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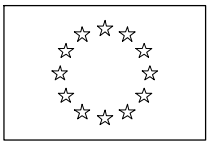
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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 18.9.2008
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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction 3
2. The Challenges of a larger and more diverse EU 4
3. Objectives 5
4. Multilingualism for intercultural dialogue and social cohesion 5
4.1. Valuing all languages 6
4.2. Overcoming language barriers in the local environment 6
5. Multilingualism for prosperity 7
5.1. Languages and competitiveness 8
5.2. Languages and employability 8
6. Lifelong learning 10
6.1. More opportunities to learn more languages 10
6.2. Effective language teaching 11
7. The media, new technologies and translation 12
8. The external dimension of multilingualism 14
9. Implementation 15
10. Conclusions 15

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment

Linguistic diversity is a challenge for Europe, but, in our view, a rewarding challenge (Amin Maalouf, Group of Intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue)

1. INTRODUCTION

The harmonious co-existence of many languages in Europe is a powerful symbol of the European Union's aspiration to be united in diversity, one of the cornerstones of the European project. Languages define personal identities, but are also part of a shared inheritance. They can serve as a bridge to other people and open access to other countries and cultures, promoting mutual understanding. A successful multilingualism policy can strengthen life chances of citizens: it may increase their employability, facilitate access to services and rights and contribute to solidarity through enhanced intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. Approached in this spirit, linguistic diversity can become a precious asset, increasingly so in today's globalised world.

The Commission's renewed social Agenda, adopted on 2 July 2008, set out a new approach to managing change in our globalising world focusing on the key principles of opportunities, access and solidarity. In a multilingual European Union, this means that: i) everybody should have the opportunity to communicate appropriately in order to realise his or her potential and make the most of the opportunities offered by the modern and innovative EU; ii) everybody should have access to appropriate language training or to other means of facilitating communication so that there is no undue linguistic obstacle to living, working or communicating in the EU; iii) in the spirit of solidarity, even those who may not be able to learn other languages should be provided with appropriate means of communication, allowing them access to the multilingual environment.

The 2005 Commission communication *A new framework strategy for multilingualism*[1] reaffirmed the value of linguistic diversity and revealed the need for a broader policy to promote multilingualism[2], as recommended by the independent High Level Group on Multilingualism[3]. This analysis was confirmed by a broad consultation[4] in 2007-08 which included an online consultation attracting over 2 400 replies, and two advisory groups reporting on the contribution of multilingualism to intercultural dialogue and on the role played by languages in business[5].

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1 COM(2005) 596.

2 See the Staff Working Paper accompanying this communication: *Inventory of Community actions in the field of multilingualism.*

3 See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/archive/languages_en.html.

4 http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/news/index_en.html.

5 http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/archive/languages_en.html.

The Commission has also listened to other EU institutions. The European Parliament has produced several reports of great interest[6], and both the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions have been asked for opinions[7]. The Council's first ministerial conference on multilingualism took place on 15 February 2008 with a view to preparing the ground for a broader policy.

Member States are the key decision-makers on language policy, including on regional and minority languages, for which the Council of Europe's *European Charter for Regional or Minority languages* provides a comprehensive framework. Many other organisations take decisions on the ground on language issues: educational providers, regional and local authorities, social partners, media and services. The Commission works with Member States and stakeholders, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, to ensure that objectives are shared, and will assist them in their efforts, notably by easing the exchange of good practices.

Within this context, the Commission has worked since 2002 with Member States towards the Barcelona objective of enabling citizens to communicate in two languages in addition to their mother tongue, in particular, by developing an indicator of language competence[8], by setting out strategic action and recommendations, and by including skills in foreign languages among the key competences for lifelong learning[9].

Building on the progress of earlier years, this communication aims to achieve a qualitative shift, by presenting a policy that is widely shared and comprehensive, going beyond education to address languages in the wider context set by the EU Agenda for social cohesion and prosperity, the two central objectives of the Lisbon strategy.

