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EXPLANATORY NOTE
<i>This report summarizes the key messages delivered at the public Circle U. event “European Universities as Actors in Multilingualism” organised by Université Paris Cité on the 6th of October 2023. The programme included contributions of Circle U. members of the Think and Do Tank and its Task Force on Multilingualism, experts from other European university alliances and external stakeholders from the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the DG Translation in the European Commission. The conference, which was live-streamed on the YouTube channel of Université Paris Cité, provided an overview of the work undertaken by the Circle U. Think and Do Tank on the promotion of multilingualism as a resource in higher education and served to discuss the group's recommendations concerning language learning, multilingualism and intercultural understanding.</i> <i>The conclusions and insights extracted from this event served to complete the recommendations report delivered by the Think and Do Tank in August 2023 and resulted in a consolidated version which is included herein and which will set the basis for a future Circle U. Language Policy.</i> <i>The programme of the conference and a report gathering the research work implemented by the Task Force on Multilingualism during the pilot phase of the project (2021-2023) are in the Annexes.</i>

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HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON MULTILINGUALISM

On the 6th of October, Université Paris Cité hosted the Circle U. High-level meeting on Multilingualism under the title “European Universities as Actors in Multilingualism”, a public conference which took place at the faculty of medicine (Necker) and online. The audience gathered a total of 14 academics, 14 administrative staff and 9 students. From a total of 39 onsite participants, 30 were from a Circle U. partner universities and 9 were from outside the alliance. Non-academic actors were underrepresented in the conference room (2 participants). As for the audience online, 125 views were accumulated during the live broadcast, with an average viewing time of 40. On the 18th of October, the video reached 250 views and 14 likes.

- Link to the video of the event on the YouTube channel of Université Paris Cité:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KakltxWEbPA&ab_channel=Universit%C3%A9ParisCit%C3%A9
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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES AS ACTORS IN MULTILINGUALISM

The aim of the conference was twofold: to provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Circle U. Think and Do Tank on multilingualism and to discuss the recommendations of the devoted Task Force concerning language learning, multilingualism and intercultural understanding in higher education with other experts.

Why is multilingualism an issue at the national level?

Sara Thornton, Scientific Advisor at the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, recalled the link of language learning with employability and productivity. In this sense, several articles and publications point to the cost of monolingualism in the UK, estimated as billions per year, and to the urgent need for languages such as Spanish, Mandarin, French, Arabic and German¹. Languages are also a powerful means of boosting personal and societal well-being and optimizing the fulfilment of our relations with others. As Sara Thornton expressed, in line with Lacan’s dialectical materialism of the signifier, “languages do something to us”. Indeed, language is spoken by the subject as much as the subject is spoken by language. The words we use change what we do and what we think; that is why switching from one language to the other allows us to adopt various ways of thinking and change perspectives. Multilingualism does not only enable flexible self-positioning among others but also towards the environment. Related to this, interesting studies have linked the lack of local languages and dialects with a loss of biodiversity².

European university alliances influence the governance of universities at the local level because they imply mobility (of both students and staff) which is not only geographical as it creates a new pan-European culture with broader horizons. New paths mean, of course, innovation. This ecosystem, together with the coexistence of different languages, leads to a diversity of thought which enables empathy and cooperation, urgently needed in today’s world.

¹ The British Academy (2019) *Languages in the UK. A call for action*. ISBN 978-0-85672-634-5

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/61/Languages-UK-2019-academies-statement.pdf>

Hogan-Brun, G., Jenkins, J., Sjögren, J., Stevens, T. (2017 November 6) The cost of Britain’s failure to learn foreign languages, *The Guardian*: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/nov/06/the-cost-of-britons-failure-to-learn-foreign-languages>

Hogan-Brun, G. (2017 March 31) How Britain’s monolingualism will hold back its economy after Brexit, *The Conversation* : <https://theconversation.com/how-britains-monolingualism-will-hold-back-its-economy-after-brex-it-72244>

² Hua, X., Greenhill, S.J., Cardillo, M. et al. (2019) The ecological drivers of variation in global language diversity. *Nature Communication*, 10(2047). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-09842-2>

Zhang X, Bu Z, Ju H, Jing Y. et al. (2022) Investigation on the Relationship between Biodiversity and Linguistic Diversity in China and Its Formation Mechanism. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(9), 5538
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19095538>

How is the European Commission promoting multilingualism?

François Arnaud, translator at the European Commission, spoke of multilingualism as one of the EU's founding principles. The Union puts all its efforts into communicating with citizens in their national language. As a matter of fact, legal acts and their summaries are available in all official EU languages, meetings of the European Council and the Council of the European Union are interpreted into all official languages, and members of the European Parliament have the right to use any official language when speaking in Parliament. The EC also aims to protect Europe's linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as to promote language learning in its area of influence. Multilingualism in the EU is unequalled by any other international organisation. The co-existence of 24 official languages is one of the most distinctive features of the European project and a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be "united in diversity". Multilingualism is not only an expression of the EU countries' cultural identities, but it also helps preserve democracy, transparency and accountability. The obligation to respect linguistic diversity is enshrined in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights: EU citizens have the right to use any of the 24 official languages to communicate with the EU institutions, and the institutions must reply in the same language.

