

# ***AEGEE Language Policy Paper***

## ***Motivation***

***Bruxelles, December 2001***

Being AEGEE the largest multidisciplinary Students' Association in Europe, whose main fields of action comprise Higher Education and Cultural Exchange (among others),  
Experiencing in AEGEE the everyday problems that arise from the use of a language different than the mother tongue as a working language,  
Bearing in mind the increasing importance that languages have in students' as well as in professionals' life, and taking advantage of the year 2001 being declared the European Year of Languages,

We, AEGEE, express our opinion on languages and language education like the following:

## ***The importance of language learning in Europe***

- a) languages are an essential tool that fosters mobility (traveling, studying abroad)
- b) languages increase tolerance and open-mindedness among people, and contribute to the building of European Citizens as the knowledge of several languages raises European mindedness
- c) languages are becoming a barrier for most people to become part of the Information Society
- d) languages are one of the most important part of a foreign cultural heritage, a diversity that we cherish
- e) languages are becoming a central part of education, especially Higher Education

## ***AEGEE asks for:***

### **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Every student, at the end of his/her studies, should have communicative skills in English and another European Language other than his/her mother tongue. English will be considered as a language for communication among students of all countries, whereas the second European Language will be a vehicle to increase cross-border cultural exchange. To achieve this:

- ✓ Courses of foreign languages to be mandatory no matter what studies
- ✓ Academic credits to be recognised in languages (where not already existing)
- ✓ Parts of the studies to be taught in a different language, preferably in another country than the homeland
- ✓ Less widely spread languages to be made accessible

### **ADULTS – LIFE LONG LEARNING**

- ✓ Access to language learning to be granted after the person has left formal education system
- ✓ Non-formal education: e.g. summer courses to be recognised. A concrete structure of National Recognition Agencies should be established in order to foster transparency and coherence within language diplomas among different countries
- ✓ The European Language Portfolio, which we consider a good initiative, to be promoted more widely as an important step towards recognition of non-formal language education

### **QUALITY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING**

- ✓ The number of native speakers as teachers to be increased, especially in Higher Education
- ✓ Language students only to be allowed to teach if they have studies in the respective country (countries) for at least six months

As a result of this demands, we consider that Universities, Governments and all incumbent Institutions should provide the means and resources to achieve these aims.