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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 / CUSC-UB

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

Polish minorities denounce president's veto on language use

Poland's tiny Lithuanian and German minorities on Wednesday spoke out against a presidential veto derailing legislation that would have broadened use of their languages in local government. "It's a bad sign and reflects a lack of respect for minorities and their rights," Algirdas Vaicekauskas, the leader of Poland's Lithuanian community told AFP. "Respect for minorities includes allowing the use of their language in official settings," he said.



However, Lithuania's Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius said Wednesday he "would not rush to condemn" the Polish president's move, insisting on the importance of dialogue. "I believe that Lithuania and Poland are capable of solving all ethnic minority issues by themselves, in the spirit of dialogue and good neighbourly relations," Linkevicius told AFP.

The community of some 8,000 Polish citizens who self-identify as ethnic Lithuanians is concentrated in the towns of Sejny and Punsk on Poland's northeastern border with Lithuania.

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Adult education along the refugee route



Serbia and Italy are on the refugee route, while Germany is the goal for many fleeing war. How are adult education communities in these three countries responding to the European refugee crisis?

According to adult educators Maja Maksimović and Nikola Koruga, the refugee situation has not sparked much debate in the Serbian adult education community.

- Serbia is seen as a temporary transit space for the refugees, therefore integration processes are not seen as a priority. Furthermore, adult education itself is marginalized and underfinanced: there are no clear structures which would raise their voice and call for strategic action, Maksimović points out.

Read more: [Elm Magazine](#), 16 October 2015.

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Malta: Language Policy for the Early Years up for public consultation

The Education Ministry has launched a public consultation document on the Language Policy for the Early Years in Malta and Gozo. The document, prepared by the Ministry's National Language Policy in Education Committee, follows the publication of the 'Language Education Policy Profile for Malta' by the Council of Europe in March 2015.



Speaking at the launch this afternoon, Education Minister Evarist Bartolo spoke on the importance of placing language education on a solid basis in the early years, especially between the ages of 3 and 5. "We need to give children the necessary language skills. Cognitive and emotional development of children also depends heavily on their language development," Mr Bartolo said.

Source: [Malta Independent](#), 28 October 2015.

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Administrative areas for Swedish national minority languages



The extension of the municipalities voluntarily joining the administrative areas for Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami, has been - at least temporarily - stopped.

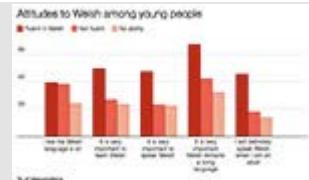
The administrative areas are based on some basic and specific language rights defined in the Minority and Minority Language Act from 2010. This means that those municipalities, which after pressure groups had presented their demands on the municipalities, and which finally accepted to apply for inclusion in the administrative areas, now have been denied this by the government.

Reasons given are the budgetary situation and that the government wants to have a fuller and more detailed picture of how the funds allotted to the municipalities have been used in practice. The Act and its implementation is supervised by the County Council of Stockholm and the Sami Parliament (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

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Survey reveals struggle to keep Welsh as a living language

Teenagers in Wales believe it is important that Welsh remains a living language, but fewer than half believe they will go on to speak it as adults. This is what we found when we surveyed over 800 young people from across Wales about their attitudes to the language.



Our initial results show that despite the Welsh government's efforts to create an "infrastructure" for the language so that Welsh speakers can use it on a daily basis, there is still a lot of work to be done.

The narrow vote in favour of Welsh devolution in 1997 was seen as a defining moment in the history of the Welsh language. The Welsh Assembly was heralded as the ultimate tool to safeguard the language, which had consistently been declining throughout the 20th century. Initially, things looked very promising. The 2001 census results seemed to mark a historic turnaround in fortunes for the language, showing a 13% increase in the number of Welsh speakers since 1991.

Yet this proved to be a false dawn. In 2011, the numbers of Welsh speakers had again declined, with 19% of the population "able to speak Welsh" compared with 20.8% in 2001. Disappointingly, this decline also included the younger age groups, aged between five and 15, which had shown slight increases in ability in previous years.

Read more: [The Conversation](#), 18 November 2015.

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New members for the Committee of Experts monitoring CoE Charter



From December 1 2015, the President and the two vice chairs elected for the Committee of Experts, monitoring the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, will be Professor Vesna Crnic-Grotic, Rijeka (Chair), Croatia, Professor Stefan Oeter (Vice Chair), Hamburg, Germany, and Professor Jarmo Lainio (Second Vice Chair), Stockholm, Sweden.

The Charter has to date been ratified by 25 of the Council's 47 member states. (See www.coe.int/minlang, for further information.)

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Council approves new Cornish language plan

A new plan to help protect and promote the Cornish language has been approved by Cornwall Council. It outlines measures to promote awareness of the Cornish language with other public bodies and government departments, and it sets out how the council will incorporate the use of Cornish in its own policies, practices and services.



According to the new plan, Cornish will be used in communications and official publications, and council staff will be provided with cultural and language awareness training. These will be delivered within existing approved budgets. Introducing the draft Cornish Language Plan, Councillor Julian German, the council's cabinet member for economy and culture, said: 'Cornish is a unique cultural asset which underpins the distinctiveness of Cornwall and has an important part to play in the cultural, economic and social life of the region.'

