European Commission
http://ec.europa.eu/languages/day2011/

European Day of Languages
www.coe.int/EDL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES

JOINT COUNCIL OF EUROPE/EUROPEAN COMMISSION DECLARATION TO MARK THE 10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES 26 SEPTEMBER 2011

Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity and language learning for all are fundamental principles of the Council of Europe and of the European Union. The ability to understand and use several languages helps citizens achieve their full potential, both socially and professionally. Language skills are essential for equity and integration. Against the current backdrop of increasing mobility, globalisation of the economy and changing economic trends, the need to learn languages and develop plurilingual and intercultural education is more obvious than ever before.

On 26 September the Council of Europe and the European Commission mark the 10th anniversary of the European Day of Languages. We welcome the joint progress made during the past decade in raising awareness about Europe's rich linguistic heritage, encouraging multilingualism in society and in motivating European citizens to learn more languages.

Languages and language learning have since 2001 been celebrated every year on 26 September, the European Day of Languages. Activities cover all languages, including the promotion of less widely used and taught languages, as well as migration languages and sign languages. The European Day of Languages should encourage lifelong language learning for personal fulfilment, full participation in Europe's democratic societies and professional development.

The two Organisations reaffirm their commitment to the promotion of language policies and practices in keeping with their shared values and principles, and their intention to continue to seek synergies between their respective actions in Brussels and in Strasbourg, including those implemented by the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz. In particular:

- The first European survey on language competences is currently being carried out by the European Commission, based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), developed by the Council of Europe. Test results with a thorough analysis of the language competences of secondary school children will be presented during the first half of 2012.

- This Council of Europe reference instrument is widely used in developing common standards for curricula and the assessment of language skills, resulting in closer links to the National and European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning initiated and co-ordinated by the European Commission. The CEFR facilitates a transparent, fair and reliable approach to the assessment of language proficiency at all levels and is increasingly used with regard to language training and testing in the context of the integration of migrants and mobile workers, thus contributing to a better functioning of the European labour market and of democratic societies.

- There will be continued collaboration between the Council of Europe and the European Commission, in particular concerning the development of the European Indicator of Language Competence. The Indicator has been requested by the European Union's Member States as a tool for improving language skills, thereby fostering mutual understanding and strengthening the employability of European citizens and the competitiveness of the European economy.

- Language teaching in vocational education and training and adult learning will be enhanced in order to promote employability and integration. This is a shared priority in both organisations which is being implemented through their respective work programmes.

The Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is a unique instrument within the European Union and beyond for the preservation and promotion of Europe's linguistic heritage.

In the future, the Council of Europe and the European Commission will continue to work in close co-operation to bring the benefits of Europe's linguistic diversity closer to the European citizens. The collaboration between the two Organisations will serve to promote the development of competences in the widest possible range of languages in order to enhance mutual respect, improve employability and mobility and to facilitate integration and active democratic citizenship in Europe's increasingly multilingual and diverse societies.

For the European Commission	For the Council of Europe
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