14:30-15:15

The Language Communities
Joint Position Paper by NPLD and EFNIL

Panel Discussion 1

❑ Body consisting of the central or national institutions for research, documentation and policy relating to the officially recognised standard languages within the states of the European Union (EU).

❑ Purpose:

▪ collection and exchange of information about the officially recognised standard languages of the EU,

▪ the provision of expert advice about language policy in the EU,

▪ the preservation of linguistic diversity within Europe and

▪ the promotion of plurilingualism amongst the citizens of the EU states.

❑ EFNIL also maintains an interest in the minority and regional languages of Europe.

http://www.efnil.org

- ❏ European wide network working in the field of language policy and planning for Constitutional, Regional and Small-State Languages (CRSS) across Europe.

- ❏ Members: regional and national governments, universities, associations.

- ❏ Main goal: raise awareness at a European level of the vital importance of planning for the sustainability of linguistic diversity in Europe.

- ❏ Also aims to facilitate the exchange of best practices among governments, policy makers, practitioners, researchers and experts.

- ❏ The network also wishes to develop new practices as our understanding of how to sustain less widely used languages continues to grow.

- ❏ NPLD believes strongly that the European Union should invest in the future of all the languages of Europe especially in relation to the development of language related technology.

http://www.npld.eu

Joint Position Paper

META FORUM 2015

- ❑ At META-FORUM 2015 we present a Joint NPLD/EFNIL Position Paper on the Multilingual Digital Single Market.

- ❑ We want to highlight that the EU needs to reaffirm its commitment to linguistic diversity as part of its plans to establish a Digital Single Market in Europe and to ensure that all the languages spoken in Europe are supported and promoted within these new digital developments for the benefit of both European citizens and European economy.

- ❑ Choosing a multilingual approach to the DSM does not only benefit the development of stable societies and robust and prosperous economies, it also strengthens and upholds the cultural cornerstone of Europe – our national, regional and minority languages.

- ❑ This position paper is set within the present context of the EU, where ensuring robust and competitive economies, a DSM and a highly skilled and mobile workforce are at the forefront of the political agenda.

Context

- ❏ We need policies to ensure that the creation of prosperous economies and cohesive societies in Europe is supported maximally by its multilingual potential and at the same time strengthens the vitality of all languages in use.

- ❏ The survival of language varieties – national, regional or minority languages – depends on their presence in the digital world.

- ❏ Inclusive policies that reflect linguistic diversity in Europe, and which provide the opportunity for all our languages to flourish in the DSM would also underpin the work of ensuring lasting peace, prosperity and equality in Europe.

- ❏ Linguistic diversity is and must remain a cornerstone and treasured cultural asset of Europe. Language barriers are market barriers.

- ❏ Half of EU citizens never shop online in languages other than their native tongue; access to e-services is restricted in terms of languages.

- ❏ Educational and cultural content is confined in linguistic communities.

A needed Strategy!

- ❑ The market alone fails to address the European language challenge which calls for an immediate and concerted EU action.

- ❑ Europe needs a strategy to remove language barriers by making the DSM a real contact zone between languages and cultures, thus enabling businesses and people to communicate in their own language, and providing equal digital opportunities for all language communities.

- ❑ Only if the DSM strategy foresees the use of technological solutions for bridging language barriers, the full potential of the DSM can be unleashed.

- ❑ We need digital services for an ever increasing range of languages available to all European citizens, businesses and organisations.

- ❑ These key enabling digital language services will allow technology and service companies to create numerous commercial solutions to cover a variety of market needs and requirements.

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- The potential of language technology will increase dramatically across the world in the coming years.

- If Europe wishes to become a world leader and an economic beneficiary from these developments it must invest now in being at the forefront of developing language technologies.

- Through a focused, concerted, major interdisciplinary LT research effort, Europe at the same time can preserve its precious languages.

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❑ In order to fully realise the potential of a single digital space and market place, language technologies need to be developed for all languages of Europe – national, regional or minority languages – to encourage the free flow of information, ideas and knowledge and to ensure the spread of goods and innovations to all citizens.

❑ Language agnostic technologies must also be rolled out to ensure the inclusion of European languages in technologies which already exist.

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- ❑ Language technology will be a key enabler in the next waves of the IT revolution.
- ❑ Therefore we need to ensure that the basic building blocks for these developments for all European languages are in place now.

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❑ Language technology will also help Europe to ensure citizens' rights, at it provides means for all Europeans to communicate with public bodies and have access to public web services in their preferred language, regardless of what status this language enjoys.

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❑ Linking a positive and inclusive policy regarding multilingualism and linguistic diversity with strategic investments in the development of language technology for the DSM will bring about a quantum leap in the evolution of IT, put Europe in a leading position in a core area of economic growth and allow all our languages to thrive in the digital age.