But how does multilingualism work every day in the EU institutions? The total number of linguistic combinations in the EU is 552 since each of the 24 languages can be translated into the 23 others. In the European Commission, the Directorate-General for Translation is responsible for translating documents from and into the EU's 24 official languages. To do so, they count on a team of 2,500 staff who translate approximately 2 million pages per year: DG Translation is probably the largest translation service in the world. The cost of the service is around 330 million euros per year or 60 cents per EU citizen per year. In the European Parliament, 700 translators translate approximately 100,000 pages per month. However, in practice, many of the internal meetings are held in English, the common language.

We should acknowledge the actual situation: one-third of adults in the EU do not know any foreign languages. Language competencies are indispensable for mobility, cooperation and mutual understanding across borders, objectives at the heart of the EU project. However, the EU has limited influence over educational and language policies, as these are the responsibility of the individual EU countries.

ERASMUS is probably the biggest success of the EU in terms of promoting multilingualism and cultural understanding amongst young Europeans. With a budget of 26 billion euros, the programme has celebrated 35 years and covered 33 countries. As a result, over 12 million people have studied in a foreign country and improved their language skills. In addition, the Commission cooperates with the OECD on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Foreign Language Assessment, which measures the language skills of 15-year-olds. They also devote training and resources for schools to support the integration of children from migrant backgrounds. Finally, the EC organises the celebration of the European Day of Languages every year on the 26th of September.

What are European university alliances doing in the field?

Three of the panelists in the roundtable were academic experts with an active role in promoting multilingualism in different European University alliances. Sharing their respective experiences was a fruitful exercise to identify common obstacles and good practices and set the basis for further collaboration in the future.

- **Elisa Corino**, Professor at the Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature straniere e Culture moderne, Università di Torino. Coordinator of the intercomprehension courses of the alliance UNITA.
- **Jo Angouri**, University-level Academic Director for Education and Internationalisation and Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick. Lead of the Learning Community on Multilingualism and Diversity in the alliance EUTOPIA.
- **Theodoros Marinis**, Professor of Multilingualism at Konstanz-Universität (former member of the alliance ERUA). Lead of the FOREU2 group on multilingualism. Coordinator of the project MultiMind.

UNITA is a European university alliance covering cross-border mountain regions whose particularity is the [training in intercomprehension](#) and the use of Romance languages to enhance linguistic diversity and promote inclusion within the alliance. UNITA has already implemented an intercomprehension course for teachers, another course for students and a course for staff happening at the time this report was written.

The Circle U. Think and Do Tank has pointed to intercomprehension training as a means of inclusion but also as a strategy to allow for and encourage a more complete and holistic dialogue between disciplines, in a perspective that considers diversity not only a controversial issue but an epistemological, political and ontological principle (Castellotti et al., 2016: 49). Disciplines often convey complex knowledge through specific terminology, which is sometimes difficult to translate into other languages even when they come from the same Latin matrix. The intercomprehension approach may therefore enrich disciplinary understanding and communication.

The [Connected Learning Communities in EUTOPIA](#) attracted the attention of the Think and Do Tank of Circle U. These communities provide the environment for connecting existing practices in all domains of activity; they are dynamic and thematically coherent spaces that bring together existing curriculum research and placemaking activities, enabling the partner universities to capitalize on their potential for innovation and societal impact based on good practice. In this new educational model for transnational education³, communities can redefine pedagogical offering and redefine innovation itself. Building innovation from the existing offering is in line with the concept of “micro-collaborations” developed by the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership DIONE4 and adopted by the Think and Do Tank as a good strategy for the democratization of education and the internationalization of higher education institutions. This kind of strategy moves beyond tensions associated with different regulatory frameworks, involves trans-institutional teams and establishes innovation from within. A review of the model is provided in Angouri *et al* (2023).