2. THE CHALLENGES OF A LARGER AND MORE DIVERSE EU

Today's European societies are facing rapid change due to globalisation, technological advances and ageing populations. The greater mobility of Europeans - currently 10 million Europeans work in other Member States - is an important sign of this change. Increasingly people interact with their counterparts from other countries while growing numbers live and work outside their home country. This process is further reinforced by the recent enlargements of the EU. The EU now has 500 million citizens, 27 Member States, 3 alphabets and 23 EU official languages, some of them with a worldwide coverage. Some 60 other languages are also part of the EU heritage and are spoken in specific regions or by specific groups. In addition, immigrants have brought a wide range of languages with them: it is estimated that at least 175 nationalities are now present within the EU's borders[10]. Due to

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6 *Report from the European Parliament with recommendations to the Commission on European regional and lesser-used languages — the languages of minorities in the EU — in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity* (A5-0271/2003); *European Parliament resolution on integrating immigrants in Europe through schools and multilingual education* (2004/2267(INI); *European Parliament resolution on a new framework strategy for multilingualism* (2006/2083(INI).

7 http://coropinions.cor.europa.eu/CORopinionDocument.aspx?identifier=cdr\educ-iv\dossiers\educ-iv-022\cdr6-2008_fin_ac.doc&language=EN and http://www.eesc.europa.eu/documents/opinions/avis_en.asp?type=en

8 COM(2005) 356; COM(2007) 184. 2006/962/EC.

9 COM(2003) 449, *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006*; COM(2005) 596, *A new framework strategy for multilingualism*. See also the *Report on the implementation of the Action Plan*, COM(2007)554.

10 Eurostat, *Europe in Figures: Eurostat Yearbook 2006-2007*, Luxembourg 2007.

these and other factors, the life of Europeans has become more international and more multilingual.

While this increased linguistic diversity is a source of benefit and richness, without adequate policies, it presents challenges. It can widen the communication gap between people of different cultures and increase social divisions, giving the multilingual access to better living and working opportunities while excluding the monolingual. It can prevent EU citizens and companies from fully exploiting the opportunities offered by the single market, and possibly blunt their competitive edge abroad. It can also be an obstacle to effective cross-border administrative cooperation between Member States in the EU and the efficient working of local services, e.g. hospitals, courts, job centres, etc.

The current challenge is to minimise the obstacles that EU citizens and companies encounter and to empower them to take advantage of the opportunities presented by multilingualism. It is also to show that languages can work as an asset for the benefit of the European society as a whole.

3. OBJECTIVES

This communication concentrates on people: their ability to use several languages, their opportunity to access culture and participate as active citizens, to benefit from better communication, inclusiveness and wider employment and business opportunities. The main objective is therefore **to raise awareness of the value and opportunities of the EU's linguistic diversity and encourage the removal of barriers to intercultural dialogue.**

A key instrument in this respect is the Barcelona objective - **communication in mother tongue plus two languages.** More effort is needed towards achieving this objective for all citizens**.**

Concrete measures are also needed for a large part of European society, which is still missing out on the advantages of multilingualism, e.g. those who are monolingual or still struggle with their first foreign language, school dropouts, senior citizens and other adults no longer in education. New learning solutions are called for to reach these specific groups through edutainment, the media and technologies, but also suitable translation and interpretation services. More work is necessary to facilitate language learning for adults and young people in vocational education and training (VET), which should be adapted to their personal needs and learning styles.

A concerted effort is required to ensure that, within existing resources, multilingualism is 'mainstreamed' across a series of EU policy areas, including lifelong learning, employment, social inclusion, competitiveness, culture, youth and civil society, research and the media. The following chapters outline key aspects of this **inclusive approach** aimed at widening the scope of multilingualism to social cohesion and prosperity, i.e. to foster successful companies, including SMEs, competitive business and trade, employability, and integration, wellbeing and leisure in one's daily life and surroundings.

4. MULTILINGUALISM FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND SOCIAL COHESION

Each of the many national, regional, minority and migrant languages spoken in Europe adds a facet to our common cultural background. It should be shared to foster dialogue and mutual

respect. There are areas in the EU where citizens successfully combine speaking a regional or minority language with the national language and score well in foreign languages too. Multilingual people are a precious asset because they act as the glue between different cultures.

4.1. Valuing all languages

In the current context of increased mobility and migration, mastering the national language(s) is fundamental to integrating successfully and playing an active role in society. Non-native speakers should therefore include the host-country language in their 'one-plus-two' combination.

There are also untapped linguistic resources in our society: different mother tongues and other languages spoken at home and in local and neighbouring environments should be valued more highly. For instance, children with different mother tongues — whether from the EU or a third country — present schools with the challenge of teaching the language of instruction as a second language[11], but they can also motivate their classmates to learn different languages and open up to other cultures.

