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УЖГОРОДСЬКА РАЙОННА РАДА

УЖГОРОДСЬКА МІСЬКА РАДА

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EUROPEAN UNION LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Biskub Iryna

*Applied Linguistics Department Head, Doctor of Philology, Professor,
Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European National University*

The recent tendency towards the association with the European Union is exemplified by the growing interest in the implementation of the EU related issues into the studying syllabus of Ukrainian universities. Modern studying disciplines that are offered to the Humanities' students have been introducing the elements of EU Language Policy and Language Planning as a part of Political Linguistics, Culture Studies, and Critical Discourse Analysis courses. The purpose of the present research is to provide an outline of the European Commission's official legislative papers that prescribe the interrelations and functioning of the EU languages, and to compare essential aspects of the Ukrainian language policy and the main tendencies in the European policy regarding the role and functioning of native and foreign languages in the European Union.

One of the important issues of modern Ukrainian education strategy supported and facilitated by the Ministry of Education and Science is providing the access to various European grant programmes co-funded by the European Union and the European Commission. For instance, Erasmus+ projects that are co-funded by the European Union aim at boosting skills and employability, as well as modernising Education, Training and Youth work. Erasmus + contributes to promoting cooperation, diversity and multilingualism. With 4 MILLION participants by 2020, Erasmus+ provides a unique opportunity to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad [3].

In order to maintain the balance between all language spoken by the EU citizens, the European Parliament passed an official resolution on endangered European languages and linguistic diversity in the European Union which has the power of a law (*European Parliament resolution of 11 September 2013 on endangered European languages and linguistic diversity in the European Union (2013/2007(INI)*). This resolution emphasizes on the fact that the objective of safeguarding and promoting each and every facet of the European Union's cultural and linguistic heritage has been bolstered under the Lisbon Treaty. The key idea of this document is that linguistic and cultural diversity is one of the fundamental principles of the European Union, as enshrined in Article 22 of the Charter of

Fundamental Rights, which reads: 'The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity' [4].

Another important issue of the above mentioned resolution is the focus on equal importance of all European languages, including regional and minority languages. The document says that trying to establish the exclusivity of a language is a restriction and a violation of the fundamental values of the Union. Endangered languages should be conceived as part of the European cultural heritage, and not as a vehicle for political, ethnic or territorial aspirations [4].

The official EU languages include Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish. Languages including Valencian/Catalan, Basque, Galician and Welsh will be covered by special rules in future.

According to the already established principles of European Union Language Policy, legislation and key political documents are published in all EU official languages. All official documents are available in at least those languages that had official EU status on the date of publication. Documents that are not legally binding are usually published in English, French and German. Specialized information (technical info, campaigns, calls for tender) and news are available in a restricted number of languages or even just one – the choice depends on the target audience.

There is a strong tendency in the European Union to support language learning through Erasmus+ and some other programmes. Better language skills enable more people to study and work abroad, improve their job prospects and enhance their career opportunities. The reality is – modern Europe is extremely multicultural and multilingual, thus speaking other languages helps people from different cultures understand one another.

Trading and commerce also face the necessity to promote the knowledge of foreign languages. Thus, to trade effectively across Europe, businesses need multilingual staff. Plus, the language industry itself is now a matter of big business. Translation and interpretation, language teaching, language technologies, etc. – is among the fastest growing areas of the economy.

The European Commission is concerned about improving basic language skills of the people living in the European Union. As the official web portal europa.eu mentions, the European commission is working with national governments to meet an ambitious goal: enabling citizens to communicate in two languages other than their mother tongue. This "*Barcelona objective*" was agreed in 2002 by the EU's heads of state and government [6].

In order to maintain the realistic picture representing language skills of the Europe's population the *First European survey on language competences (ESLC)* was carried on in 2012. It revealed that language competences provided by educational systems still needed to be significantly improved. Surprisingly enough, the ESLC results showed an overall low level of competences in both first and second foreign languages tested. The level of independent user (B1+B2) was achieved by only 42% of tested students in the first foreign language and by only 25% in the second foreign

language. Moreover, a large number of pupils did not even achieve the level of a basic user: 14% for the first and 20% for the second foreign language [5].

One of the most urgent objectives in the domain of learning and teaching foreign language is establishing universal approaches towards the assessment of language skills. In "Conclusions on multilingualism and the development of language competences. EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE and SPORT Council meeting. (Brussels, 20 May 2014)" Council of the European Union agrees that the EU and the Member States should assess progress in developing language competences, with each country contributing to this progress in accordance with its national context and circumstances. The paper prescribes that the assessment of language competences could help to promote multilingualism and the effective teaching and learning of languages in school. Such assessment should cover all four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking [2].

The result of over twenty years of research, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)* was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, the assessment of foreign language proficiency. It is used in Europe but also in other continents. The CEFR is available in 40 languages. Using the standards of CEFR the foreign language proficiency can be assessed at six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2. It also defines three 'plus' levels (A2+, B1+, B2+). CEFR certificates are officially recognized and accepted by employers and educational institutions in Europe and across the world [1].

In conclusion, we would like to mention that the linguistic landscape in the EU as well as in Ukraine is complex and diverse. There definitely exist specific national factors influencing language learning and teaching. However we have noticed considerable differences in legislation and practice with regard to these. The official legislation in the European Union specifies all important issues of the EU's language policy and language planning with ever greater focus on the support of regional and minority languages, as well as emphasizing the importance of developing foreign language skills among EU citizens. Language competences contribute to the mobility, employability and personal development of European citizens, in particular young people, in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs. Introducing European mobility and quality assurance tools such as ECTS, the Diploma Supplement and the European Quality Assurance Register into Ukrainian educational standards facilitates mutual trust, academic recognition, and mobility between Ukraine and EU member states. The Erasmus+ programme provides direct support to Ukrainian students and lecturers wishing to study or train abroad and to projects which support cross-border cooperation between higher education institutions in Ukraine and the European Union.

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РЕЛІГІЯ В КОНТЕКСТІ ЄВРОІНТЕГРАЦІЇ УКРАЇНИ

Бокоч Вікторія Михайлівна

*кандидат політичних наук,
доцент кафедри міжнародної політики
Ужгородського національного університету*

Цивілізаційний вибір України, зроблений нею після Революції Гідності, підписання Угоди про асоціацію України з Європейським Союзом змушує її до активізації діяльності, спрямованої на впровадження європейських стандартів у різні сфери суспільного життя.

Однією із важливих сфер, якій європейська спільнота постійно приділяє увагу, є релігійно-церковна. Об'єднана Європа, виробляючи спільні принципи, положення та рекомендації у сфері забезпечення свободи думки, совісті та релігії, на які мають зважати усі держави-члени, з повагою ставиться до їхньої конфесійної різноманітності, визнаючи за ними право на національному рівні визначати ставлення держави до релігії та церкви.

Кожна із держав-членів Європейського Союзу має домагатися відповідності національного законодавства положенням і нормам Конвенції про захист прав людини і основоположних свобод, виробляти і впроваджувати таку релігійну політику, яка відповідала б викликам сучасного часу. Європейська спільнота, сприятиме розвитку партнерських відносин між державами-членами.