EUTOPIA has a Connected Learning Community (CLC) on “Multilingualism and Diversity” and another one on “Text and Discourse Analysis”. The Multilingualism CLC offers a module on Linguistics and Diversity granting ECTS. Still, there is a big question that stands and concerns all European alliances: “How do we move promising programming from the periphery to the centre?”⁵

The Forum of European Universities (FOREU1 for the alliances of the first wave and FOREU2 for those of the second wave)⁶ is composed of informal groups established to work together in different ways: sharing information, benchmarking the process of their projects, collaborating on project activities, monitoring the process of the initiative of European universities as a whole and joining lobby efforts at the European and national levels. The FOREU2 sub-group on Multilingualism, led by Prof. Theodoros Marinis from Konstanz-Universität, gathers the alliances of the second wave working on the topic. The first action in the forum was to implement a survey to know how each alliance is positioning itself in the field. All of them identified multilingualism as a priority. Language learning stood as the priority for most of the alliances. Additionally, promoting linguistic diversity and inclusion, as well as embedding language learning in intercultural training courses were pointed out as important. Accordingly, the most common actions implemented by the alliances of the second wave (launched in 2020) have been language courses and intercultural training. It is fair to acknowledge that most of these courses targeted students and that we should include staff as beneficiaries of our activities in the future. Furthermore, most of those courses do not include minority or regional

³ Angouri, J., Moriau, L. and S'Jegers, R. (2023). *Connected learning communities : a model for transnational education*. Learning and Teaching (LATISS) . ISSN 1755-2273. (In Press)

⁴ *Micro-collaboration as a new pillar in the internationalisation of higher education teaching*, a White paper by the E+ Strategic Partnership DIONE: <https://dione-edu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DIONE-Micro-collaboration-White-Paper.pdf>

⁵ *Transnational collaboration and mobility in higher education: Looking back – looking forward* (The Guild Insight Paper No.4) The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities: <https://www.the-guild.eu/events/2023/transnational-collaboration-and-mobility-in-higher-education.html>

⁶ The European Commission wants to reinforce this space of collaborations across the alliance and has thus launched a call for proposal to establish a “Community of Practice”: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/erasmus-edu-2024-eur-univ-2?tenders=false&callIdentifier=ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV>.

languages. Apart from regular courses, there are other suitable formats that have been tested such as summer schools, cafés and tandems. Annual or punctual events such as the Circle U. conference on multilingualism are also usual, especially to engage the local community with the project activities and their results. Bringing the local university community into the consultation process has been also an important aim in developing knowledge-based and relevant initiatives. One important step that alliances have forgotten to take in the first place is trying to determine language proficiency levels that students and staff already possess at each partner university. This 'state of the art' would be necessary in order to guide future interventions. Of course, the implementation of surveys at universities is very challenging.

European universities are multilingual by definition, but, with very few exceptions, internationalisation means communicating exclusively in English. Unfortunately, European alliances do not have enough resources to work as the DG Translation of the EC does. Instead, random translation services, automated subtitling and translation tools are being used, along with the translations that members of alliances are doing themselves. Communication within the alliance among partners is a very important issue that needs to be addressed, for example, using intercomprehension strategies as UNITA is doing. In any case, the exclusive use of English excludes an important proportion of the university community. In order to address this and other challenges in the promotion of multilingualism, Theodoros Marinis recommends the creation of a language policy. This is a complex process that has been started only by three alliances of the second wave but that will be key in the next phase until 2030.

Overview of the work done by the Circle U. Think and Do Tank

Stephan Breidbach, Director of the Professional School of Education at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and **Ana de Medeiros**, Director of the King's Language Centre offered an overview of the Task Force by explaining the aims and fields of action of this group. **Nataša Janković**, Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Education at Univerzitet u Beogradu, presented the results of the survey collecting students' opinions and attitudes towards multilingualism⁷. **Philipp Wasserscheidt**, professor at the Department of Slavic and Hungarian Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, explained a central concept in the development of the mission and vision of the task Force: "receptive multilingualism". Last but not least, **Dominique François**, Director at the Institut des langues vivantes at the Université catholique de Louvain, focused on the network of language centres across Circle U. and presented the new platform that will allocate concrete resources to multilingualism in the next phase: the Multilingualism Interculturality and Languages Lab (CU.mil).

Discussion of the recommendations of the Think and Do Tank in the round table

Aliyah Morgenstern, Professor of Linguistics, Vice-President for European Affairs and President of the Ethics Committee at Sorbonne Nouvelle University (member of the YUFE alliance) led the discussion between five panelists, two of them were Circle U. members of the Task Force on Multilingualism (**Ana de Medeiros**, Director of King's Language Centre; and **Natalie Kübler**, Director of the CLILLAC-ARP research lab at Université Paris Cité) and three external experts (**Jo Angouri** from the University of Warwick, **Theodoros Marinis** from Universität Konstanz and **Elisa Corino** from Università di Torino).

