

Zlat R. Milovanovic:
Multilingualism and Monolingualism in the Institutions of the European Union

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Abstract

The European Union (EU) policy on languages is based on multilingualism, that is with respect to the equality and parity of all 24 official and working languages (of the 28 member states). The EU functions in all these languages thanks to translation and interpretation, with a few exceptions. Three so called “procedural languages” (English, French and German) are used in the Commission for its internal work. French is also given working preference in the Court of Justice of the EU. Multilingualism helps to maintain transparency in the work of the institutions, facilitates communication with European citizens and heightens efficiency. The 47-state Council of Europe, by comparison, while recognizing the equality of all its languages, has opted for two working languages in its institutions and five in its Parliamentary Assembly. There is no common language in Europe and monolingualism is not under consideration for the time being. Among Europeans, English is the first language of mutual communication, French being the second. Europe, however, has a long history of functioning monolingualism and single language use in diplomacy, international relations, and intellectual life. In real life, the equality and parity of languages cannot be maintained for an extended time as the international community tends to function in one or a few languages, mainly for practical purposes but also to diminish the advantages enjoyed by native speakers of working or official languages. Languages in general convey the cultures of their native speakers, as well as their concepts, qualities, relations and terms (called “universals” in philosophy). The United States, for instance, does not have an official language by law, yet de facto, English has grown into that role. This paper is dedicated to the search for an ideal solution for EU institutions, which would make not only states but also their citizens more equal. The EU and other European organizations and their institutions will eventually need a common language in addition to all languages currently in use, if they are to achieve a broader social integration, a sense of European citizenship, new opportunities for study and work in wider geographic areas, and businesses able to reach out to all parts of the Single market while being more competitive abroad. This chapter is divided into four parts: Multilingualism in the EU; Legal aspects; Monolingualism;

The future. European and other languages can definitely serve peace, development and the general progress of the global world as we know it.

Keywords: multilingualism, monolingualism, official, working and procedural languages, European institutions, linguistic minorities, EU non- member states, role of language.

Introduction

The European Day of Language was first organized by the Council of Europe on September 26, 2001, in order to raise awareness of the languages used in Europe, promote language diversity and encourage the life-long learning of languages. The European Commission and the European Center for Modern Languages have supported and taken part in this and similar events. The Commission and the Council of Europe signed a partnership agreement in 2013 to cooperate in this effort and make it a joint venture.

The EU institutions have adopted a policy of multilingualism, that is a policy of respect for the equality and parity of all of the 24 EU official and working languages. EU multilingualism has reached its highest level with the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, making the activities of the European institutions more transparent, efficient and legitimate and their communication with European citizens much easier. The EU moved ahead of the Council of Europe's more traditional approach.

As there is no common language in all of Europe, monolingualism has been overlooked and disregarded. The one language present in Europe from Roman times to the end of the 18th century was Latin, the carrier of a common Graeco-Roman culture of ancient times, and the language of diplomacy, government, churches, law, and education. Latin was replaced by French as an international language by the end of the 18th century, and by French and English in the 20th century. Nonetheless, Latin remains a common element of most modern European languages, whether Indo-European or not.

If the EU is to develop into a new nation and a global power in its own right, it will need its own language as a *conditio sine qua non* of the Union. Which language it will be depends fully on the member states and the European citizens. Otherwise, the number of accepted languages could grow easily to 80 or more languages within the next 30 years (Pan, Pfell, 2002). The official use of all those languages could become prohibitively costly and highly impractical.

Multilingualism

Multilingualism can be defined as the existence of many languages in a given area, or the mastery of many languages by a single person. The distinction between languages and dialects which was formerly made is no longer applied, with some exceptions. As almost every person contributes to the creation of his or her own language, individuals can also design and create new languages. The capacity of humans to create new and forget old languages is almost limitless. The capacity of institutions to use any number of languages is not, although it is not easy to say at which point it ends. Today, nobody can possibly speak Phrygian (the language of democracy), Etruscan or Moesian. Some languages are in the process of being reconstructed even if no longer spoken, for instance Cornish, Occitan, and Livonian. Should we also count slang, argot, or Klingon as languages? Ultimately, the issue of identity arises: Is it more important for a people to speak in its own language or to be able to be understood by others?