With a view to allowing closer links between communities, the Commission's advisory group on multilingualism and intercultural dialogue[12] developed the concept of a 'personal adoptive language', which could usefully benefit from a further reflection[13].

4.2. Overcoming language barriers in the local environment

A basic feature of citizenship is that people living in a local community can benefit from the services available and are able to contribute to the life of their neighbourhood. Tourists, foreign workers or students, and immigrants often come to local communities with limited proficiency in the national language. To ease access to services and ensure a smooth integration, some communities make basic necessary information available in different languages and rely on multilingual people to act as cultural mediators and interpreters. In particular, metropolitan areas and tourist resorts in Europe have gained considerable experience in coping with the needs of foreigners who do not speak the local language. The Commission attaches great importance to this and will support the dissemination of good practices in this area[14].

To facilitate cross-border provision and reception of services, the Points of Single Contact, which will be established on the national level by the end of 2009 under the Services

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[11] COM(2008) 423 final, Green Paper. *Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems*

[12] To mark the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the Commission set up a Group of Intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue chaired by Amin Maalouf to define multilingualism's contribution; see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/archive/languages_en.html for its report.

[13] "A language which should be learned intensively, spoken and written fluently (…) Learning that language would go hand in hand with familiarity with the country/countries in which that language is used, along with the literature, culture, society and history linked with that language and its speakers."

[14] Outlook Opinion of the Committee of the Regions http://coropinions.cor.europa.eu/COROpinionDocument.aspx?identifier=cdr\educ-iv\dossiers\educ-iv-022\cdr6-2008_fin_ac.doc&language=EN

Directive[15], will be encouraged to provide necessary information in different languages to service providers from other Member States as well as to recipients of services.

An area which deserves particular attention is legal translation and interpretation[16]. Given the increasing professional and personal mobility of EU citizens between Member States, growing demand for such support is likely, as the number of cases involving persons with limited skills in the court's language increases.

The Commission will make strategic use of relevant EU programmes and initiatives[17] to bring multilingualism closer to the citizen:

- *run awareness-raising campaigns on the benefits of linguistic diversity and language learning for intercultural dialogue*
- *monitor citizens' language skills through the Language Indicators and Eurobarometer surveys*
- *together with the Member States, exchange good practices, train and network legal interpreters and translators and develop specific translation tools to access documents in order to improve access to justice*

The Member States are invited to:

- *make efforts in order to have Points of Single Contact under the Services Directive working in several languages to facilitate cross-border provision of services*
- *facilitate access to targeted courses of the host country's language(s) for non native speakers*

5. MULTILINGUALISM FOR PROSPERITY

Languages can be a competitive advantage for EU business. Multilingual companies prove how linguistic diversity and investing in language and intercultural skills can be turned into a real asset for prosperity and a benefit for all. Some European languages are widely spoken around the world and can be a valuable communication tool for business.

The Business Forum for Multilingualism[18] made recommendations to boost competitiveness and improve employability through better management of linguistic diversity. The Forum pointed out that emerging markets such as Brazil, Russia, India and China are increasingly important for EU companies and adequate language skills are needed to compete there. The

15 Directive 123/2006/EC on services in the internal market (OJ L 376, 27.12.2006, p. 36).

16 COM(2008) 329, *Towards a European e-Justice Strategy*.

17 The accompanying Staff Working Paper: *Inventory of Community actions in the field of multilingualism* gives an overview of the existing actions and programme supporting multilingualism.

18 *Companies work better with languages*, July 2008 http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/news/news1669_en.htm

challenge, therefore, is to root multilingualism in all strategies aimed at developing human capital[19].

5.1. Languages and competitiveness

A Commission study on the impact on the EU economy of shortages of foreign language skills in enterprise[20] estimated that 11% of exporting EU SMEs may be losing business because of language barriers. Although English has a leading role as the business language of the world, it is other languages that will provide EU companies with a competitive edge and allow them to conquer new markets. Better language skills are an asset across all activities, not only for sales and marketing. All companies interact with different categories of service providers and upstream suppliers. However, in many cases, businesses — SMEs in particular — lack the know-how and the resources to incorporate languages into their business plans.

Multicultural workforces need adequate training in the language of their company, but companies need to go further, and find creative ways of using the language resources that exist, but are often hidden, in their multicultural workforces.

