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The Mercator newsletter informs you about the news of the five Mercator Network partners:

Mercator Research Centre of the Fryske Akademy

Mercator Media

Mercator Legislation

Stockholm University

Research Institute for Linguistics

Newsletter focusing on multilingual regions dealing with regional or minority languages, but also immigrant languages and smaller state languages, with emphasis on language needs arising from migration and globalisation. Submit your subscription request, comments or suggestions to: **Richard de Boer** (Fryske Akademy).

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NEWS

LEARNMe: new partner and workshop (8-9 April 2015) in Barcelona

In March 2015, the University of Barcelona became an official partner within the LEARNMe project. The Centre Universitari de Sociolingüística i Comunicació at the University of Barcelona (CUSC UB) replaces our very valued partner CIEMEN, that needed to withdraw from the LEARNMe project due to financial issues. The third LEARNMe workshop, which originally would be organised by CIEMEN and held in January 2015, is therefore postponed to 8-9 April 2015.



Under the title "Recent developments regarding the legal protection of minoritized languages: different European perspectives", the **workshop** aims to bring together a group of specialists that will inform the attendants of a number of innovations in the legal and political arenas in connection with a variety of European languages, and to explore the sociolinguistic consequences of these policies in a variety of settings.

It is the final workshop of three specialist international workshops of Mercator's LEARNMe project, leading up to an international conference to be held in Budapest in 2015.

Click here for more about [CUSC UB](#) and the [programme](#) of the third LEARNMe workshop.

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EBLT concerned about Dutch attitude towards minority languages



The European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLT) is very concerned about the attitude of the Dutch government towards the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM).

Netherlands has virtually done nothing with the recommendations that were drafted in October 2012 by the Council of Europe in the field of minority languages. For instance, there's still no question of a structured dialogue between The Hague and organizations of speakers of minority languages. In addition, the government hasn't developed a clear policy on the protection and promotion of the Lower Saxon language. The future of the Frisian regional channel Omrop Fryslân is uncertain, while the position of radio and television in Frisian (as the second state language) is nowhere defined in the current Dutch Media Act.

Moreover, the Netherlands has been more than a year late in submitting its report on the position of minority languages to the Council of Europe. EBLT has therefore written its own position paper for the Council of Europe on the situation of minority languages in the Netherlands. The position paper was presented on Friday 6 March to several politicians, including Marieke Sanders (advisor of the Council of Europe), Members of National Parliament Magda Berndsen and Lutz Jacobi, and Member of Provincial Parliament Annigje Toering.

Download [EBLT Position Paper](#) (in English)

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LangOER: Join our free online webinars on Open Educational Resources

The LangOER network is organizing a series of five webinars on Open Educational Resources (OER) for teachers. How can OER enrich your teaching and learning practice? Where can you find OER in your languages? And how can you blend online learning in your own teaching context?



The online webinars are organized by experts in the field: Marit Bijlsma (Mercator Research Centre) on OER and the open learning platform; Ebba Ossiannilsson (Lund University) on OER and best-practice examples; Robert Schuwer (Fontys Higher Education) on a step-by-step approach to apply OER in teaching; Lisette Kalshoven (Kennisland/Creative Commons) on OER and licensing; and Elena Shulman (European Schoolnet) on how to store and share your own created material.

The webinars will be held on 25 March, 2, 15 and 23 April, and 13 May, and are part of the activities of the EC-funded project LangOER (OER for less-used languages). Teachers can register by mailing their name and school/affiliation to: mercator@fryske-akademy.nl. By joining the online webinars, you can get the chance of winning a €1.000 award.

Find more information on the [LangOER](#) website.

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Facebook apologises after attempt to ban Scottish Gaelic login names



A former police officer has won a victory over Facebook after the social media giant decided his Gaelic name was not real. Gavin McGowan was outraged when he failed to log in to his Facebook account using the same Gaelic version of his name - Gabhan Mac A Gbhbhainn - that has worked for four years. To add insult to injury, Facebook threatened to close his account unless he used a "proper" name.