The European Community started with four official languages: Dutch, French, German and Italian. The Coal and Steel Treaty had originally started with only one official language: French. Today, the 24 languages of the EU, from Bulgarian to Swedish, in alphabetical order, make it possible for 28 states to have their representatives communicate with each other, the principle being one official language per member state (with the exception of Luxemburg, where both German and French count as official languages.) To quote the European Commission, the EU now has some 500 million citizens, 28 member states, three alphabets and 24 languages, some of them with worldwide coverage (EU, *Supporting Language Diversity in Europe*, 2015). According to the same document, some 60 other languages are also part of the EU's heritage and are spoken in specific regions or by specific minority groups. In addition, immigrants (some of whom are already European citizens) have brought in an estimated 175 languages. All these numbers are likely to increase, starting of course with candidate countries, aspirant countries, members of the European Economic Area and some other neighboring countries.

The European Commission (some 33,000 employees) is now backed by 1,750 linguists and 600 supporting staff, who make up one of the largest translation services in the world. The interpretation service employs a staff of 600 and some 3,000 freelance interpreters, with 250 on the supporting staff. The Commission has two Directorates General (DGs) in this area: one for Translation, the other for Interpretation. The General Secretariat of the European Parliament (EP) employs 6,000 employees, the Council of the EU

3,500. The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have the right to speak in an official language of their country. The political groups of European parties have their own staff. All official documents of the EU and all other publications are produced in the 24 languages, and some of them in the languages of the six candidate countries (including Macedonian). The cost of the use of the 24+6 languages is about EUR 1 billion a year. Within the European Commission, the internal work may be conducted in the “procedural languages” (formerly called working languages): English, French and German. The finalized documents, however, must be published in all 24 languages. Although some of the translations can be prepared faster than others, this is not normally a problem (The European Commission, *Supporting Language Diversity in Europe*, 2015; all figures).

The Committee of Regions, representing the layer of government of member-state countries directly under the national level, provides its members with the right to speak in their own languages, even those that are not official in the EU. This is an example of expanded diversity. Catalan or Welsh, for example, can be heard on this Committee (Loughlin, 2004). A step further, following the Treaty of Lisbon, was the acceptance by the EU of communications by citizens in their minority, or Lesser Used Languages (LULs), provided that the expense is covered by member-states. The EU institutions will answer those communications in the same language in which they are written. The first languages included were Welsh, Scottish-Gaelic and Irish (for the U.K.), Catalan, Galician (Gallego) and Basque (for Spain) and Frisian (for The Netherlands). The number of these Lesser Used Languages will increase.

Further developments, especially within the Council of Europe, brought minority language rights to the fore. The right to use one’s own language, be it in a traditional regional or an ethnic minority language, has received the support of EU institutions as well. We refer to the “historic minorities” of the states party to the Framework Convention for the Protection of Ethnic Minorities (Council of Europe, Framework Convention, 1995). The ratifying states, members of the Council of Europe, adopted this act in order to combat discrimination against minorities, promote equality among citizens, and preserve and develop the cultural identity of the minorities through their access to the media, education and public life.

While this Convention clearly does not represent an obligation for the EU, the EU cannot possibly ignore it. The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) has called upon the European Commission to pay more attention to language diversity, emphasizing the fact that 40 million European

citizens use a regional or a minority language. The European Parliament decided in 2003 to have a report prepared on the language policy of the EU. This initiative was supported by the Committee of the Regions. The report of Michel Ebner, MEP, was adopted on July 14, 2003, by 423 as opposed to 27 votes (21 abstentions). The “Ebner Report” mentioned some 150 regional and minority languages (the lesser used languages), with various recommendations, having in mind the enlargement of the Union and its increased cultural diversity. Among the recommendations, a European Agency for Linguistic Diversity and Language Learning was proposed, including its funding which has not yet materialized (Ebner Report, 2003). The EU Program for 2014-2020 does include funding for a Language Diversity Center, as well as an Action plan for a legal framework, which is to be developed.