As the Business Forum stated, companies and business associations could usefully develop strategies to improve language skills for different functions. Such language management strategies would also have a positive impact on the 'language industry' providing translation and interpretation services and multilingual technology. It would also be in their interest to invest in language training and, together with national, regional and local authorities, set up private-public partnerships providing assistance for the business community, in particular SMEs, to fund language courses and develop other methods of improving language strategies.

5.2. Languages and employability

Linguistic and intercultural skills increase the chances of obtaining a better job. In particular, command of several foreign languages gives a competitive advantage: companies are increasingly looking for skills in a number of languages to conduct business in the EU and abroad. Those mastering more languages can choose among a wider range of job offers, including jobs abroad: lack of language skills is reported as the primary barrier to working abroad[21]. There is empirical evidence that skill in several languages fosters creativity and innovation: multilingual people are aware that problems can be tackled in different ways according to different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and can use this ability to find new solutions.

Mobility schemes, such as those supported by the Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes, should be made widely available to EU citizens[22]. Studying or working abroad is one of the most effective ways of learning other languages and making contact with other cultures. Erasmus students ranked the improvement of language skills as the foremost benefit

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19 See COM(2008) 394, Think Small First. A Small Business Act for Europe

20 CILT, *Effects on the European Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise, 2007,* http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/key/studies_en.html.

21 COM(2007) 773 final, *Mobility, an instrument for more and better jobs: The European Job Mobility Action Plan (2007-2010).*

22 *Making learning mobility an opportunity for all*, July 2008 http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/2008/mobilityreport_en.pdf

of their period abroad. Education and training curricula should make the most of exchanges, partnerships and E-twinning with schools in other countries.

The Commission will:

- *promote mobility among students, apprentices, workers and young entrepreneurs*
- *disseminate the results of an ongoing study on the link between language skills, creativity and innovation*
- *create a permanent platform for exchange of best practice for companies, gathering relevant information from the business community, social partners, trade organisations, chambers of commerce, trade promotion organisations, schools and education authorities*

The Member States are invited to:

- *value and further develop language skills acquired outside the formal education system*
- *encourage trade promotion organisations to develop specific programmes, in particular for SMEs, that include language training*
- *supplement EU mobility schemes with specific support at national and local level*

6. LIFELONG LEARNING

So far, it is mainly students in general education who have benefited from progress towards the 'mother tongue plus two' objective, while very limited language provision, if any, is offered in vocational education. Given the smaller number of young people entering education and the goal to reach all citizens, increased focus is now needed on updating adults' competencies throughout their lives. At the same time, a wider range of languages should be made available to enable individuals to learn the languages they are more interested in.

6.1. More opportunities to learn more languages

Two previous Commission communications[23] set strategic goals and priorities to teach a wide range of languages effectively and from an early age. These remain valid and should be pursued. Although most Member States increased language learning provision in primary and secondary education between 1999 and 2005, this largely involved English[24]. In nearly half of the Member States, students still do not have the opportunity to study two languages during compulsory schooling[25], and the situation is worse for those in VET[26]. Languages are often perceived as a difficult subject and an important factor in failure at school. An effort is needed to motivate students and adapt teaching methods to their needs. The value of passive language knowledge should be further explored, and appropriate language learning methods enhanced to allow understanding and basic communication across different languages.

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23 COM(2003) 449, *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006*; COM(2005) 596, *A new framework strategy for multilingualism*. See also the *Report on the implementation of the Action Plan*, COM(2007)554.

24 M. Strubell et al., *The diversity of language teaching in the European Union*, 2007 (Report to the European Commission, DG EAC) http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/key/studies_en.html.

25 Eurydice, *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe,* 2005 Edition, http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/showPresentation?pubid=049EN.

26 Cedefop Thematic Overviews, http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/.

Students in VET should have access to practice-oriented language provision, tailor-made to their occupation and relevant to their future employment. Universities should equip students with strong language skills regardless of their fields of specialisation.

Adults are more likely to be monolingual, especially if they have relatively low qualifications and job positions. They often point to lack of time and motivation as the main reasons for not learning languages, followed by a need for more flexible provision. A specific challenge is therefore to strengthen language provision for adults[27]. Language learning outside formal education should make increased use of the media, new technologies, cultural and leisure activities.

Efforts are still needed to increase the number of languages taught, particularly in relation to the choice of second foreign language, bearing in mind local conditions (border regions, presence of communities speaking different languages, etc). The organisational challenges of widening the choice of languages could be met by using new technologies (distance teaching on the internet, videoconferencing in classrooms and virtual exchanges) and by networking between schools and education providers, partnerships with local stakeholders and twinning with foreign institutions.

