



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

**Mercator Research Centre (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 globalization. Submit your subscription request, comments or suggestions to: [Johanneke Buning](#) (Fryske Akademy).

## NEWS

### Mercator hosts Mercator-SOAS-CIDLeS seminar



Friday 9 and Saturday 10 December, the Mercator Research Centre hosted a successful seminar on the topic of 'Language documentation, teaching materials and didactics: an opportunity for small and endangered languages?' Co-organizers were the [SOAS World Languages Institute](#) (UK) and [CIDLeS](#) (Portugal).

Diverse issues related to documentation, revitalisation and teaching material development were discussed on the basis of a wide range of cases: among these were the Guernésiais of Guernsey Island, Mirandese and Minderico in Portugal, languages of the northeastern Congo, and native American languages in and around the state of Maine, USA. Many speakers recognized the need for a modern take on language documentation, including multiple modalities and documenting 'authentic', everyday language use. It was also noted that such authenticity can be very helpful for the production of modern teaching materials.

The seminar was attended by about 60 people, including experts from all over Europe and the US, as well as a group of students from the Minorities & Multilingualism programme at the University of Groningen. The next Mercator/SOAS/CIDLeS seminar will be held in Lisbon in October 2017.

More photo's of the event are available [here](#).

### FEL-Mercator regional conference in Murmansk

*By: Tjeerd de Graaf*

The [Foundation for Endangered Languages](#) exists to support, enable and assist the documentation, protection and promotion

of endangered languages worldwide. One of the possibilities to accomplish this is to bring specialists together in a Regional Interest Group with representatives of certain endangered languages communities in a specific area of the world. With this in mind, a symposium on *Documentation, Standardization and Teaching of Endangered Languages in Northern Eurasia* has been organised in Murmansk, 25-26 November.



During the first day of the conference participants from Germany, England, the Netherlands, and the Russian Federation discussed topics related to the minority languages in Northern Russia, in particular Saami and neighbouring languages. The programme for this day can be found [here](#). The second day was devoted to a field trip to Lovozero, where the participants could meet with representatives of the Saami and Izhva-Komi community.

The symposium has been organized as a result of collaboration between academic institutions based in Russia and the Netherlands: the [Murmansk Arctic State University](#), the [Mercator Research Centre](#) of the [Fryske Akademy](#) and the [Centre for Russian Studies](#) of Groningen University. It took place in the framework of the city partnership between Murmansk and Groningen, which also supported the symposium financially. A further exchange of information between the participants will lead to specific proposals for the intended Regional Interest Group.

Some photo impressions of the stay in St.Petersburg, Murmansk and Lovozero can be found [here](#).

## Frisian language thrives on social media among Frisian teenagers



By: *Lysbeth Jongbloed Faber*

In December 2016, a [paper exploring the use of Frisian on social media by Frisian teenagers](#) was published in [Treballs de Sociolingüística Catalana \(TSC\)](#).

Frisian is predominantly a spoken language, and only 12% of the Frisian population indicate that they can write it well. Yet in recent years, Frisian contributions have frequently shown up on social media.

For our study, more than 2,000 Frisian teenagers aged between 14 and 18 years filled in a questionnaire about their language use, language preferences, language attitudes and language proficiency. Results show that, on social media, Frisian is mainly used by mother tongue speakers, 87% of whom use it to some extent. The study indicates that the teenagers' peer group, language attitudes, and writing proficiency are reliable explanatory factors for the use or non-use of Frisian on social media.

Although teenagers do not always follow its official spelling rules, Frisian has conquered a presence on social media. Social media thus seem to have introduced Frisian into the written domain for an extended group of people, which is a positive sign of the vitality of the Frisian language.

[TSC26](#) deals with *Les llengües en les tecnologies de la informació i la comunicació (Languages and information technology and communication)* and includes several more interesting papers about the use of minority languages - predominantly Catalan - on social media, the use of social media for sociolinguistic research, and the construction of Catalan identity in the digital world.