The panel addressed the following issues:

- 1 The paradox of globalization and multilingualism.
- 2 Why European university alliances need a language policy and how to build it.
- 3 How to promote language learning in our universities and in an alliance if we cannot include language courses in the curricula.
- 4 The impact of the multilingualism paradox in academic research: "Publish in English or perish"
- 5 Using machine translation

⁷ Janković, N., Buđevac, N., Wasserscheidt, P. and Vukelić, B. (2023) Circle U. Research on Multilingualism. Students Have a Say: Circle U. survey on multilingualism and language learning in higher education. Circle U. Erasmus+ (101004062) https://www.circle-u.eu/resources/multilingualism/circle-u.-research-on-multilingualism_survey-report.pdf

- 6 What the opportunities to conduct research on multilingualism across an alliance might be.
- 7 The exchange of good (and poor) practices among alliances.
- Link to the PowerPoint presentations of the speakers:
<https://cloud.parisdescartes.fr/index.php/s/iZMkmcXPdeSPsMd>

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON MULTILINGUALISM

THE PROMOTION OF MULTILINGUALISM AS A RESOURCE IN CIRCLE U.

The stake of multilingualism and cultural diversity in Europe

Language competencies are at the heart of building the European Education Area. They are indispensable for mobility, cooperation and mutual understanding across borders. The [High-Level Group on Multilingualism of the European Commission \(2007\)](#) defined multilingualism as “the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives”. Importantly, **multilingualism is not a state, it’s an action**. Just like any language, multilingualism is something that has to be done. Language, like multilingualism, only exists when it is used in communication by speakers. Multilingualism thus requires, on the one hand, that individuals master two or more languages to a certain degree. On the other hand, multilingualism means the actual use of several languages within social structures (institutions, groups, societies). This presupposes the presence of multilingual individuals in an environment where they can and want to communicate with other individuals in different languages.

Multilingualism in Circle U.

For the Circle U. Task Force on Multilingualism, the aims and motivation behind the promotion of multilingualism are the potential of this resource to:

- Enhance mobility and internationalisation in all domains.
- Increase employability of individuals, competitiveness of organisations and economic growth in general.
- Encourage interdisciplinary approaches.
- Develop “soft” competencies (tolerance, openness, hospitality) and transferable skills (intercultural understanding, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and communication skills), which are a profound vector for democracy, social cohesion and the recognition of diversity. Therefore, multilingualism might prevent to some extent misinformation, disinformation, polarization, hate speech, xenophobia, and violent extremism.
- Fostering lesser-used languages is coherent with the promotion of democracy, social cohesion, and the recognition of diversity.

As stated in the [White Paper “Shaping the Future of Higher Education in a Changing World”](#), Circle U. will increase awareness of multilingualism as a resource, involving the languages that European citizens already know, in addition to learning new ones. During the three years of the pilot phase of Circle U. (2020-2023), a group of experts on multilingualism within its [Think and Do Tank](#) worked at three levels:

- 1 At the individual level, by building networks between students and teachers involved in multilingualism and intercultural competence training,
- 2 At the local and institutional levels, by connecting the language centres of partner universities, and creating opportunities to learn languages and develop intercultural communication skills outside the physical university context such as the development of blended or online learning initiatives,

- 3 More broadly, at the national and international levels, by sharing good practices and creating synergies with other European alliances.

At the end of the pilot phase, the members of the Think and Do Tank involved in these initiatives have been working on the design of a common strategy for the alliance and a set of recommendations with the aim of producing a Circle U. Language Policy in the next phase of the project from November 2023. This group advocates for European Higher Education Alliances to become places of plurilingualism at all levels. They argue that institutional multilingualism is inextricably linked to individual multilingualism: speakers do not develop multilingual practices unless the (self-chosen or given) environment is itself multilingual to some degree. At the same time, institutions can only perform multilingually if their members are themselves multilingual and willing to put this ability into practice in everyday life.

Their approach starts precisely at the interface between the individual and the institution. They suggest that in order to enable multilingual practices, it is not only necessary to have active users of different languages who communicate in languages of their own choosing. Rather, for reasons of communicative efficiency and social norms, it is equally important that the institutional environment tolerates these language choices and that indirect participants are able to follow multilingual exchanges.

Their aim is to encourage university members to make full use of their existing linguistic resources, thereby enabling plurilingual practices. In doing so, we acknowledge that multilingualism is to a large extent already present among European citizens, be it in the context of certain sociolinguistic constellations (linguistic minorities, migrant groups), through schooling or other histories of acquisition. This vast potential should be integrated into the future universities' development.

The strategy aim of the group in the Think and Do Tank of Circle U. is to promote multilingualism by addressing this competence in its three components:

- Firstly, promoting knowledge about multilingualism and language in general. The group will thus initiate reflections on people's own multifaceted language competencies, standard language ideologies and ideas of purity. As a result, speakers should be able to deal more self-confidently with the various modalities of their own linguistic resources.
- Secondly, it addresses the attitudes of university members towards multilingualism in general and their personal resources and skills in particular. The group wants to advocate openness to the use of any existing language competencies - regardless of how advanced they are, whether they are productive or receptive, or in which modes they are available. To this end, apart from normative language courses, universities should enable and promote non-normative communicative practices such as translanguaging or non-reciprocal multilingual practices. Speakers should develop agency skills and build a self-image as agents impacting on societies becoming more multilingual.
- Thirdly, the group wants to promote skills and practices that do not only rely on productive language use, but also mobilise hidden resources for broader receptive multilingualism. This includes training in intercomprehension strategies, increased recognition of non-formal language acquisition and the introduction of multilingual routines.