6.2. Effective language teaching

The Commission has recently adopted a Communication on European cooperation on schools[28] and welcomes the recognition of the key role of teachers in enhancing language and intercultural skills in Council Conclusions on intercultural competences[29] and on multilingualism[30]. In particular, allowing teachers to spend time abroad has been identified as essential for them to improve fluency in the languages they teach and hone their intercultural skills[31]. Teacher mobility is currently very low due to: difficulties in accessing the teaching profession abroad, lack of career incentives, or even career penalties, and, last but not least, rigid mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral exchanges, which combine to discourage most teachers from applying[32].

The trend of the past five years has been to advance the introduction of language learning in primary education, while content and language integrated learning has gained ground, especially in secondary education. In many settings, languages are taught by non-language specialists who are not always fluent in the language they teach and they should receive adequate training in language teaching methods.

More recently, two other characteristics of language training have gained attention. Teachers of the national language are increasingly confronted with classrooms where students have different mother tongues, and would therefore benefit from training in the techniques required

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27 Innovative projects in this area are funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme and the European Social Fund

28 COM(2008) 425, Improving competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools

29 http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Council_Conclusions/May/0521_EYC1.pdf

30 http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Council_Conclusions/May/0521_EYC-MULTILIN.pdf.

31 P. Franklin et al., *Languages and Cultures in Europe (LACE)* http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/key/studies_en.html.

32 Williams, Strubell et al., *Detecting and Removing Obstacles to the Mobility of Foreign Language Teachers,* 2006, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/key/studies_en.html.

to teach their own language as a second or foreign language. In the case of lesser-used languages, where a lack of teachers is reported, schools often rely on untrained staff. Action is required to support them and develop their teaching skills.

The Commission:

- *will use EU programmes to support teaching of more languages through lifelong learning, teacher and student mobility, language teacher training, school partnerships, and research and development of innovative methods adapted to different target groups.*
- *will draw up an inventory of best practice in language learning and teaching in the field of multilingualism and make it available to the Member States*

The Member States are invited to:

- *provide genuine opportunities for all to master the national language(s) and two other languages*
- *make a wider range of languages available to learners to allow individual choice and match local needs in the languages that can be learned*
- *enhance the training of all teachers and others involved in language teaching*
- *promote mobility among language teachers to enhance their language and intercultural skills*

7. THE MEDIA, NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND TRANSLATION

Using languages and other communication tools is an important part of the skills set required in today's globalizing Europe. Everybody must have the chance to communicate efficiently in the enlarged EU. This does not only affect those who already are multilingual but also those who are monolingual or linguistically less skilled.

The media, new technologies and human and automatic translation services can bring the increasing variety of languages and cultures in the EU closer to citizens and provide the means to cross language barriers. They can also play an important role to reduce those barriers and allow citizens, companies and national administrations to exploit the opportunities of the single market and the globalising economy. Notably the Framework Programme for Research and Development and the Media Programme support such efforts. The media have great potential to promote intercultural dialogue by conveying a more complex representation of our society, allowing for many different voices. The media can thus also be a great source of informal language learning through 'edutainment' and subtitled films.[33]

Faced with the globalising online economy and ever-increasing information in all imaginable languages, it is important that citizens access and use information and services across national

[33] *Study on the needs and practice of the European audiovisual industry in respect of dubbing and subtitling*, http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/media/overview/evaluation/studies/index_en.htm.

and language barriers, through the internet and mobile devices. Information and communication technologies (ICT) need to be language-aware and promote content creation in multiple languages. This overall goal is supported by i2010 — the policy framework for the information society — one of the objectives of which is to create a Single European Information Space by ensuring seamless access to ICT-based services and improving conditions for the development of rich, multilingual content.

Dialogue with citizens is an interactive process. In this area, the EU institutions have developed the use of technology which allows interpretation in several languages in combination with communication with distant places and with the wider public. The tools available on the market are mainly video-conferencing, internet chats, and web streaming of conferences and events. Investment in further development and use of such technology should be encouraged.

Human and automatic translation is an important part of multilingualism policy. Both can facilitate the exchange of information between national authorities and improve cross-border administrative cooperation. For instance, the Internal Market Information System[34] (IMI) is being developed to allow Member States to exchange information in all official EU languages and therefore, support the administrative cooperation obligations under various pieces of EU legislation[35]. Automatic translation is also used to provide more transparency regarding public procurement opportunities and in the procedures of the European Patent Office.

