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mercator newsletter

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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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Mercator Network wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



NEWS

[Czech Republic urged to respect minority languages](#)

The Council of Europe today called on the Czech Republic to step up

its efforts to protect and promote minority languages, in particular German and Romani. The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers issued a number of recommendations to the Czech Republic based on an expert committee's report which evaluates its compliance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.



In the report, the committee highlights the existence of a well-developed general framework for the protection of national minorities in the country and acknowledges the existence of a special funding program for the implementation of the Charter. However, it also calls on the Czech Republic to intensify its efforts to promote awareness and tolerance in relation to minority languages and cultures as an integral part of the cultural heritage of the country. Measures are particularly needed to promote German and Romani in education, and their use in the media and public life.

At the moment, there is little knowledge in the Czech society about the country's traditional minority languages and their contribution to the national cultural heritage. German is largely perceived and also taught as a foreign language and the presence of Romani in mainstream education is limited, and its teaching is hampered by a negative public perception of Roma. On the other hand, Polish largely remains in a good situation in education in its traditional areas.

Read more: [Prague Post](#), 2 December 2105.

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Benedict Anderson, who wrote 'Imagined Communities,' dies



Benedict Anderson, a Cornell professor emeritus in government who wrote "Imagined Communities," the book that set the pace for the academic study of nationalism, died December 13 in East Java, Indonesia. He was 79. Anderson, the Aaron L. Binenkorb Emeritus Professor of International Studies, taught at Cornell University from 1967 to 2002.

In his 1983 book, "Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism," Anderson maintained that nations are communities that are "imagined" in the sense that all members do not – and will not – ever know all of the other members. "Members of the community probably will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion," Anderson wrote.

Contrasting the ideas of political scientists who believe that ancient nation-states possessed ideas similar to nationalism as we know it today, Anderson suggested that modern nationalism depends upon widely disseminated material – printed in a common language. The development of the printing press and the subsequent market for books and other publications in vernacular languages created and reinforced discourse within language communities.

Source: [Cornell University](#), 15 December 2015.

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NPLD Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity unveiled

"Europe needs to accommodate all its languages, not just 24," NPLD chair Patxi Bartzarrika said on 18 November as the network unveiled in Brussels the final version of its Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity. The document aims at ensuring equality for all languages in Europe, and demands concrete action from the EU. But words by a European Commission representative at the meeting do not allow a major glimpse of encouraging optimism.



The roadmap results from four years of work by the NPLD. The network brings together sub-state governments and parliaments, civil society groups and academia, all of them in favour of promoting Europe's minoritised languages. Government representatives include those from Catalonia, the Valencian Country, Wales, Brittany, the Basque Country, Galicia, Friesland and Friuli, among others.

At the presentation, MEPs Jordi Sebastià and Kinga Gal and former MEP François Alfonsi also voiced their support for NPLD's proposal. The European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity argues that all European languages "play a determinant role in social cohesion" and "personal, social and economic development, as well as for mobility." For this reason, the document goes on, the EU should engage itself in actively supporting "regional, minority and endangered languages of

Europe," including "the most vulnerable" ones.

"European institutions should take the lead in the promotion of real and diverse multilingualism," Bartzarrika said, as he quoted Amin Maalouf to recall that a common European project "can only be built on its diversity."

Source: [Nationalia](#), 19 November 2015.

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Euskaltzaindia and Fryske Akademy continue collaboration



Euskaltzaindia (Royal Academy of the Basque Language) and Fryske Akademy, represented by Andres Urrutia and Hanno Brand, signed a new agreement for collaboration on Friday 18 December in Bilbao (Basque Country). The signatories intend to generate synergies between the institutions in the study of their languages, as well as organising conferences, seminars, workshops and congresses which offer greater visibility to minority languages.

Eukaltzaindia and Fryske Akademy intend to work on the creation of a Network of Language Academies of minority languages in the European context, and on obtaining their recognition as representatives of their respective language communities in the European Union, with the objective of promoting knowledge of and respect for European linguistic diversity.

Fryslân and the Basque Autonomous country maintain already for years a good professional relationship. This includes a collaboration between Mercator Research Centre (Fryske Akademy) and the Basque Ministry of Education in research projects and the organisation of seminars.

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Report of Bunjevac international expert seminar (24-25 November 2015)

by Tjeerd de Graaf



On behalf of the Mercator Research Centre, Cor van der Meer and Tjeerd de Graaf were invited to take part in the international seminar on "Languages at risk of extinction and the digitization of educational materials for minority education". This meeting was organised in Subotica (Serbia) by the Bunjevacka Matica, in collaboration with the Bunjevac European Center and the Mercator Research Centre.