## Donostia Protocol presented

On 17 December 2016, the *Donostia Protocol to Ensure Language Rights*, was released and presented to the public at the Kursaal Palace in Donostia – San Sebastián, after a preparatory work of almost two years.

More than 100 organizations representing approximately 26 languages signed it on that day, while many others have already agreed to do so. The Donostia Protocol, concluded the

extensive programme of Donostia/San Sebastián as European Capital of Culture for 2016.



More than 600 people were present as the *Protocol to Ensure Language Rights* – otherwise also referred to as the *Donostia Protocol* – was unveiled. The event brought together linguistic experts, representatives of international organisations and cultural activists, that delivered speeches on the topic, punctuated by traditional musical performances, for a truly enriching event promoting the revitalisation and normalisation of Europe's minority language communities.

[Download the Donostia Protocol](#) (available in Basque, Spanish, French, English and Catalan). Read more the website of the [Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization \(UNPO\)](#)

## 17 January 2016: kick-off meeting of the Teaching in Diversity project in Flensburg, Germany



By: *Rixt van Dongera*

On the 17th of January 2017, the kick-off meeting of the Teaching in Diversity Project took place at the headquarters of ECMI (European Centre for Minority Issues), the project's lead partner. The ten partners of this Erasmus + project met in Flensburg in order to discuss and divide the tasks and responsibilities that the project entails.

In short, the Teaching in Diversity project (or Teach-D project) focuses on why and how to teach diversity, as well as how to manage diversity in one's classroom. The goal of the project is to produce a training module as well as a training package for an online training, which can assist teachers in mitigating intercultural conflicts, be knowledgeable about culture-sensitive learning and facilitate intercultural communication.

The project involves ten partners from nine different countries: [European Centre for Minority Issues \(ECMI\)](#) (coordinator, Germany), [Mercator Research Centre of the Fryske Akademy](#) (The Netherlands), [European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano \(EURAC\)](#) (Italy), [Workers Education and Training College \(WETCO\)](#) (Bulgaria), [Asociatia Paradigme Educationale](#), (Romania), [Danmar Computers LLC](#) (Poland), [Kairos Europe Limited](#) (UK,) [Liceul Pedagogic "Mircea Scarlat" Alexandria](#) (Romania), [MEDEA: Media and Learning](#) ( Belgium), [CSP - Innovazione Nelle ICT](#) (Italy). The project is funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

## The Council of Europe releases reports about the application of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages in Hungary, Switzerland and the Netherlands

Hungary is praised for having strengthened minority language policies, which have led to increased funding for the country's rich linguistic diversity. According to the report, Hungary has a highly detailed and complex legislation governing national minority policies and the use of all 14 minority languages. Since January 2012, the rights of minorities have been considered fundamental rights. The report does stress, however, that a structured long-term policy and plan for education in all minority languages must be developed. The report calls on Hungary to increase bilingual education at all levels, and to move away from the model of teaching minority language as a subject. The report also asks that further measures are taken to ensure that Romani and Beas are offered at all levels of education.



The report on Switzerland highlights recent positive developments concerning the Part III languages – Italian and Romansh, and acknowledges the significant steps that Switzerland has taken to implement most of the undertakings ratified. The Council of Europe experts welcomed the encouraging situation

of Romansh in education and media. However, the report warns that municipality mergers may negatively affect the visibility of some minority languages in Switzerland, and stresses that several of these languages, including Italian, Franco-Provençal, and Walser German, need more protection.

The report on the Netherlands notes some improvement, such as developments in Frisian language education. However, additional efforts are needed. New legislation addresses the use of Frisian in courts and administration. However, reforms and mergers may negatively affect Frisian language use in these areas. The Council of Europe expresses concern about the changes in the legal and financial framework in the media sector, which might negatively affect the offer of programmes in the regional or minority languages, and urges the government to take steps. Also, further efforts are needed to strengthen the status of Limburgish and Low Saxon in education, and to protect and promote Romanes and Yiddish.

For more information, read the article on the [Council of Europe website](#).