Finally, human translation is also of course a major way of accessing other cultures. As Umberto Eco said, 'The language of Europe is translation'. Europe's cultural heritage includes masterpieces written originally in different languages, but common to us all thanks to a long-standing tradition of literary translation which should be strengthened so as to make works written in other languages, especially lesser-used languages, available to a wider audience. The Commission will explore ways of optimising synergies between initiatives and programmes supporting translation[36], with a view to facilitating access to our common cultural heritage and to support the development of a European public sphere.

The Commission will:

- *support subtitling and the circulation of European media productions*
- *support projects developing and disseminating language and communication technologies*
- *hold a conference on the role of translation in promoting openness, understanding and dialogue between cultures*
- *together with Member States extend the scope of IMI to more regulated professions and support the administrative cooperation requirements of the Services Directive*

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34 http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/index_en.html

35 For instance, Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications (OJ L 255, 30.9.2005, p. 22) or Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market (OJ L 376, 27.12.2006, p. 36).

36 Such as, for instance, the Culture programme.

The Member States are invited to:

- *work with stakeholders to promote multilingualism through the media — notably by supporting film subtitling — and the circulation of cultural works in Europe*
- *stimulate and encourage further development and use of new technologies supporting multilingualism*

8. THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF MULTILINGUALISM

Multilingualism's contribution to intercultural dialogue is increasingly recognised in the EU's external relations[37]. Linguistic diversity is not unique to the EU and our experience of respecting diversity and promoting language skills could be turned to good account in our relations with other countries. In this respect the European Parliament has drawn attention to the fact that some EU languages, referred to as European world languages[38], are spoken also in a great number of non-Member States in different continents; those languages constitute therefore an important link between peoples and nations of different regions in the world.

The core objective of this external dimension is to fully realise the potential of those EU languages spoken in third countries, promote the teaching and learning of EU languages abroad and of non-EU languages in the EU through exchanges of expertise, good practice and joint stakeholder groups. In the framework of joint declarations, concrete steps in this direction have already been undertaken with non-EU countries.

The Commission will:

- *develop partnerships and enhance cooperation on multilingualism with non-EU countries, taking account of the opportunities offered by those European languages which have a worldwide coverage*
- *promote the teaching and learning of all EU languages abroad*

The Member States are invited to:

- *further enhance networking and cooperation among relevant institutes to better promote EU languages abroad*

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37 *Agreed Conclusions of the third Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Culture Athens, 29 – 30 May 2008*; Presidency Declaration at the Conference *New Paradigms, New Models — Culture in the EU External Relations,* Ljubljana, 13 -14 May, http://www.mzz.gov.si/si/zunanja_politika/kulturno_sodelovanje/nove_paradigme_novi_modeli_kultura_v_zunanjih_odnosih_eu/.

38 The European Parliament acknowledged "the strategic importance of European World Languages as a communication vehicle and as a means of solidarity, cooperation, and economic investment" and, therefore, recommended this concept to be "one of the main political guidelines of European policy on multilingualism" - European Parliament resolution on a new framework strategy for multilingualism (2006/2083(INI).

9. IMPLEMENTATION

Multilingualism policy has a wide range of stakeholders, at local, regional, national and EU level. The Commission will pursue structured dialogue with five strands:

(1) It will work together with Member States through the Open Method of Coordination within the Education and Training 2010 process and aim to reinforce multilingualism in the new strategic framework for cooperation after 2010. To this end, it will expand the remit of the Working Group on Languages to cover all aspects of multilingualism.

(2) It will create a platform with the media, cultural organisations and other civil society stakeholders to discuss and exchange practices to promote multilingualism for intercultural dialogue.

(3) Building on the Business Forum, it will set up a permanent framework for cooperation with the relevant stakeholders.

(4) It will gather and disseminate good practice and systematically promote synergies between the latter three fora. It will review progress regularly, for instance by holding an EU language conference every second year.

(5) It will mainstream multilingualism in relevant EU policies and take the actions listed above.

10. CONCLUSIONS

The Commission invites Member States and the other EU institutions to endorse the cross-cutting policy framework for multilingualism presented in this communication and to implement it at the most appropriate level.

In partnership with Member States, the Commission will carry out a global review in 2012.