



CONSEIL EUROPEEN POUR LES LANGUES /
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CEL/ELC Working Group 3

Language and rights

Maurizio Viezzi



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SIG on Language and rights

1. The context
2. SIGTIPS
3. Special Interest Group on Language
and Rights



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1. The context

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The Context

multilingual Europe



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Multilingual Europe

- institutional multilingualism
- individual multilingualism
- **societal multilingualism**



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Societal multilingualism

mobile EU citizens

migrants

refugees



super-diversity (Vertovec 2007)



European Union, 1 January 2015

- 34.3M born outside EU
- 18.5M born in another member state
- 19.8M non-EU citizens
- 15.3M citizens of another mb state

(Eurostat)



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societal multilingualism

- ECML 2007: 440 spoken languages + 18 sign languages in 21 countries
- a more accurate figure might be in the region of 600 languages (ECML 2007: 27)



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societal multilingualism

London 2009:

- > 50 communities with > 10,000 residents
- 340 languages

(Clement & Brooker, MET)



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societal multilingualism

mobile EU citizens, migrants, refugees
may not know the local language(s)



language needs to be met
(e.g. through T&I)



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societal multilingualism

1. “They must learn our language!”
2. “We shall not spend our money on T&I for migrants!”



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societal multilingualism

1. Languages are not learned overnight
2. No money on T&I in sensitive settings = discrimination



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Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU

Article 21

Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, **language**, [...], **membership of a national minority**, [...], shall be prohibited



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Non-discrimination

T&I is a human right



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CEL/ELC and T&I

- CIUTI founding member of CEL/ELC
- TNP1 – sub-project 7: T&I
- close contacts with DGT & SCIC
- Wolfgang Mackiewicz and EMCI
- etc.



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19-20 March 2010

Special Interest Group on
Translation and Interpreting
for Public Services
(SIGTIPS)



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SIGTIPS

to produce a report **analysing the situation** of translation and interpreting for public services in Europe, **identifying problems** to be tackled and **putting forward recommendations** to stakeholders as to how to address what is, without any doubt, a **burning issue** in Europe



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SIGTIPS

- 17 members (chaired by MV)
- DGT and SCIC as observers
- face-to-face meetings + emailing



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The SIGTIPS Report

- published by SCIC in September 2011 with a foreword by Commissioner Vassiliou
- presented to the Commissioner on 9 December 2011



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The SIGTIPS Report

I. Multilingual and multinational Europe

1. Languages and nationalities
2. The need for translation and interpreting
3. Legal instruments



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The SIGTIPS Report

II. Issues

1. Availability
2. Quality
3. Training



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The SIGTIPS Report

III. Recommendations

- European Union
- national and local authorities
- public service providers
- Higher Education Institutions
- translators and interpreters



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1. The context
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- 3. Special Interest Group on
Language and Rights**



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CEL/ELC Board Meeting
Brussels, 10-11 March 2016



Special Interest Group
on Language and Rights (SIGLaR)



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SIGLaR

focus from T&I to rights
(*the* burning issue)



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Language and rights

right to language use

right to language education

right to language assistance



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Right to language assistance

Rights **do not** exist in some areas,
e.g. right to interpreting
in *all* public services at *all times*

the need to promote legislation



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Right to language assistance

Rights **do** exist in some areas,
e.g. criminal proceedings
(Directive 2010/64/EU)

are they enforced? and how?



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Language assistance quality

important in all interpreting settings

crucial where health or
personal freedom are at stake



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Language assistance quality

how much quality

in public service / court interpreting?



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Directive 2010/64/EU

Art. 2 (8): Interpretation provided under this Article shall be of a **quality** sufficient to safeguard the fairness of the proceedings, in particular by ensuring that suspected or accused persons have knowledge of the case against them and are able to exercise their right of defence



How much quality, e.g. in court?

- native speakers = interpreters
- interpreters are untrained, unaccredited, non-professionals, poorly remunerated
- interpreters are not informed about the case
- legal professionals are not quality-aware



Professional ethics

Interpreter: *ausiliario di polizia giudiziaria*
(= adjunct criminal investigation officer)

- read between the lines
- understand if someone lies
- understand the jargon
- detect speaker's features
- select important parts (interceptions)

Informant or interpreter? Impartiality?



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Language rights

the presence of an «interpreter» does
not necessarily mean that rights are
actually enforced or enjoyed



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SIGLaR

- 20 members (to be expanded)
- DGT & SCIC expressed interest
- 1st meeting, 29 September 2016
(with SCIC DG in attendance)



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SIGLaR

- pathway to citizenship (full access to society)
- areas where language issues may arise
- language rights: no / yes / how
- repercussions of non-existing / non-enforced rights



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SIGLaR

Stage 1: data collection

Stage 2: data collation

Stage 3: ...