Legal Aspects

The European Union has moved from its original inattention to language issues to increasing its interest and support. The European Day of Language is symbolic in this respect. The EU today can be considered a champion of multilingualism in the international community. The EU Barcelona Summit in 2002 already provided inspiration for the European Social Model. The President’s Conclusions called for the promotion of skills, competences and qualifications for greater mobility in education, research and innovation. The need to teach at least two foreign languages in addition to one’s own from an early age was emphasized, as were including a European dimension in education and digital literacy (Barcelona Summit, 2002).

The Lisbon Treaty of 2007 in its Art. 1:2, states that the EU: “shall respect its rich cultural, religious and linguistic diversity” (*Treaty of the EU*, 2007). This provision formalizes the policy of multilingualism within the EU and, at the same time, recognizes the equal standing of all EU languages. The EU *Charter of Fundamental Human Rights*, in its Art. 21: 1 and 2, states the following: “Any discrimination, based on any ground such as sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, *language*, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, *membership of a national minority*, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation, shall be prohibited.” And also: “any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited.” Art. 22 states that: “the Union shall respect cultural, religious and *linguistic diversity*.” (*EU Charter on Fundamental Human Rights*, 2007 / emphasis added by author of this article).

The Preamble of the Charter also draws attention to the international obligations of member states, including those contained in The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Council of Europe, the Social Charters adopted by the Community and the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Community and the European Court of Human Rights. The EU Charter has been in force since 2009.

The Linguistic rights of minorities were not forgotten by the Council of Europe, which adopted a European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, originally signed on Nov. 5. 1992 in Strasbourg, and in force since March 1, 1998. This Charter has been signed by 33 and ratified by 25 countries (19 of of which were EU member states) (*European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages*, 1992). The main goal of this Treaty is to protect and promote historical regional and minority languages (not including those of the new immigrant communities). There are several levels of protection in this Charter. Countries ratifying this Charter indicate the regional and minority groups on their territories and the corresponding level of protection. Each state decides which of it minorities' languages should be protected under the Charter, which gives them full freedom of choice.

There is also the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), signed in Strasbourg on Feb. 1, 1995, containing more precise aspects of minorities' rights. By 2009, this Convention had been ratified by 39 member-states of the Council of Europe (*The Framework Convention*, 1995). It is worth mentioning that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in its Art 27, established rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, namely not to be denied the right to "enjoy their own culture, profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language" (*The UN Covenant*, 1966). The Covenant has been in force since March 26, 1976. Several CSCE/OSCE documents deal with the rights of minorities, starting with the Final Act of the Conference, 1975.

The European Union has certainly gone farthest, not only among international organizations but also most nation-states, in the implementation of multilingualism. Adopting one language per member-state of the EU as an official and working language, is a great example. By comparison, the United Nations, with 192 member states uses only six languages, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with 57 members uses six, the African Union, with 51 members also uses six. Full diversity in the EU, according to Theodor Schilling, is a source of cultural enrichment but also a source of tensions (Schilling, 2009). Schilling finds that despite all efforts so far, there is no principle

of the protection of languages in Community Law. Many member-states do not respect the equality of languages in selecting one only as their official language. Many states, which in principle have a number of official languages, also have a “lingua franca” to be used in everyday practice. For instance, there are 11 official languages in South Africa, while only two are used in the work of the Government. The right of the members of the European Parliament to speak in their languages is not a human right *per se*, it is an institutional right of the institution.

Be that as it may, it can be said that language discrimination is not completely or efficiently prohibited. A member of the EP whose native language is not the official language of his country cannot use his/her language in a parliamentary debate. A Lithuanian resident in Italy, who has the right to run as a candidate in the European elections, cannot use Lithuanian in his campaigning, especially if he wants to be successful. An Italian residing in Sweden can be elected to the EP if he/she speaks Swedish.