Mr McGowan, 53, from Glasgow, hit back by organising a petition which within days had attracted 2,000 signatures. It is believed the use of capital letters and apostrophes in many Gaelic names is

falling foul of Facebook software designed to stop joke or bogus accounts being set up. As a result, names including the Gaelic version of Macleod are not acceptable.

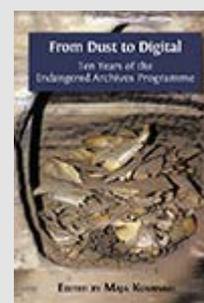
Facebook has now apologised and allowed Mr McGowan's Gaelic name to be used but Scottish Gaelic remains unrecognised as a specific language option. Campaigners say that is unfair when Irish Gaelic, "Pirate" and "Upside Down English" are catered for. Mr McGowan, who worked for British Transport Police for 30 years, learned the new language from scratch about 10 years ago and has changed his driving licence and bank account to his Gaelic name.

Source: [Herald Scotland](#), 27 February 2015.

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From Dust to Digital: Ten Years Endangered Archives Programme

On 17 February 2015 the British Library organised a reception to celebrate the first decennium of a special programme on endangered archives (EAP) and to launch a book about some of the projects within this programme. The title of this book is 'From Dust to Digital; Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme'. The EAP was initiated by the Arcadia Fund, which stimulates the preservation and enlargement of cultural information and awareness in their broadest senses.



Another programme of Arcadia is the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP), which is located at SOAS, University of London. As the ELDP was being launched, attention turned to a parallel need to act on behalf of a field of knowledge and culture that was also under threat:

Historical archives are subject to the ravages of time. In response to this danger, Arcadia established the EAP to ensure that archival material was not only preserved and digitally recorded, but also safely deposited and used for several purposes, such as the safeguarding of endangered languages.

The book [From Dust to Digital](#) contains a chapter by Tjeerd de Graaf and Victor Denisov, which is devoted to this task: The use of sound archives for the investigation, teaching and safeguarding of endangered languages in Russia. The book is now online in form of an e-book and in form of downloadable pdfs of all articles.

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UNPO Conference: What Future for Minority Languages in Europe?



On 24 February 2015, Csaba Sógor MEP organized a conference titled "Language, Identity & Power: What Future for Minority Languages in Europe", with Herbert Dorfmann (EPP) and Jill Evans (EFA/Greens) MEPs, in cooperation with the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), the European Free Alliance (EFA) and the Centre Maurits Coppieters (CMC).

The International Mother Tongue Day, observed annually on 21 February, provided a symbolic backdrop for the discussions. With around 60 participants, from various European minority groups, EU institutions, Council of Europe, and human rights NGOs, the conference was a definite success, shining a light on Europe's unrecognized, unprotected and even endangered languages. The conference was also well-attended by MEPs across different political groups.

In their opening remarks, MEPs Csaba Sógor, Herbert Dorfmann and Jill Evans reminded the audience about the significance of multilingualism as an engine for the European Union to engage with its citizens, stressing that linguistic diversity in Europe cannot be underestimated, but should instead remain a question of fundamental rights, equality and democracy. While the importance of linguistic diversity is widely recognized, a lot more needs to be done in order for minority and regional languages to survive and thrive.

Source: [UNPO](#)

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Genomes document ancient mass migration to Europe

DNA analysis has revealed evidence for a massive migration into the heartland of Europe 4,500 years ago. Data from the genomes of 69 ancient individuals suggest that herders moved en masse from the continent's

eastern periphery into Central Europe. These migrants may be responsible for the expansion of Indo-European languages, which make up the majority of spoken tongues in Europe today.



An international team has published the research in the journal **Nature**. Prof David Reich and colleagues extracted DNA from remains found at archaeological sites around the continent. They used a new DNA-enrichment technique that greatly reduces the amount of sequencing needed to obtain genome-wide data. Their analyses show that 7,000-8,000 years ago, a closely related group of early farmers moved into Europe from the Near East, confirming the findings of previous studies.