Warning against sensationalist reports in the media, Cllr German emphasised: 'We are certainly not proposing to spend the current annual budget of £150,000 on making all Cornwall Council staff speak Cornish. 'Our aim is to encourage reception staff in Council buildings and in our contact centre to learn a few basic phrases so they can greet visitors in Cornish. This will be done by the members of the Cornish language office using existing resources so the only cost will be that of staff time.'

Source: [LocalGov](#), 5 November 2015.

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24-25 November 2015: Mercator Expert Seminar in Subotica (Serbia)

With the support of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning of the Fryske Akademy, and



the **European Bunjevac Center** from the Netherlands, Bunjevačka matica organization from Subotica (Serbia) is organizing an international expert seminar under the working title "**Languages at risk of extinction and the digitization of educational materials for minority education**". The event will take place on 24th and 25th of November 2015 in Subotica, Korzo street 8, 24000 Subotica, Serbia.

On the first day of seminar the topic will be languages which are in danger of extinction, where the European experience in this matter will be presented and the ways and possibilities of protection, as well as the problems and experiences of minorities whose languages are in danger.

The second day is scheduled for the topic of education, which refers to the process of digitizing the experiences of countries where this process has been completed or initiated, topics will include ways of making international projects. Participants from abroad are international experts in the given areas who will present their works and give speeches at the seminar.

Any additional information can be obtained on the **Bunjevačka matica website** or via [email](#).

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Expert in the Spotlight: Anke Tästensen

Anke Tästensen is head of two German-language schools in Denmark: Deutsche Schule Osterhoist and Deutsche Schule Rapstedt. She is the author of the *Regional Dossier German in Denmark, the German language in education in Denmark* which will soon (December 2015) be published by Mercator Research Centre.



"My major challenge at the moment is developing bilingual teaching material for pupils in the schools of the German Minority in Denmark . At the same time it is necessary to provide courses, conferences and training programs for new teachers about the special minority background of the pupils and their bilingual language approach. Combining and harmonizing those two areas can be quite challenging at times."

[Read more...](#)

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INTERESTING LINKS

Vacancies: Assistant/Associate Professors in Minority Studies at Åbo Academi University, Finland.

Why is English so weirdly different from other languages? A piece by John McWhorter, professor of linguistics at Columbia University and author of *The Language Hoax* (2014).

Scientists say they have decoded 'panda language'. Chinese researchers now plan to develop a 'panda translator' using voice recognition technology.

Modelling language shift in Carinthia, Austria. Paper abstract of a project by the University of Vienna presenting an agent-based model to simulate language shift over time and space.

Researchers create automated tool for dialect analysis. Dartmouth scientists have created an automatic speech analysis tool that pushes the technological envelope for what types of sociolinguistic dialect research are possible.

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EVENTS

18-20 November 2015, Trento (IT): Theory of Language and the Debate on Language Origins, Trento, Italy. Call deadline: 5 August 2015.

24-25 November 2015, Subotica (RS): Languages at risk of extinction and the digitization of educational materials for minority education, Subotica, Serbia.

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

7-9 December 2015, Leuven (BE): International Research Workshop CLARe 2015 "Language Use in Later Life", KU Leuven, Belgium.

10-11 December 2015, Recanati (IT): International Conference on Linguistic-Cultural Crossroads and Migration Patterns, Recanati, Italy.

15 December 2015, Udine (IT): SUNS EUROPE: Europe's Festival of Performing Arts in Minority Languages, Udine, Italy.

17-18 December 2015, Leuven (BE): Morphology Days 2015, KU Leuven, Belgium.

24-26 January 2016, Valencia (ES): 3rd International Conference on Linguistic & Psycholinguistic Approaches to Text Structure, KU Leuven, Belgium.

8-9 February 2016, Utrecht (NL): Linguistic Variation in the Interaction between Internal and External Syntax, Utrecht, The Netherlands. Call deadline 23 November 2015.

8-11 February 2016, Mandalay (MM): International Conference on Language Policy in Multilingual and Multicultural Settings, Mandalay, Myanmar. Call deadline 27 November 2015.

17-18 February 2016, Frankfurt am Main (DE): Multilingual CALL: Multilingual Language Learning with Digital Media in Primary and Secondary Classrooms, Goethe Universität, Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

18-20 February 2016, Tbilisi (GE): The Impact of Socio-Political Transformations on Language and Identity, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

17-18 March 2016, Riga (LV): Grammatical and Lexical Variance in Language System. 52nd Prof. Arturs Ozols Conference, Latvijas Universitate, Riga, Latvia.

30 March-1 April 2016, Strasbourg (FR): The Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants: Lessons from Research. Symposium organised by the Language Policy Unit of the Council of Europe.

4-5 April 2016, Leuven (BE): Probabilistic Variation Across Dialects and Varieties Leuven, Belgium. Call deadline 15 December 2015.

8-9 April 2016, Nottingham (UK): Diachronic Corpora, Genre, and Language Change International conference, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom.

3-5 June 2016, Rijeka (HR): CLARC 2016: Perspectives on Language Planning and Policies, Rijeka, Croatia. Call deadline 10 January 2016.

6-8 June 2016, Glasgow (UK): SOILLSE Conference 2016: Small Language Planning: Communities in Crisis International conference, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom.

19-22 July 2016, Vienna (AT): 13th International Conference of the Association for Language Awareness, Vienna, Austria. Call deadline 30 November 2015.

15-17 September 2016, Innsbrück (AT): Forms of Multilingualism in Secondary and Tertiary Education, Innsbrück, Austria. Call deadline 15 December 2015.

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