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) issued a reminder of problems of language in interpreting European Law (in its *CILFIT v. Ministro della Sanita*, 1982 decision). The ECJ said that each working language can be consulted on issues of the interpretation of the law. Prior to 1973, English was not an official language of the EU, thus even in interpreting the Treaty of Rome, the French, German, Italian or Dutch versions would be more authoritative. (The Treaty of Rome was originally drafted in French.) Attorneys practicing European law routinely consult different language versions of regulations, directives, decisions and treaties (Folsom, 2008).

The Court has been trying to reconcile different official texts through “linguistic interpretation”, without giving preference to any language. In the *CILFIT* case, the Court warned against the transferability of legal concepts (from national to European Law). The legal concepts do not necessarily have the same meaning in EU Law and the law of various member-states (Folsom, 2008). The French Administrative Law doctrine of “acte claire” has received support in many countries as reasonable, the same applies to the “détournement de pouvoir” (misuse of power). The ECJ also said that cases involving a reasonably obvious interpretation of the law do not need to be referred by national courts to the ECJ.

Neither discrimination nor the bases of discrimination are clearly defined in the major texts mentioned above. Consequently, in many situations, we find cases of discrimination only by looking at the relevant statistics. It can be shown statistically for instance that women are not equal with men in holding

certain political offices, either within the EU or within their own nations. There is no parity in the use of languages, as members of various bodies prefer the use of those languages which can be understood by most participants. On the other hand, some of the highest positions in the EU are performed by members of ethnic minorities: Donald Tusk (Kashubian) of Poland, Klaus Iohannis (German Lutheran) of Romania, Manuel Valls (Catalan) of France and Mariano Rajoy (Galician) of Spain, to name just a few. The European Parliament is the most multilingual parliamentary institution in the world!

Today's politicians, and civil administrators in national governments and international organizations, do not spend much time studying languages. In many cases, they fully rely on translators and interpreters, unless they speak procedural languages in some institutions, in other words English, French or German. Those who want to have a real influence in the EU cannot just stick to their national languages.

Monolingualism

People in power tend to concentrate on one of the major languages, which could, *ipso facto*, evolve into an informal *lingua franca*. English has become a dominant language of international communication. Preferred in business, trade, education, international politics, it has moved into many other areas.

Within EU member states, some 54% of the population can communicate in another EU language, most of them in English and French (Eurobarometer, 2012). The figure is probably higher in the EU institutions. Those European citizens who work in EU institutions are most likely to communicate in English, the only exception being the judicial branch in which French prevails. Within the Court of Justice of the EU, the preliminary proceedings and the public hearings may be held in any EU language. The members of the "Curia" are all francophone, and all documents and reports are translated for them into French. Their internal debate is in French, and the decision is formulated in French and then translated into the language or the languages of the case. There have even been proposals to make French the language of reference in legal matters, although this has not happened yet.

In the European civil service, a large number of English speakers speak French and vice versa. Eastern and Northern Europeans show a preference for English, whilst Western or Southern Europeans may prefer French (especially the countries of the Francophonie). Central Europe has more German speakers.

New members are more likely to rely on translation and interpretation into their own languages.

We have already mentioned differences between continental and common law legal systems. Some differences are due to philosophy. The “universals”, such as general and abstract objects, concepts, qualities, relations, and numbers may not have an independent existence outside the languages we speak, and all languages are not the same. The theory of nominalism places emphasis on the name, as we perceive those things which exist in name and not those things for which there is no name or whose name we do not know. This theory goes back to William of Ockham (13th-14th centuries). The theory of realism maintains that universals exist independently of both the human mind and particular things. They exist independently of our perception. William of Champeaux (12th century) was one of the creators of this theory (*Columbia Encyclopedia*, 1963).

Thus, technically, no translation can be perfect. Different languages are also linked to different epistemologies. Italians have a saying: “Traduttore – traditore” (the translator is a traitor). Here is an example: Averoes, translating Aristotle from Greek to Arabic, had great difficulty in figuring out the meaning of the words “tragedy” and “comedy”, despite his excellent knowledge of both languages. For Dante, a monarchy could have been a republic, for Kant a republic also meant a monarchy of a certain type! In Swedish, the word “allemansträtt” means all men’s right, which designates the right to collect comestibles from publicly owned areas or occupy those areas temporarily for personal use (Moore, 2009).

