



IALIC

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**IALIC 5th Annual Conference
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FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR A EUROPEAN KNOWLEDGE BASED SOCIETY

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***Conseil Européen pour les Langues /
European Language Council (CEL/ELC)***



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Structure of Presentation

- 1 basic principles of the European Union`s traditional language policy and practices**
- 2 what do the terms *knowledge based society* and *knowledge based economy* mean?**
- 3 the new role of foreign language learning within the *Lisbon Strategy***



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Structure of Presentation

- 4 the EU`s language policy – mere ideology?**
- 5 some findings from a number of EU projects carried out in the 90s**
- 6 need for anticipating future changes and linguistic needs**



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Structure of Presentation

***case study:* Thematic Network Project
in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)**

**7 language learning in European higher
education – some key issues**

**8 university language policies – the
ENLU project -> the *HELP* network**

***case study:* foreign languages in the
new BA courses at FUB**



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Basic principles of the EU`s language policy and practices

➤ "unlike the U.S., the EU is being created as a
multilingual society" (Mackiewicz)

the public sphere

- the official languages of the Member States =
official EU languages
- notion of an EU *lingua franca* rejected
- principle of multilingualism obtains in
external communication of EU institutions



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Basic principles of the EU`s language policy and practices

the educational sphere

- promotion of the learning of the EU languages
- Maastricht Treaty (1992)
- **WHAT:** formula of the Commission`s White Paper on Teaching and Learning: everyone 1+>2
- **HOW:** action programmes and secondary legislation



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Basic principles of the EU`s language policy and practices

- **WHY:**
 - **economic considerations**
 - **humanistic considerations**
 - **access to other cultures**
 - **development of a European identity**
- **PROBLEM: education = responsibility of the Member States**



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Knowledge-based society / economy

- **acquisition and application of knowledge = a key factor for career opportunities and economic success of a society**
- **two key issues regarding (higher) education**
 - **transfer of knowlegde from HEIs to industry**



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Knowledge-based society / economy

- lifelong learning**
 - * education/training to equip young people with a secure foundation for LLL**
 - * continuing education**



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The role of education within the Lisbon Strategy

Lisbon Council (March 2000)

- **two new challenges for the EU**
 - 1) globalisation**
 - 2) the advent of a knowledge-based economy**
- **response to challenge: a clear strategic goal -**



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The role of education within the Lisbon Strategy

“to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world”

- **HOW? radical transformation of the economy**
- **PRECONDITION? adaptation of education and training to demands of knowledge society**



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The role of education within the Lisbon Strategy

**Logical conclusion: Barcelona Council
(March 2002)**

**“the objective of making [EU`s] educative
and training systems a world-wide
quality reference by 2010”**



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The role of education within the Lisbon Strategy

Two basic principles

- **new basic skills**
**IT skills, foreign languages,
technological culture,
entrepreneurship, and social skills**
- **open method of co-ordination**
common goals – different paths



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The role of education within the Lisbon Strategy

**- focus on benchmarks and indicators
focus on output – on learning outcomes**

➤ THE OBJECTIVES PROCESS

**13 objectives; 12 working groups;
working group on languages**



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Foreign language learning within the Lisbon Strategy

- **Barcelona Council (March 2002) prioritised FLs among the new basic skills**
 - all children should be taught at least two foreign languages from a very early age
- **Education Council (February 2002)**
 - linguistic competence indicators for measuring progress in language learning – percentage of students – 2 Ls at B2 CEFR



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Foreign language learning within the Lisbon Strategy

**called on Commission to draw up concrete
proposals for promoting language learning
and linguistic diversity**

- **Consultation Document**
- **Europe-wide consultation (12/02-2/03)**
- **Action Plan “Promoting Language Learning
and Linguistic Diversity” (2004-2006)**



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Foreign language learning within the Lisbon Strategy

ACTION PLAN - THREE SECTIONS

- I. Life-long language learning
I.3 Language learning in HE
- II. Better language teaching
- III. Building a language-friendly environment



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Foreign language learning within the Lisbon Strategy

**Why are languages deemed to
be important for the knowledge society?**

- knowledge-based economy requires geographical mobility (Action plan for skills and mobility – February 2002)**
- good language skills are a precondition for working and studying in other MSs**



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Foreign language learning within the Lisbon Strategy

- **EU citizens and companies need inter-cultural and language skills to be effective in the global market-place**
- **learning foreign languages improves cognitive skills and strengthens mother tongue skills**



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Foreign language learning within the Lisbon Strategy

- **from exclusive to inclusive language policy**
 - **regional languages (<- European Parliament)**
 - **minority languages**
 - **immigrant languages**
 - **non-European languages**



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The EU`s language policy – mere ideology?

