

PRESS RELEASE

Mercator Research Centre organises international symposium on Multilingualism and Higher Education

Leeuwarden, The Netherlands, 5 Oktober 2010 – The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning of the Fryske Akademy organises the EUNoM symposium ‘Higher Education and Research on Multilingualism: Challenge or Opportunity?’ This international event takes place at the WTC Expo in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands, on November 18th and 19th 2010.

In today’s multilingual society universities are faced with students speaking all kinds of different languages. As a result universities offer courses and information in several languages. The multilingual university is one of the themes that will be discussed at this symposium. A second theme concerns the link between universities and their region: how can universities contribute to the region’s development, particularly in relation to linguistic diversity. Finally, the symposium will focus on European language policy development and the way that universities and the EUNoM project can contribute.

Speakers and participants

Scholars from a variety of linguistic and research backgrounds will address the themes mentioned. Speakers include Ildikó Vancsó of the Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre in Slovakia, Jochen Rehbein of the Research Centre on Intercultural Communication and Multilingualism, Ankara, Robert Dunbar of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Scotland, John Harris of Trinity College Dublin, and Rita Temmerman of the Erasmushogeschool Brussel. A workshop is included in the first day of the symposium to allow for further in-depth discussion in smaller groups. Around 60 to 80 people are expected to participate, including representatives from different European universities as well as local representatives from universities, public authorities, and business. On the discussion forum on the EUNoM website (<http://eunom.uoc.edu>) questions relating to the symposium’s themes, for example: ‘How can we create and conduct a multilingual university without English?’ and: ‘How can universities contribute to the development of a multilingual corporate identity of companies?’ are addressed both before and after the symposium.

About the EUNoM Project

EUNoM (European Universities Network on Multilingualism) addresses the issue of multilingualism within the information society and knowledge economy. The lead partner of the project is Universitat Oberta de Catalunya in Barcelona, the Open University of Catalunya. In total 7 full partners, including the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning / the Fryske Akademy, and around 20 associate partners from all over Europe are involved in the Network. EUNoM is funded with the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union (2010-2012). For more information, visit the EUNoM website: <http://eunom.uoc.edu>.

The symposium in Leeuwarden is the second in a series of symposia that are organised as part of the EUNoM project. The first symposium, ‘Language teachers: Training for a new paradigm’, was held in Udine, Italy, in the beginning of September, for more information visit www.mercator-research.eu.

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Note for the editor, not for publication:

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The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, hosted at the Fryske Akademy, is already 20 year an independent and recognised centre for policymakers, researchers and educators in the sphere of multilingualism and language learning. Because of that the Mercator Research Centre is an important supplier of the social cohesion and social durability from multilingualism regions through Europe. The Mercator Research Centre brings Europe to Fryslân en Fryslân to Europe.

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