



# **POSITION PAPER AND ACTION PLAN based on THE EUROPEAN ROADMAP FOR LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

**Towards a new approach on languages  
as part of the European Agenda 2020**



The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity is an international network consisting of 43 members representing state or regional authorities, academic institutions, or other organizations that aim at promoting the language maintenance, use and revitalization of European minoritized languages. It has its main office in Brussels. The members can be found in 11 countries, but the network is open for additional members.

In 2015 the NPLD published *The European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity*, in order to substantiate and formalize the strategic aims of its policy and practical work for the benefit of the Constitutional, Regional or Smaller State (CRSS) languages, that are used within and among the members of the network. Due to changes in the conditions regulating and facilitating the promotion of these languages, both internationally and at national and regional levels, the NPLD now has renewed and developed a document, that for the closest future will function with similar, language policy aims as the Roadmap.

The NPLD represents at this moment<sup>i</sup> 21 European languages<sup>ii</sup>.

## Introduction

The language policy impact work that the NPLD decided to focus on during the preceding years, from about 2015, when the *European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity* was launched and disseminated, to 2018, concentrated on issues mainly summarized and formulated in the Roadmap. These in turn were the results of the preceding period, which were seen to be in need of being formally stated in an overarching policy and action document, which thus eventually took form in the Roadmap.

In parallel to these developments, however, the structure and internal division of labour within the NPLD took new forms and were re-established. An additional dimension was the impact of novel conditions for funding an international network of this kind. These changes partly explain the outcome of some of the challenges of the work of NPLD and its Roadmap, both fulfilled and unfulfilled.

Now, when considering next steps of extended and deepened directions of work for the NPLD and its Constitutional, Regional or Smaller State (CRSS) languages, and largely based on the content of the Roadmap, a need of retrospection arises, of how and to what extent the targets of the Roadmap were followed up and achieved. Simultaneously, formulations of new targets and necessary ambitions for an even more successful work for the CRSS languages are foreseen.

Many external factors, that is, societal, economic and political developments, also press for such an updated document to be produced. The introduction of digital technologies in many fields of private and public life, add to the increasingly complex context of European linguistic diversity.

Part of the mentioned retrospection will be briefly dealt with in the section titled Evaluation of the work on the Roadmap below, and to some extent, in the section on Implementation of the Roadmap, which will complete this brief retrospective overview of earlier developments.

After these sections, the plans for future actions and positionings will be introduced, and later concretely formulated in further sections of this report.

Even if the Roadmap fulfilled many of its intended functions, for example work summarized under the following sections, other aims were not developed or achieved. Such a short recapitulation of the work of the NPLD, connected to the Roadmap, will function as an introductory basis for the formulation of new aims, plans and language policy strategies, presented further below in the report.

### Background and aims of the European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity

The aim of *The European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity* -launched in 2015- is to reaffirm the European Union's commitment to linguistic diversity and to ensure that the languages spoken in Europe, international, national, regional, minority, endangered and migrant languages are seen as common assets which need to be supported, promoted and protected.

The *European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity* contains **four major practical lines of action** which, if implemented, would ensure that the European Union translates its positive vision regarding linguistic diversity into concrete, tangible and far-reaching measures.

#### The legal status of the languages:

- 🗨 The European Union/Institutions should provide protection, support and visibility to the languages of Europe by acknowledging their intrinsic value and granting them the highest possible degree of recognition;
- 🗨 And ensure that all the languages of Europe are eligible to participate in EU programmes, initiatives and projects.

#### Language skills as an economic, educational and cultural driver:

- 🗨 The European Union/Institutions should embed all languages within the EU strategy on growth, competitiveness and jobs for the local, regional, national and international economies;

- Promote all languages for different types of mobility; international mobility in which *lingua franca* and transnational languages play a determinant role, along with cross-border regional mobility in which regional and minority languages represent an added value.
- And promote the use of regional or minority languages in socio-economic activities and in the private sector including everyday consumer products.

#### ICTs at the service of language learning:

- The European Union/Institutions should ensure that all European language communities, regardless of number of speakers, are able to participate in the development of relevant European ICT initiatives;
- And take advantage of new technologies and unlock their full potential to provide a wider range of multilingual services to European citizens in areas such as intercultural mediation in public services.

