are the costs of bilingual education, when does (foreign) language teaching has to start in order to be cost-effective, what about the cost-benefit analysis of aiming at partial competences in various languages?

What works in language policy?

Over-simplified copying of language policy solutions that have proven or just seem to be succesfull in local or national multilingual contexts to other contexts seems to be problematic. Therefore the Swiss and Luxemburg models, to mention just two examples, cannot simply be taken as a model for larger entities such as the European Union as a whole (cf. Weber; Lüdi). As the cases of Belgium, Wales and Catalonia show, language policy measures that aim at the protection or suppression of a given language may lead to positive or negative consequences for that language (Deprez; Wright; see also De Vries 1995). Although it generally speaking turns out to be very difficult to predict the effect of policy measures (Cooper 1989), at least broad support in large sections of the population seems to be a prerequisite for succesful language political action. One of the main fallacies in this respect is the absence of sound empirical data with respect to language attitudes of European citizens regarding their own and others' languages.

Language policy research and language policy development seems to be rather self-centered. Researchers hardly cross the borders of their own language policy related disciplines and seem to be rather hesitant to take research data from other scientific or societal sources into consideration or to contribute, in collaboration with for example governmental bodies, to the formulation of language policy recommendation. When it comes to formulating language policies, policy makers, generally speaking seem to be bound to national considerations, hardly ever crossing national boundaries and including international viewpoints. Joint international research into language policy development is needed and at the same time a joint international effort, based on the results of that research, in formulating a European language policy that takes into account indigenous and non-indigenous, national and non-national, dominant and non-dominant, big, medium-sized and smaller languages. The NTU, in collaboration with comparable agencies in other countries, and with institutions at the level of the European Union could start such an initiave, thereby

guaranteeing that especially medium-sized and small national languages like Dutch and Danish, to mention just two examples, in this framework get the attention they deserve.

Generally speaking, apart from contributing to the establishment of a scientific knowledge base for European language policy development, the conference aimed at finding a balance between the growing political, economic and monetary unification of the European space on the one hand and the permanent safeguarding of cultural and linguistic diversity and pluriformity on the other hand European unification and even globalisation in the perspective of Euripides' "*varietas delectat*" without much room for boring uniformity. It is hoped that also this collection will contribute to this aim.

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