In modern times, we have simultaneous interpreters, who are specialists in languages trained to interpret speeches, sentence by sentence as they are spoken. Interpreters occasionally specialize in some substantive areas, like law, agriculture, pharmacology, medicine, foreign policy – but not all of them at the same time. Another problem is that there are no interpreters for unusual pairs of languages (such as: Irish to Maltese, Estonian to Croatian, or Hungarian to Icelandic). The principle is to interpret from a foreign to one’s own language. What that means in practice is that some interpretations include going to a third language, which increases the possibility of making mistakes. The European Parliament’s interpreters are advised to include the gist of what is being said – especially those in unusual combinations of languages. The best interpreters translate for the “Consilium”. If one adds the regional or minority languages, those will have to be interpreted through the official languages of their states.

Conscious of all those difficulties, peoples decided early in their history that monolingualism was a better solution. Monolingualism gave strength to the human race allowing it to reach for the sky! Multilingualism was a punishment, many languages were created from the original one to render humans confused and inefficient (11Gen. King James Version). Ever since then, the search for a common language of mutual communication has been ongoing:

Not far from Babel, Darius the emperor of the Persians made Babylonian Aramaic the official language of his empire.

Alexander the Macedonian coined a Greek *koine* as the language of his empire.

The Romans introduced Latin into their empire. When in 212 emperor Caracala enacted the *Constitutio Antoniana de Civitate*, making all free men of the empire Roman citizens, Latin was already a *lingua franca* from Ireland to Persia and from Mauritania to Northern Germany (Milovanovic, 2012).

After the break-up and fall of the Roman Empire, the new Europeans adopted Latin as their common language. It became one of the languages of the Christian Church, and Charlemagne made it the language of his empire. The Treaty of Westphalia was written in Latin, the European common diplomatic language at that time. Whether Bologna, Sorbonne or Oxford, all European universities used Latin for centuries.

Latin has survived to our day and could become one of the official languages of the EU and other international bodies, at first as an auxiliary international language, later a language of common reference and, possibly, a common language of a united Europe. It was Jean Capelle, the Rector of the University of Nancy, France, who, in 1952, proposed the use of Latin as an international language (Capelle, 1952). In 1956, the first international congress for living Latin was organized in Avignon, to be followed by other congresses and events. There are several Academies of Latin Language today (some Latin and Greek); there is a Foundation "Melissa", Latin societies (*sodalitates / circuli latini*), there are *Ludi Romani*, radio programs, and magazines in Latin. According to Gaius Licoppe, a Belgian promoter of modern Latin, the Greek-Roman culture and the Latin language are the only common heritage of all European nations! (Stroh, 2009). During its presidencies of the EU, the Government of Finland publishes newsletters in the official EU languages and in Latin!

It was French that replaced Latin as a diplomatic language in the 18th century. Close to Latin, French became an international language, national in origin and independent of other social institutions. It became the language of the elites in Europe and on other continents, including the US and Latin America,

a language of intellectuals, of international education, and of world trade. The first international organizations used French as their language, for instance the Universal Telegraphic Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Interparliamentary Union.

English, with its high percentage of Latin-origin vocabulary, became an international language at the turn of the 20th century, in part due to the increasing power of the British Empire and the United States of America and to their role in international business and trade and in international organizations. English joined French as an international language in its own right and has become increasingly popular since the Second World War. It is also the language of the British Commonwealth and various regional and sub-regional organizations.

German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic, have all achieved the status of languages used in international communications, within the United Nations and elsewhere.

Artificial languages: Early on, the idea of an international language created especially in order to help international communication was born. The Greek *Koine* was a semi-artificial language. Swahili in Africa was born of the need for a common language, as a combination of Arabic and Eastern African languages.