## Call for Proposals for the 16th International Conference on Minority Languages (ICML XVI)



The upcoming [ICML XVI conference](#), organised by the University of Jyväskylä Language Campus, will address critical questions such as how minority languages are valued, by whom and under what conditions. The conference is open to researchers, students and stakeholders from across the multidisciplinary field of minority languages.

The submission of proposals is now open and should concern original and previously unpublished research on minority languages. All proposals should fall broadly within the conference theme "revaluing minority languages". **Submission deadline is February 28, 2017**

For more information see the [conference website](#)

## Update from the COMBI project: now active on social media

The COMBI project "Communication competences for migrants and disadvantaged background learners in bilingual work environments" is now active on Twitter and launched its Facebook page:

- [COMBI on Twitter](#)
- [COMBI on Facebook](#).



The goals of COMBI project are to develop innovative and inclusive/systemic practices and methods focused on acquiring communication competences in the languages required in the workplace. It takes into consideration the multilingual reality of European regions. The aim of the project is to make sure that the regional language is taken into consideration as far as it fulfils language requirements in the workplace.

### INTERESTING LINKS

LangOER publishes their [Policy paper](#) and [Digital showcase](#). These are the final products of the 3-year LangOER project.

[The first cousin of the English language is alive and well in the Netherlands](#), podcast about the Frisian language in the Netherlands, by Public Radio International.

January 7, 2017: [Pakistan's regional languages face extinction](#), online article in the National.

January 16, 2017: [55% of the population of Luxembourg speak Luxembourgish](#): should Luxembourgish be Luxembourg's first language? Online article in the Luxemburger Wort.

January 16, 2017: [How to bring up your child bilingual: don't follow the received wisdom](#), article by Bea Sieradzka.

## EVENTS

16 - 18 March 2017, Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany): **Multilingualism in Society, Politics and Education**, International conference.

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23 - 24 March 2017, Paris (FR): **Tandem Language and Intercultural Learning in Higher Education Settings**, International conference.

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23 - 25 March 2017, Oxford (UK): **Language, Mobility, and Belonging**, conference, hosted by the University of Oxford.

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19 - 21 April 2017, Barcelona and Vic (ES): **First International Conference on Revitalization of Indigenous and Minoritized Languages**, International conference.

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27 - 28 April 2017, Birmingham, United Kingdom (UK): **Minority Languages in New Media**, seminar.

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3 - 5 May 2017, Bologna (IT): **Learning and Assessment: Making the Connections**, international conference.

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4 - 7 May 2017, Lausanne (CH): **Approaches to Migration, Language, and Identity**, International conference.

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6 - 7 May 2017, Poznan (PL): **Workshop on Multilingual Language Acquisition, Processing and Use**, workshop.

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11 - 13 May 2017, Braga (PT): **International Conference on Multilingualism and Multilingual Education, Call for papers**: deadline 15 February 2017.

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17 - 20 May 2017, Odense (DK): **MultiMeDialectTranslation 7 – Dialect translation in multimedia**, conference hosted by the University of Southern Denmark.

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22 - 24 May 2017, Odense (DK): **The Politics of Multilingualism: Possibilities and Challenges**, conference hosted by the Amsterdam School for Transnational, Regional and European Studies. Call for papers! Deadline: 20 January 2017.

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26 - 27 May 2017, Kaunas (Lithuania): **Sustainable Multilingualism 2017**, conference.

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1 June 2017, Paris (France): **the Caribbean in the strategic partnership EU-CELAC**, conference.

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11 - 15 June 2017, Limerick (IE): **International Symposium on Bilingualism (ISB11)**, hosted by the University of Limerick.

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5 - 7 July 2017, Soria (Spain): **III International Colloquium on Languages, Cultures, Identity in School and Society**, organized by the Loyola Marymount University School of Education (Los Angeles, California).

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28 - 30 August, Jyväskylä (FI) **ICML XVI**, International Conference, **Submission deadline: February 28, 2017.**

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7 - 9 September, Palma (Balearic Islands) (Spain) **Formal Perspectives in the Acquisition of Minority Languages**, workshop.

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5 - 10 September, Krotoszyn (Poland) **5th International Cross-Curricularity in Language Education Conference**, conference.

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