- **inclusive policy could favour EN only**
- **new Member States: national language for internal communication – EN for external communication**
- **EN = *the* international means of communication**
- **EN = the language of the hard sciences**



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The EU`s language policy – mere ideology?

- **Results of TUNING Phase 1: consultation of employers and graduates re general skills and competences**
 - > understanding of customs and cultures of other countries
 - > knowledge of a second language, i.e. ONE foreign language
 - > appreciation of diversity and multiculturality
 - > ability to work in an international context
- **German employers` organisation: EN is enough**



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The EU`s language policy – mere ideology?

- **international corporations function in EN**
- **European business schools: EN is enough**
- **more and more universities are teaching in EN**
- **increasingly, meetings in BXL in EN only**



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The EU`s language policy – mere ideology?

Anecdotal evidence

- **Berlin – a BE company with its headquarters in Wallonie communicates with its Berlin branch in EN**
- **a number of *cantons* in CH have introduced EN as the first FL in schools**



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The EU`s language policy – mere ideology?

**The very Commission seems to be
worried**

Action Plan

**IV.1.2 A detailed study of the
requirements for language skills in the
European Union, and the personal
benefits of FL learning ... will be
funded.**



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The EU`s language policy – mere ideology?

IV.1.3 Studies will be undertaken into:

- the costs of non-multilingualism**
- the effects on the European economy
of business lost due to a lack of
foreign languages**



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The EU`s language policy – mere ideology?

6th Framework Programme Priority 7

3.1.1 Linguistic diversity in a European knowledge based society

.... The role of language in European society, economy and culture needs to be considered. Special attention should be paid to the reasons for, and consequences of choices of a language as '*lingua franca*' in economic, political, scientific, cultural and other contexts. The importance of foreign languages as a “new basic skill” in a diverse and cohesive European knowledge based society should be examined.



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Findings from projects conducted in the 90s

Languages used in companies (mainly SMEs) (outside native language area)

- **English (77%-93%)**
- **French (53-57%)**
- **German (20-53%)**
- **Spanish (17-38%)**
- **Italian (6-31%)**

Varies from region to region and by size of company



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Findings from projects conducted in the 90s

ELUCIDATE (Leonardo, 1996)

SMEs in DE, ES, FR & UK

- **35%-53% had met language difficulties**
- **8%-19% had met intercultural difficulties**
- **10%-19% had lost contracts because of language or cultural problems**



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Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)

For those of you who don't know

TNPs

- **are co-operation projects, involving HEIs from all countries participating in SOCRATES and other stakeholders, which seek to**
 - bring about improvements and innovations in HE programmes and modes of delivery**



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Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)

- develop a European dimension in HE programmes**
- overcome the frequently observed disconnection between HE provision and changing needs in the economic and social environments**



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Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)

Three sub-projects

- I. Languages for language-related industries and professions**
- II. Languages for enhanced opportunities on the European labour market**
- III. Languages as an interface between different sectors of education**



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Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)

**Sub-project 2 is particularly relevant in the
context under discussion**

- **which languages and what skills?**
- **point of departure: neither the universities
nor the employers know the answer**
- **consultation and co-operation between HEIs
and employers – anticipate future needs**



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Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)

Year One: Preparation of national reports based on an agreed structure

- 1. The national labour market**
- 2. New linguistic demands in the private and public sectors resulting from European integration and globalisation: languages and skills / competences**
- 3. In regard to non-language graduates, what formal or informal linguistic and intercultural qualifications – languages / skills and competences – are sought after on the national labour market?**
- 4. In regard to language graduates (bachelor and master) outside language-related industries and professions, what formal or informal linguistic and intercultural qualifications – languages / skills and competences - are known to enhance career prospects?**



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Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)

- 5. Validation of learning, assessment, certification – what does the labour market recognise and value?**
- 6. Communication and co-operation between higher education institutions / public authorities and the world of work (private and public employers, the social partners, professional associations etc) – aims and structures**
- 7. Institutional, regional and national career services**
- 8. Process recommendations: measures to be taken to bring about improved consultation and co-operation between higher education and the world of work**
- 9. Process recommendations: measures to be taken to survey higher education graduates and to provide careers advice in regard to linguistic and intercultural requirements**