Esperanto was invented by Dr. Ludwig Zamenhof of Poland, in 1887, as an auxiliary language to be used in international communication, while preserving fully all national languages. The ideal of the first Esperantists was: Your national language + Esperanto = the solution of all language problems. Esperanto has a simple grammar of 16 rules, no exceptions. It is written in the Latin alphabet and its vocabulary comes from a combination of Romance languages, English, German, Russian, Polish and some other languages. It can be learnt easily and rapidly, it is politically neutral and practical (Lapenna, 1952). There is original literature by Esperanto writers as well as many translations of world literature.

Other artificial languages include Volapuk, created in 1880 by Johan Schleyer, based on English, Danish, German, French and Latin. A Dalmatian priest Juraj Krizanic, designed a first Panslavic language in 1665, based on Old Slavonic, Russian, the Serbo-Croatian Chakavian dialect and Polish. There is also a new Interslavic language, designed in 2011 by Ondrej Rechnik, based on easily recognizable words.

Esperanto is the only artificial language which has managed to achieve some status in the international community. The UNESCO General Conference

held in 1954 in Montevideo, authorized the Director General to: “follow current developments in the use of Esperanto in education, science and culture”. The Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) has consultative status with UNESCO. In 1966, a petition on making Esperanto an official UN language was handed by the UEA to U-Thant, the then Secretary General of the UN. The petition had been signed by 1 million people worldwide and by 3843 NGOs representing 70 million members. The UEA has consultative status with the ECOSOC. In 2015 a petition to make Esperanto the 25th official language of the EU is being circulated by the UEA in the EU countries. Despite the proclaimed equality of EU languages, says the petition, all languages are not equal, English is being favored, concludes the petition (*Esperanto, an official language of the EU*, 2015).

The Future

Our ability to predict the future is still relatively limited. There are too many unknowns. What is the future of the European Union? The future of the world? The future of human intelligence?

Under present conditions, the EU could maintain its position as an organism between a sovereign state and a regional international organization. Or, it could become a unified federation, the United States of Europe, a world power or a superpower in which European citizens would become full compatriots. In the first case, the EU could have some 55 member-states by 2050 and use some 18 new languages in addition to the present 24. The number of states would increase through the accession of new members, as well as through the secession of some parts of today’s states. In the second case, the EU could grow to incorporate all of Europe and part of Asia, with a total of some 80 member states and some 65 languages. In that case, multilingualism will become impractical and too costly, especially if some regional and ethnic minority languages are also added to the official languages, a quite likely prospect. The question of a single language will re-emerge.

If one looks at the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the process resulted in redefining majorities and minorities, as well as in the atomization of existing languages into smaller but more numerous ones. Macedonia was one of the constitutive nations of Yugoslavia, its language official within the whole country. Macedonian was one of the languages of the majority. Today, it is the official language in the Republic of Macedonia only, and a minority language in other republics. Serbian became a minority language in Croatia and Croatian in Serbia. Serbo-Croatian has been subdivided into Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian,

Montenegrin, while some dialects have been overlooked. The Albanian minority was a minority within the whole body of the Yugoslavs, not linked to any particular region – and Albanians could live and work in any part of the country, while now they are restricted to those areas where they originate. Ethnic tensions emerged in the smaller areas over the issue of new identities that were often defined by language.

The example of Yugoslavia should not be repeated within the EU or in other European countries. Similar conflicts could happen in many countries, within and outside the EU. In 2014, the Venetian secessionists in Italy claimed the validity of their referendum on independence based on the validity of the Referendum in Montenegro. Once launched, the Republic of Venice could proclaim its own language as well, as proof of its people's identity. The Hungarian minorities in Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Ukraine, could also claim their ethnic identity and the right to use their language if such a right does not exist yet (as in Ukraine, for example).

If and when the question of one language becomes an issue within the EU, English may become first choice. A language referendum could be organized within the EU. If, however, the British electorate decides that the UK should leave the EU (we hope that this will not be the case), English would not be a choice as it would be a language of the EU only in Ireland which has chosen Irish as its EU Language. With no English in competition, French would emerge as the most likely second choice. What if France decided to leave the EU as well? How the EU would choose a single language remains a big question. Financing the use of 80 or more languages could one day prevent the EU from conducting its main activities.