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Lithuania's LRT television to expand its Russian-language programming



In response to informational pressure of the Kremlin-supported media, the Lithuanian national broadcaster LRT plans new programs for Russian-speakers in Lithuania and hopes to launch a program focused on explaining sources of propaganda and its methods of working. The issue was discussed during a meeting of representatives from the LRT Council, the Council for Culture and the Ministry of Culture of Lithuania.

According to LRT Council Chairman Žygintas Pečiulis, the new programs could start airing this autumn. "We are speaking about a program that would disclose propaganda of hostile countries," Pečiulis told BNS, adding that the format and details of the new program were not discussed during the meeting yet.

The LRT also plans to increase the number of Western-produced programs for Russian-speakers and is about to finalize the conditions for cooperation with the German state broadcaster Deutsche Welle and the rebroadcasting of its Russian-language content.

Source: **DELFI**, 26 February 2015.

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Finland shelves indigenous rights agreement ratification

Finland will not be ratifying the International Labour Organisation's "Convention No. 169", which vouch safeguards the rights of indigenous peoples, until the next government is formed. The ratification proposal was shelved earlier this month.



The decision to put the ratification proposal on ice came down from Parliament's Speaker's Council. It means that the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) "Convention No. 169", a binding international directive granting indigenous and tribal peoples the same rights as other citizens, will next be under discussion in the next government. The convention was approved in 1989, and has so far been ratified by 22 states. The ILO 169 proposal was just one of many issues that were left open in Parliament on Friday 13 March, when the Parliament had its final working day before going on recess. Parliament will reconvene after the next elections in April.

Minister of Justice Anna-Maija Henriksson said on Friday evening that she was extremely disappointed in the Speaker's Council's decision. "I'm very dissatisfied, but perhaps it is better to leave the decision up to the next government," she said. "A rushed vote now may have denied the ILO agreement in Finland completely." The Finnish Sámi Youth Organisation protested in front of Parliament on Friday morning for the ratification of the ILO 169 agreement. The event, dubbed the "Black March" (*Čáhppes ráidu*), was attended by about a hundred protesters.

Source: **YLE**, 14 March 2015.

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Delegation of Ulster Scots visit Mercator Research Centre

A delegation of Ulster Scots visited Mercator Research Centre at Fryske Akademy (Leeuwarden, the Netherlands) on 17 February, to get acquainted with the Frisian experiences as a minority language.



In recent years, a lot of effort has been put into the development of Irish and Ulster Scots, embracing aspects of history, heritage, music, dance, cookery, and language. Amongst other initiatives, the Irish-language initiative 'Liofe' was established for Irish language empowerment. In a desire to create a parallel initiative for people wanting to embrace their Ulster Scots culture, **Ministerial Advisory**

Group on the Ulster-Scots Academy (MAGUS), a body which advises the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, was asked to establish what kind of learning resources the Ulster Scots community would like, and to devise a 3 or 4-year culture and language initiative.

The Ulster Scots delegation, consisting of Bill Smith (Queen's University Belfast), Laura Spence (Stone Circle Consulting), Fintan Mullan (Ulster Historical Foundation), met in Leeuwarden with scientific staff, project leaders and policy makers, of Fryske Akademy, Afûk, and the provincial government of Fryslân.

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Expert in the Spotlight: Juan Pablo Martínez Cortés

Juan Pablo Martínez Cortés is Associate Professor in the Engineering School of the University of Zaragoza, in the area of Information and Communication Technologies. He is the coauthor of the Regional Dossier Aragonese in Spain, soon to be published by Mercator Research Centre.

"My field of research is in signal processing applied to biological signals, so it has no direct relationship with the field of regional and minority languages. However, having a background in ICTs and being a speaker and advocate of Aragonese language and multilingualism, I saw the opportunities that new technologies could offer to minority and endangered languages as Aragonese."



Read more [here](#).

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INTERESTING LINKS

Formal and informal academic language socialization of a bilingual child. Ethnographic case study by Hyonsuk Cho in *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* examines a bilingual child's academic socialization in both formal and informal academic communities.

Diccionari de llengües del món: along with TERMCAT and CIEMEN, the Directorate-General for Language Policy of Catalonia recently presented the Online World Languages Dictionary, comprising 1,264 languages. Available in 17 languages.