A focus on the notion of “receptive multilingualism”

Multilingualism may refer to the individual linguistic repertoires or, in a broader sense, to the co-presence of different languages at the societal level. Receptive multilingualism (RM) points to receptive language skills, such as listening and reading, in contrast to productive ones (speaking, writing). Experts have defined RM as a mode of interaction in which speakers with different linguistic backgrounds use their respective preferred

languages while understanding the language of their interlocutor (Blees, ten Thije 2015)⁸. Receptive multilingualism then comprises all “linguistic, mental, interactional as well as intercultural competencies which are creatively activated” when speakers try to understand each other in receptive multilingual communication. (Rehbein, ten Thije, Verschik 2012 and Blees, ten Thije 2015)⁹.

Dr. **Philipp Wasserscheidt**, Lead of the Think and Do Tank at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, has further developed the notion of RM in relation to the potential of European university alliances. He considers that multilingual individuals must be able to act multilingually, starting with the principle that the basis of using a language is to be understood. Receptive language competencies are always higher compared to productive skills. Moreover, existing foreign language skills coming from individuals’ family heritage or previous education could be put into practice.

	Everybody own L	Everybody English	Everybody (parts of) some Ls	Everybody all Ls
Institution	Multilingualism	Monolingualism	Multilingualism	Multilingualism
Individual	Monolingualism	Bilingualism	Multilingualism	Multilingualism
Mode of communication	Translation	English-only	Receptive Multilingualism	Multilingual
Implementation	Translation and infrastructure costs high	Efficient, but (somewhat) exclusive	Through language policy	Language diversity not coverable
Multilingualism	Runs counter to the goal	Goal not met	Adaptive	Multilingualism overkill

Table from the presentation of Dr. Philipp Wasserscheidt at the Circle U. conference “European Universities as Actors in Multilingualism”, Université Paris Cité, 6th of October 2023. The four-column level refers to the possible strategies to cope with multilingual organisations. Each strategy presupposes that everybody speaks [the own language / English / (parts of) some languages / all languages present in the organisation]. The rows show whether Institutions, Individuals and Communication are multilingual, bilingual or monolingual, the mode of implementation and how this approach supports the goal of multilingualism.

RM as a mode of communication should be understood as a competence and therefore considered in its three components (knowledge, skills and attitude) as explained above. To successfully implement RM, governing bodies at the level of partner universities and alliances need to take action at different levels:

- Institutionalise RM through a language policy that introduces RM and multilingual communication as valid modes of communication.
- Enable meso and micro communication through situational and user-based solutions.
- Promote RM by monitoring and visualising language skills, fostering receptive competencies (intercomprehension) and raising awareness and commitment.
- Implement actions that embrace multilingual communication and schedule time for reflection and learning.

Balance needs to be kept between different communication modes (over-accommodation/English-only, over-multilingualisation/all at once, compartmentalisation/L1 only) and different language skills (relying on

⁸ Blees, G.J., ten Thije, J.D. (2016). *Receptive Multilingualism and Awareness*. In: Cenoz, J., Gorter, D., May, S. (eds) *Language Awareness and Multilingualism*. Encyclopedia of Language and Education. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02325-0_25-2

⁹ Rehbein, J., ten Thije, J.D., Verschik, A. (2012). *Lingua receptiva (LaRa) – remarks on the quintessence of receptive multilingualism*. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 16(3) 248-264 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006911426468>. Rehbein, J., ten Thije, J.D., Verschik, A. (2012). *Receptive multilingualism – introduction*. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 16(3) 245-247. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006911426468>

translation, resting on receptive skills, practising active skills). Of course, RM is only one building block for a multilingually productive university.

Recommendations for the future

The approach of the Think and Do Tank is to make Circle U. operate as a multilingual alliance, developing its capacity for conducting administrative and teaching activities in multiple languages. To achieve this goal, efforts need to go in two complementary directions:

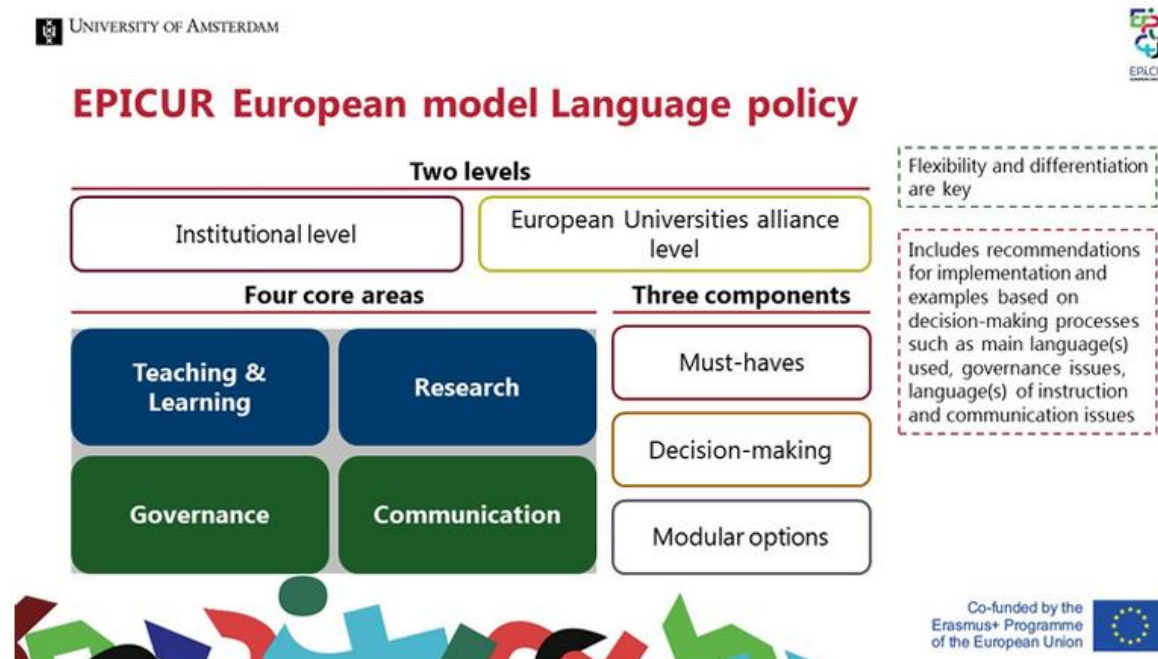
- 1 Producing new linguistic competencies and achieving language proficiency.
- 2 Capitalising on existing knowledge and promoting its receptive use to enable multilingual practices.

In order to facilitate the development of a language policy for Circle U. in the next phase of the project, the Think and Do Tank has created the following set of recommendations:

Develop a Circle U. Language Policy to preserve and promote the wealth of languages within our alliance and to show respect for the existing linguistic resources amongst students and staff.

The language policy for the Alliance has to be flexible due to national differences. It is important to distinguish between the common language policy and a local implementation plan that could evolve and be revised regularly.

- Use the Circle U. Language Policy based on the [EPICUR European Model Language Policy](https://epicur.education/epicur-european-model-language-policy/)¹⁰, which is designed so that it is applicable for both partner universities and for Circle U. as a European university alliance. Other advantages of this model are its flexibility thanks to three different components (must-haves, decision-making and modular options) and the fact that it covers different areas (teaching and learning, research, governance and communication).



Schematic overview of the components of the EPICUR European Model Language Policy

¹⁰ Link to download the EPICUR European Model Language Policy: <https://epicur.education/epicur-european-model-language-policy/>

Enable students to master two or more modern/foreign languages (apart from their native language or Latin), as prescribed by the EU, by recommending / offering / introducing more language courses in the official curriculum of each university within the Alliance and also by offering alternative ways of language learning.

- Read the report “[Students Have a Say: Circle U. Survey on Multilingualism and Language Learning in Higher Education](#)” (See the Annexes).

Offer opportunities to students and staff to learn other modern languages for general and specific purposes at their own universities and in Circle U.

- Offering additional languages as regular and/or optional courses for both general and specific (professional) purposes at universities, which would enable progress towards higher language proficiency levels.
- Opening existing language courses to Circle U. students and staff such as the [language modules offered by the Modern Language Center from King's College London](#). The partnership should be based on cooperation and complementarity.
- Sharing and mutualizing existing courses and materials in different scientific fields through [short-term virtual teaching cooperation \(the so-called “micro-collaborations”\)](#)¹¹ and mobility programmes, which will allow students and staff from partner universities to cooperate in different languages and put them in use quite purposefully in a truly multilingual and multicultural environment.
- Opening existing online training at partner universities in other languages to Circle U. staff, such as the [French training sessions of the Louvain Learning Lab on teaching techniques](#).
- Advertising to partner universities hybrid cultural activities that other Circle U. students and staff can follow online.
- Creating semi-formal networks/spaces/activities such as Circle U. World Cafés in different languages.

Use the wealth of languages already spoken by students and staff as a resource for their further professional and personal development, as many may already be considered multilingual. This requires both progressing towards proficiency levels and free use of the already existing knowledge and skills.

Promote inclusive communication by using other languages of the Alliance different than English when conducting certain activities, meetings or events. The problem of monolingualism in Academia also needs to be addressed, as English is persistently more valued in scientific publications, as well as the challenge of translating different types of argumentations in various languages.