The Bunjevacka Matica co-ordinates cultural, scientific and educational activities for one of the various minority groups in Vojvodina, Serbia's Northern province. During the seminar several lectures have been presented about the position of these minorities and their cultures and languages. This could be compared with the experience of Mercator and other international organisations. In the future a further exchange of information will be considered, in particular related to the safeguarding and recognition of the Bunjevac language, if possible as one of the new candidates for UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Endangered Languages.

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Multilingual speech translation service for smart devices



Hitachi today announced that it has developed a speech signal processing technology for smart devices to achieve a better multilingual speech translation service on the market. By removing background noise excluding speaker's voice, this innovative technology offers a speech recognition capability in noisy urban street environments in which its noise level is 70 dB. In addition, its automatic detection of speech intervals enhances usability with an accurate recognition of speech timing without requiring user to press a button for determining the intervals. This technology will contribute to the commercialization of the multilingual speech translation service at service counters in various stores or at information center in public transportation systems.

As the growing popularity of visiting Japan, the number of foreign tourists has been increasing every year. Consequently, a demand of multilingual speech translation services is rising from the practical needs of performing effective communications between foreign tourists and local service counter clerks without feeling language barrier in public transportation services or shopping

centers.

Source: [Phys.org](#), 17 November 2015.

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New Regional Dossier: German in education in Denmark

This month, a new publication within the Regional dossiers series has been issued: the German language in education in Denmark. The dossier was written by Anke Tästensen, principle at the Deutsche Schule Osterhoist in Denmark.



Currently, there are approximately 15,000 people in the southern part of Denmark who belong to the German minority. These persons are able to read and write German. In total, however, there are about 250.000 inhabitants living in this area, called North Schleswig. The majority can understand and speak German, but is not able to read and write it. At the Danish public schools, German is only taught as an optional subject. On the other hand, the German schools in North Schleswig are bilingual schools, where German and Danish are taught as a mother tongue.

Although the status of German is still quite low among the total population of North Schleswig, the language is increasingly getting more influence in the region as well as in the rest of Denmark. The language ability of the pupils after attending the German schools is recognised as being very good, which is advantageous when these young persons apply for jobs in the area.

Download: [The German language in education in Denmark](#) (2015)

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INTERESTING LINKS

[Language Ideologies about Learning Historical Minority Languages: Hungarian in Romania and Swedish in Finland](#). Ph.D. dissertation in Hungarian Studies by Attila Gyula Kiss (University of Jyväskylä).

[The Internet Isn't Available in Most Languages](#), Katharina Schwab reports for *The Atlantic*. Despite all the hype about how it has connected the world, the web is more insular than you might think.

[Are We Different People in Different Languages?](#) Ana Menéndez on being a multilingual writer in the 21st century.

[Rise of the multilingual boss creates a 'monoglot ceiling'](#), Andrew Hill reports for the *Financial Times*. Having another language can aid your brain. Not having one can hurt your promotion chances.

[Do minority languages need machine translation?](#) Talk by Michal Boleslav Měchura at a British-Irish Council conference (November 2015) busting the myth that language technology is necessary for revival of minority languages.

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EVENTS

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

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.

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

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

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NEW TITLES MERCATOR LIBRARY

The catalogue of the library of Mercator Research Centre can be searched in the catalogue of Tresoar: <http://katalogus.tresoar.nl/>

The database with bibliographic data consists of more than 6500 entries, both books and articles. They deal with minority languages, bilingual and multilingual education, language learning, language policy and related subjects.

Education



Plurilingual education: Policies, practices , language development / [ed. by] Patrick Grommes and Adelheid Hu. – Amsterdam: Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014. – 260 p. – isbn 9789027214164 – signature Merc100Gbe252 – keywords: plurilingual education



Vorsicht Vielfalt : perspektiven, Bildungschancen und Diskriminierungen / [ed. by] Georg Gombos and [et al] – Klagenfurt: Drava Diskurs, 2015. – 343 p. – isbn 9783854357025 – signature: Merc100MLG386 – keywords: multilingual education; ethnic minorities; immigrants

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Linguistics



Conflict, exclusion and dissent in the linguistic landscape / [ed. by] Rani Rubdy and Selim Ben Said – Hounds Mills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015. – 306 p. – isbn 9781137426277 – signature: Merc100Gsg280 – keywords: linguistic landscape



Language MOOCs: Providing Learning, Transcending Boundaries / [ed. by] Elena Martin-Monje and Elena Bárcena Walter de Gruyter, 2015 – isbn 9783110422504 – signature Merc100Gsla264- keywords: MOOC; language learning

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