Is this the most unusual sound in the Swedish language? The word for 'yes' in most of Sweden is 'ja', but in the north of the country a unique sound is used instead, as *The Local's* Oliver Gee discovered in the city of Umeå.

Iran's Azad University to offer Kurdish studies, Kurdish news site *NRT* reports. The Islamic Azad University is the first in Iran to permit the study of Kurdish.

How to sound smart in your TEDx Talk. In a hilarious talk at TEDxNewYork, Will Stephen shows presentation skills to make you sound brilliant, even if you are literally saying nothing.

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EVENTS

16-19 March 2015, Berlin (DE): Urban fragmentation(s): Borders & Identity III, Center for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany.

27 March 2015, Ghent (BE): Sociolinguistics Circle 2015, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium.

One-day conference for sociolinguistics with a connection to the Low Countries.

13-15 April 2015, Mainz (DE): Multilingualism in Baltic-Sea Europe, interdisciplinary conference at Johannes Gutenberg Universität, Mainz, Germany.

15-17 April 2015, Utrecht (NL): Empirical Methods in Language Acquisition Research XI, lectures and hands-on sessions on language acquisition research at conference day in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

17 April 2015, Leeuwarden (NL): The Role of Lexicography in Standardisation and Purification of Lesser Used Languages, international conference day at Fryske Akademy, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

16 May 2015, Poznań (PL): Second Conference on Languages for Special Purposes and Small Languages, conference organized by the Institute of Linguistics, Adam Mickiewicz University.

19-23 May 2015, Teramo (IT): First Worldwide Congress for Language Rights, XIV International Conference of the International Academy of Linguistic Law, IX Days of Language Rights, Teramo, Italy.

20-24 May 2015, New Brunswick (USA): International Symposium on Bilingualism, New Brunswick, NY, USA.

29-30 May 2015, Kaunas (LT): Sustainable Multilingualism: Language, Culture And Society, international conference organized by VDUKI Institute of Foreign Languages.

22-23 May 2015, Egmond aan Zee (NL): Anéla Applied Linguistics Conference 2015, Egmond aan Zee, The Netherlands.

27-29 May, Leipzig (DE): International Conference on Language Variation in Europe, Leipzig, Germany.

28-29 May 2015, Joensuu (FI): Receptive Multilingualism: Multilingual Resources in Service of Mutual Understanding, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland.

28-30 May 2015, Belgrade (RS): XV International Conference on Minority Languages, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Call deadline 31 December 2014.

3-6 June 2015, Hong Kong (CN): The Sociolinguistics of Globalization: (De)centring and (de)standardization, The School of English, University of Hong Kong, China.

18-20 June 2015, Leiden (NL): Globalising Sociolinguistics, Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands. Call deadline 15 December 2014.

22 June 2015, Caen (FR): Natural Language Processing for French and European Regional Languages, Caen, France. Call deadline 4 April 2015.

1-4 July 2015, Valencia (ES): 12th International Symposium of Psycholinguistics, Universitat de València, Spain. Call deadline 15 February 2015.

2-3 July 2015, Tours (FR): Bi-SLI 2015: Bilingualism and Specific Language Impairment, Tours, France. Call deadline 1 February 2015.

8-11 July 2015, Graz (AT): World Conference on Pluricentric Languages and their Non-Dominant Varieties, Graz, Austria. Call deadline 30 March 2015.

26-31 July 2015, Antwerp (BE): Complex Linguistic Repertoires and Minority Languages in Immigrant Communities, Antwerp, Belgium.

31 July 2015, Cambridge (UK): 5th Cambridge Conference on Language Endangerment, University of Cambridge. Call deadline 1 April 2015.

14-17 September 2015, Barcelona (ES): 4th Barcelona Summer School on Bilingualism and Multilingualism Workshop, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain.

29-30 October 2015, London (UK): Interpreting Communities: Minority Writing in European Literary Fields, conference at the Institute of Modern Languages Research (IMLR), London.

23-26 November 2015, Auckland (NZ): 4th International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity (LED 2015), University of Auckland, New Zealand. Call deadline 1 February 2015.

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