¹¹ The Think and Do Tank recommends using the model of micro-collaborations proposed by the Erasmus + project « Digitalising aMobility and International Networks with Open Education » (DIONE) <https://dione-edu.eu/>

- Making a better connection between students' and staff's former language learning experience and the development of their language and intercultural skills in the university.
 - Enable and promote non-normative communicative practices such as translanguaging or non-reciprocal multilingual practices. This includes training in intercomprehension strategies, increased recognition of non-formal language acquisition and the introduction of multilingual routines.
 - Support the creation of online communities to meet and collaborate in various languages, such as the informal learning groups of PhD students that organise thematic discussions around their own research work in different languages (an initiative identified by a [Think and Do Tank Café](#)), and international tandems.
- Using the already widely spoken languages apart from English (German, French, Spanish, Italian and Russian) as a resource by promoting them all as languages of active communication in class and at the workplace.
 - Support the creation of hubs of online communities such as the [French Hub](#) and the East-European Hub to launch different initiatives in various languages and promote teacher collaboration.
- Offering proper remediation opportunities to students and staff not mastering the language used in certain activities or complex group discussions. Support to researchers who do not feel competent enough in the languages used should also be considered. The Alliance would need to identify apps and/or interpretation services.
- Partner universities should ensure that relevant communication and information concerning the Alliance are translated into the local and national languages to reach out to their university communities at large.

Use the multicultural reality of the alliance as a resource to promote the development of intercultural skills among students and staff and internationalisation at partner universities.

- Pursue the experience of the [Intercultural Lab](#) and implement a hybrid training on cultural competencies (online + on-site activities) with groups of participants that mix students and staff coming from different partner universities and fields of expertise. The [Cultural Competency Unit at King's College London](#) would be interested in contributing to this initiative. It may also be useful to map the inclusion of cultural competency in Circle U. activities and/or in study programmes at partner universities.

Conducting needs analysis by collecting the opinions of both students and staff in order to plan strategic action lines in the alliance and/or potential changes at partner universities. The survey conducted with Circle U. students, for example, highlighted the need for language proficiency certification and explored how universities and the alliance could contribute to supporting students and staff to obtain these qualifications.

- Read the report "[Students Have a Say: Circle U. Survey on Multilingualism and Language Learning in Higher Education](#)" (See the Annexes). The main motivation for learning other languages among the students completing the survey was, in the first place, personal growth and development as a human being, followed by work opportunities and professional development.

Conducting research on multilingualism: bilingual communities as good practice laboratories, language mediation for communication, etc.

- Use the [Circle U. seed-funding scheme](#) and other sources to conduct research on related topics.

Sharing good practices with other alliances, multilingual universities, experts, etc.

- Continue organising [round tables](#) with experts to discuss the obstacles and opportunities to promote multilingualism in Circle U. and at partner universities.
- Continue participating in the FOREU2 sub-group on multilingualism to share good practices with other alliances.

Consider the inclusion of associated partners and external stakeholders such as museums and other cultural institutions or business organisations when organising any activity or event.

- When organising events, offer invitations to cultural events rather than handing “goodies”. Not only will invitations reduce environmental impact, but they will also help guests become more familiar with the cultural specificities of all Circle U. partners.
- Cultural organisations may be interested in contributing to the organisation of informal on-site activities or in sharing the calendar of sessions (music, cinema, theatre, art, etc.) that can be followed online.

Consider investing in IT support solutions, such as automatic simultaneous translation services and learning apps that can support language learning.

Both students and staff would need to be trained in the use of such tools.

- Make the recording of workshops, conferences, etc. in other languages available with English subtitles. See the example of the [Circle U. Public Lecture Series on Global Health](#) and of the [Masterclass Circle U. d'Histoire avec Michelle Perrot](#).
- Explore the potential of new AI developments in machine translation and learning apps.

ANNEXES

CIRCLE U. THINK AND DO TANK EVENT “EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES AS ACTORS IN MULTILINGUALISM”

The aim of this conference is twofold: We will provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Circle U. multilingualism group, and we will discuss the group's recommendations concerning language learning, multilingualism and intercultural understanding in higher education with other experts. The focus will be on Circle U. operating as a multilingual alliance, developing its capacity for conducting administrative and teaching activities in multiple languages.

Friday 6th of October 2023, 14:00 – 19:00 (CEST)

Université Paris Cité - Site Necker. [160 rue Vaugirard 75015 Paris](#).

The conference will be live-streamed on the [YouTube channel of Université Paris Cité](#).

Speakers:

[Sara Thornton](#), Scientific Advisor at the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

[François Arnaud](#), Translator, European Commission.

[Elisa Corino](#), Professor at the Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature straniere e Culture moderne, Università di Torino. Coordinator of the intercomprehension courses of the alliance UNITA.