Programs of mechanical translation and interpretation are still only in the initial research phase, for instance at the European Parliament where at this point there are only ten languages in the Statistical Machine Translations Systems. This option, even when further developed, could not possibly be used with the precision needed in legally binding texts.

Transhumanism (h+), a social movement based on nature and technology, could eventually provide some solution to translation and interpretation through the use of increased human capacities (i.e. of the "transhumans"). Nanotechnology would be helpful. Individuals could be able to learn and speak tens of languages at the same time (Clarke, 2000; Bostrom, 2005).

At some point, the author of these lines was a member of the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) Working Group in New York. The group was

working on a list of proposals to the UN on how to make Esperanto an official language of the UN. This was 12 years after the petition to the UN signed by 1 million people. The group was presided by Humphrey Tonkin, a professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, later President of UEA. This plan recommended the steps to be taken by the UN and by interested nations. It was proposed that Esperanto be taught in the higher grades of elementary schools, in high schools and in universities. Esperanto literature would be studied as well, the original and the world literature in translation. A number of diplomats would be given classes of International Law and Diplomacy in Esperanto. Many other details were included but no progress could be made due to the Cold War realities of that time. Some of the major principles were agreed by the UN Secretariat, and could serve as guidance for future work, dealing with Esperanto or another language. The UN has the following languages on its list to be considered: 1/ Bengali; 2/ Esperanto; 3/ Hindi; 4/ Portuguese; and, 5/ Turkish. Any of those could be added on to the official languages: English, French, Russian, Chinese, Spanish and Arabic.

What about Latin? It has not been officially proposed yet at the UN although several Popes have spoken in Latin at the General Assembly. It appears that Europeans are not enthusiastic about Esperanto (it remains to be seen how many sign the petition to the EU), while they may be cold to the idea of Latin. They see Esperanto as too artificial and too easy, while Latin may be too difficult. Many deem Latin to be a dead language. In fact, the general public is not aware of how much Latin vocabulary we already use in English, French, German and all the other languages. Indirectly, Latin remains very much alive. Latin is very precise, with a grammar recognizable by most Europeans, and written phonetically in an almost universal alphabet. There are intellectuals all over the world who know all of the above, and who adopt Latin. The steps recommended for Esperanto, would be equally valid for Latin: re-introduce it in schools, starting with elementary schools and high schools, and teach it according to the Cambridge and ASSIMIL methods. Cambridge University has developed wonderful instruction manuals for children, the ASSIMIL method would be for adults. Many recent publications include modern Latin vocabulary. Many universities would be happy to teach Latin, not only in Europe, but in the US and Latin America, even in Africa. President Jefferson once said that if we want to have democracy in our country, we should be speaking ancient Greek (the language of democracy) in the US. *Mutatis mutandis*, we could say Latin for a republic (the language of the republics). In Brussels, the EU buildings are called *Consilium*, *Parlamentum* etc. The U.S. motto is: *E pluribus unum*. Practically all

modern concepts can be expressed in Latin. To quote Gaius Lycoppe of Belgium: *Cultura Graeco-Romana et lingua latina sunt unicum patrimonium commune gentium Europaeorum* (Stroh, 2009).

Conclusion

The EU should be saying more about its own visions of the future. The EU Reflection Group Horizon 2020-2030, established by the Commission in 2007 and chaired by Felipe Gonzales, presented its Report in May 2010. The main targets of this report are: employment, education, research and innovation, social inclusion and poverty reduction and climate/energy initiative. The Report left the strategic issues to the member-states, without going into them. The nature of the Union itself and its future are a strategic issue. Yes, it is up to the member-states to clarify their strategic plans, if there are any!

Languages of the future are necessarily related to those, strategic choices. Yes, the EU works in the largest number of equally important languages worldwide. Yes, it has announced its choices concerning minority languages. But it has not said anything about tensions and conflicts which could potentially be threatening EU identity or integrity. At some point, one language will have to be selected, and nations and institutions should be ready for a change. The institutions will certainly have to make their choice and recommendations. The member states, of course. The European citizens should have their say as well!

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