#### Support for the most vulnerable languages of Europe:

- The European Union/Institutions should encourage Member States to provide legal recognition and to support and promote the use of Europe's regional, minority and endangered languages;
- Adopt measures of visibility, awareness-raising and support for Europe's regional, minority and endangered languages and include them in the new narrative of European growth and prosperity;
- Work in close contact with the Council of Europe to further develop the impact of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and encourage all EU Member States sign and ratify the Charter, as appropriate to their jurisdictions;
- Support the inclusion of language rights within the Charter for Fundamental Rights;

- 🗨️ Develop multilevel cooperation between the European institutions, Member States and regions and encourage the removal of still-existing barriers to the promotion of regional, minority or lesser-used languages in public or private life;
- 🗨️ And support sociolinguistic research on lesser-used and endangered languages.









### Future activities and a new position paper



Though the Roadmap as such was not fully instantiated, many of its aspects have been followed up with various centrally directed actions of the NPLD and by regional achievements. Some of these have been successful, others remain to be taken further. In addition, some other, international aspects, many of which depend on the lack of support for the protection and promotion of CRSS languages among the European institutions, need to be either repeatedly discussed and targeted, or, to be updated and reformulated. Also changes in technologies contribute to challenging the existential conditions for these languages.

Whereas the Roadmap may be seen as a list of long-term core targets and policy aims for the NPLD, there is nevertheless a timely need to reformulate new actions and views. This type of further step in the language policy issues stated in the Roadmap, needs to go in the direction of a higher level of concrete activities and recommendations. This is what is aimed at, on the one hand in the Action plan section below, and on the other, in the Position paper of the NDPL following the Action plan.









For the fulfilment of both the actions and the position recommendations, it is clear that the work of the NPLD is even more needed today, than it was at the time of the launch of the Linguistic Roadmap.

## NPLD Position Paper



-  The European Parliament should encourage the adoption of a European Charter of Linguistic Rights based on existing legal frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Languages Rights and the article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.
-  The European Union should provide protection, support and visibility to the languages of Europe by acknowledging their intrinsic value and granting them the highest possible degree of recognition, in order to ensure that the Constitutional Regional Small States (CRSS) languages of Europe are eligible to participate in EU programs, initiatives and projects.
-  The identified goal by the EU is a Europe where everyone can speak at least two other languages in addition to their first languages with a special emphasis on minoritised languages. Therefore, the identified multilingualism goal should be updated to 2+2 languages.
-  The European Union should support and provide training for teachers, school leaders and vocational education trainers to guarantee that all European students have access to education in their first languages, with a special emphasis on minoritised languages.
-  The European Union should support, coordinate and/or supplement actions of the Member States also in the field of language policy, which is currently determined on the national/regional level.
-  The European regulations on the labelling and instructions for the use of products and consumer goods marketed in the territory of the European Union should promote the inclusion of CRSS languages.
-  The European Commission should ensure that the Digital Single Market must be multilingual and to put a special emphasis on the reverse of the digital fragmentation of the cross-border languages.
-  The New Digital Technologies can play an important role in order to improve language equality in Europe; the European Union policies should focus on fostering technology development for all the European languages.

-  The European institutions should adopt the Copenhagen criteria in order to encourage the Member States of the European Union to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.
-  The Council of Europe should improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages and implement the content of the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages among the ratifying parties. The Council of Europe should also analyse the impact of the Charter for the languages involved since its inception.

### Action Plan 2019-2020

-  Juvenes Translatores: action to enable the participation of all the languages represented by the NPLD.
-  Interactive Terminology for Europe (IATE): action to include all the languages represented by the NPLD in the public version of IATE.
-  Official languages at the European Parliament: action to increase the use of languages at the European Parliament.
-  European Capital of the Linguistic Diversity: action to raise awareness of the territories characterised by its best practices towards the respect and the promotion of the linguistic diversity.
-  Europass/Language Passport: action to achieve the inclusion in the Europass of all European languages present in the education and training system.
-  Language and education: action to work with EU officials on the need to go beyond the “Mother Tongue + 2 formula” which is outdated in today’s education systems in Europe.
-  Migration in bilingual territories: action to work on language measures for the integration of migrants in bilingual territories.
-  Language indicators: action to set a table of indicators to measure the vitality of a language.



-  Letter to the Council of Europe: action to send a letter to the Council of Europe to inquire an evaluation of the impact of the Charter for the Regional or Minority Languages on the languages object of protection.
-  Educational Guidelines: action to translate into the NPLD languages the Educational Guidelines.

### Review of the Action Plan 2019-2020

The developments of the Action Plan will be evaluated every six months and shall be included on the agenda of NPLD meetings.

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<sup>i</sup> May 2019

<sup>ii</sup> Catalan, Basque, Galician, Occitan, Alsatian/Platt, Breton, Corsican, Cornish, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Finnish, Swedish, Kashubian, Hungarian, Macedonian, Ladin, Mòcheno, Cimbrian, Friulian and Frisian.