[Jo Angouri](#), University-level Academic Director for Education and Internationalisation and Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick, Lead of the EUTOPIA Learning Community on Multilingualism and Diversity.

[Theodoros Marinis](#), Professor of Multilingualism at Konstanz-Universität – a member of ERUA (European Reform University Alliance). Lead of the FOREU2 group on multilingualism. Coordinator of the project MultiMind.

[Aliyah Morgenstern](#), Professor of linguistics. Vice-President of European Affairs and President of the Ethics Committee, Sorbonne Nouvelle University, representing the YUFE alliance.

Speakers from the group on multilingualism in the Circle U. Think and Do Tank

[Ana de Medeiros](#), Director of the King's Language Center. Lead of the Think and Do Tank and its Task Force on Multilingualism at King's College London.

[Stephan Breidbach](#), Director of the Professional School of Education (PSE). Lead of the network on Teacher Education in Circle U. Member of the Think and Do Tank and its Task Force on Multilingualism at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

[Nataša Janković](#), Professor at the Teacher Education Faculty. Member of the Task Force on Multilingualism at the Универзитет у Београду / Univerzitet u Beogradu.

[Philipp Wasserscheidt](#), Professor at the Department of Slavic and Hungarian Studies. Lead of the Think and Do Tank at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

[Dominique François](#), Director at the Institut des langues vivantes. Member of the Task Force on Multilingualism and Coordinator of the forthcoming CU.mil at Université catholique de Louvain.

[Natalie Kübler](#), Director of the CLILLAC-ARP research lab, Université Paris Cité. Member of the Task Force Multilingualism at Université Paris Cité.

[Ana Elvira Garcia Lopez](#), Coordinator of the Circle U. Think and Do Tank for the Future of Higher Education, Université Paris Cité.

Programme

14:00 Institutional welcoming by **Julia Motte-Baumvol**, Vice-Dean of International Relations at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Université Paris Cité.

14:10 Introduction to the topic

- *Making diversity happen: European Alliances and the language-effect* **Sara Thornton**
- *The language of Europe is translation* **François Arnaud**
- *The development of intercomprehension methods by UNITA* **Elisa Corino**
- *The EUTOPIA Community of Learning on Multilingualism and Diversity* **Jo Angouri**
- *Sharing good practices among alliances: The FOREU2 sub-group on Multilingualism* **Theodoros Marinis**

15:00 Presentation of the work on multilingualism in Circle U.

- *Overview of the Task Force Multilingualism in the Think and Do Tank* **Ana de Medeiros and Stephan Breidbach**
- *The notion of 'receptive multilingualism'* **Philipp Wasserscheidt**
- *Considering students' opinions: Conception, implementation and results of the survey on languagelearning* **Nataša Janković**
- *The network between Circle U. Languages Centres and the future CU.mil* **Dominique François**

15:40 Coffee break

16:10 Key recommendations for the next phase of Circle U. **Ana Elvira Garcia Lopez**

16:20 Panel discussion on the recommendations

Moderator: **Aliyah Morgenstern**

Speakers: **Ana de Medeiros, Elisa Corino, Jo Angouri, Natalie Kübler, Theodoros Marinis.**

18:00 Open Q&A session

18:30 Closing remarks

18:40 Cocktail/buffet

CIRCLE U. RESEARCH ON MULTILINGUALISM

STUDENTS HAVE A SAY: CIRCLE U. SURVEY ON MULTILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Read the report [Circle U. research on multilingualism conducted by the Think and Do Tank in the pilot phase \(2021-2023\)](#)

TECHNICAL REFERENCES	
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EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the pilot phase of Circle U. (2020-2023), a Task Force on Multilingualism in the Think and Do Tank of the alliance has conducted research on the modern/foreign languages known and taught at the nine partner universities. The results of our research guide us to offer recommendations for the implementation of changes at Circle U. universities as our ultimate goal on the path of [shaping the future of higher education in a changing world](#).

The survey “[Students Have a Say: Circle U. Survey on Multilingualism and Language Learning in Higher Education](#)”, was conducted in the period November 2022 - February 2023, among students of the nine Circle U. universities in the seven languages of the Alliance. The first version of the questionnaire was designed by a research team at the University of Belgrade in March 2022 and was further developed thanks to the contribution of other colleagues in the Think and Do Tank of Circle U. The aim was to gain insight into students’ attitudes towards language learning and the opportunities provided within their education systems, their experience and aspirations related to learning languages, motivation for and obstacles to learning other languages, the ways in which they like to expand their linguistic knowledge and skills and the importance they attribute to multilingualism in terms of one’s general, professional and socio-cultural well-being.

This report presents detailed results of this research which relies on both qualitative and quantitative methods. One of the most important aims of this research is collecting students’ opinions and attitudes towards multilingualism. The discussion of the results is based on the comparative analysis of the answers, with a particular insight into the differences between students’ needs and the current state of affairs at universities.