



Multilingualism – from the students perspective



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2008 CEL/ELC Forum – 05th of December 2008, Brussels

Multilingualism

- It is intrinsically linked to:
 - Mobility
 - LLL
 - Internationalisation
- But also to:
 - Active citizenship
 - Employability



Importance in the Bologna Process

The Berlin communiqué (2003):

*“Moreover, they stress the necessity of ensuring a substantial period of study abroad in joint degree programmes as well as proper provision for **linguistic diversity and language learning**, so that students may achieve their full potential for European identity, citizenship and employability.”*



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Facts and figures

- Mobility studies done by OECD, EUROTEC, EUROSTUDENT assert that working and **studying in a different language** is one of the **most valued learning experiences** a mobile student can have
- Students achieved **greater linguistic competences during their Erasmus experience**, and percentage of students being able to work in a second language increased from 40% to 65% compared to those who didn't participate in Erasmus



Facts and figures

- A large number of students declare that the period abroad allows them to **start or improve in a third or even fourth foreign language**
- **25% more students were fluent in their second language** at the end of their ERASMUS than at the start



Measures needed for removing language obstacles

- Language courses that are **free and easily accessible for everyone** in all HEI
- **Flexible programs** taught in foreign languages have to be developed
- **Proficiency tests – free** of charge
- Promoting **European languages** (especially the “unpopular” ones)



Measures needed for removing language obstacles

- Assistance for **integration** of the foreign students (mobile students or immigrants)
- **Information resources** at different levels (coordinated):
 - European,
 - national and
 - institutional.
- Multicultural social events, combined with **culturally sensitive media**



Data on language proficiency

Proficiency in first, second and third foreign language

	Language, in %					
	First		Second		Third	
AT	English	100	French	57	Italian	36
DE	English	100	French	73	Spanish	37
ES	English	97	French	36	German	10
FI	English	99	Swedish	92	German	41
FR	English	98	Spanish	63	German	60
IE	French	82	German	40	Spanish	22
IT	nda		nda		nda	
LV	English	nda	Russian	nda	German	nda
NL	nda		nda		nda	
PT	English	65	French	22	Spanish	17
UK (E/W)	nda		nda		nda	

Good examples

- In **Austria**, the Austrian Exchange Service offers university preparation courses for foreign students that include not just language but 'cultural integration'.
- In **Hungary**, there have been developed extensive language training opportunities, as well as programmes in English and other widely spoken languages.

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Thank you!

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