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Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)

11. Initial overarching recommendations regarding learning outcomes and academic profiles
12. Initial recommendations regarding validation of learning, assessment and certification of linguistic and intercultural skills and competences
13. Needs for future projects, studies and research

First results

- little is known about these issues
- it is difficult for us academics to reflect on these issues
- TNP3 will only scratch the surface -> research



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Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)

Year Two activities

- **preparation of a synthesis report**
- **a Europe-wide consultation**
 - **graduates**
 - **employers and employers' organisations**
- **a workshop at Year Two final conference –
Copenhagen, 30 Sept.-1 Oct. 2004**



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Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3)

Ultimate outcomes

- **identification of language-specific and job specific competences**
- **recommendations regarding specialist degree programmes and provision for students of all disciplines**
- **proposals for consultation**
- **creation of a new structure (within CEL/ELC)**



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Language learning in HE – some key issues

We cannot wait till 2006 ... nor do we need to

- **EU Member States = multilingual / multicultural societies**
- **increasing EU integration**
- **increasing opening up to the world**



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Language learning in HE – some key issues

We need to ...

- **apply common European standards to HE language teaching / learning**
- **HE language studies need to develop general competences relevant to lifelong language learning and use**
- **develop institutional language policies**



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Language learning in HE – some key issues

The ENLU project is designed to help HEIs to develop and implement their own language policies

- **creation of a new network – *HELP***
- **development of an action plan to complement the Commission`s Action Plan**



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Language modules in FUB`s new BA courses

Three-year single-subject BA courses

- 180 credits
- 1 credit = 30 hours student work
- a core subject of 90 or 110 credits
- (an) *imported* module package(s) – 30/60 credits → specific student profile
- a strand outside the subject area(s): general preparation for employability – obligatory internship + a range of modules – 30 credits



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Language modules in FUB`s new BA courses

I. Language provision as part of the
general preparation for employability strand

General considerations

- students have to achieve a competence level relevant to employability
- in more widely taught languages, this level has to be higher than in LWULT languages



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Language modules in FUB`s new BA courses

LANGUAGE	ENTRY LEVEL	MODULES	LEARNING OUTCOMES
SPANISCH	B1	2 x 6 credits	B2
FRENCH	A2	1 x 12 credits	B1
ITALIAN	A2	1 x 12 credits	B1
GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE	to be defined	2 x 6 credits (skill specific)	to be defined



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Language modules in FUB`s new BA courses

DUTCH	ab initio	to be decided	to be decided
PORTUGUESE	ab initio	1 x 12 credits + 1 x 6 credits	A2-B1
POLISH	ab initio	1 x 12 credits + 1 x 6 credits	A2+
RUSSIAN	ab initio	1 x 12 credits + 1 x 6 credits	A2+
ARABIC	ab initio	1 x 12 credits + 1 x 6 credits	A2 (?)



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Language modules in FUB`s new BA courses

TURKISH	ab initio	1 x 12 credits + 1 x 6 credits	A2+
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Language modules in FUB`s new BA courses

II. Packages of modules in modern languages complementing 90- and 110- credit core subjects

- **initially for Dutch, Italian, Portuguese
and Spanish**



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Language modules in FUB`s new BA courses

Example One: 30 credit in ES, IT, PT

- 24 credits (= 4 modules) language study (zero -> B1)
- 6 credits civilization

Example Two: 60 credits in ES, IT, PT

- 42 credits (= 7 modules) language study (zero -> B2.2-C1.1)
- 18 credits linguistics, literature, civilization



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Language modules in FUB`s new BA courses

- **calculation of credits in accordance with the time students are estimated to need on average to get from entry level to exit level (learning outcomes)**
- **normally: a 6-credit module = 4 x 15 contact hours = 60 taught hours + 120 hours independent and co-operative learning - a major challenge for teachers and students**



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Réfléchir ce que pouvait être l'avenir ...

- **languages shape our patterns of thought**
- **the languages of modern Europe include non-European languages**
- **our diversity is our strength**
- **our universities have to transcend their own cultures**
- **our universities cannot just be regional / national institutions – they must also be European institutions – they will have to become multilingual institutions**



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THANK YOU