

United in Diversity: The EU Approach to Language Learning and Multilingualism

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The 8 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

Competences: a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context.

Lifelong learning has become the necessity for all citizens who need these competences for:

- *personal development and fulfillment*
- *active citizenship*
- *social inclusion*
- *employment.*

- ▶ LITERACY (communication in the mother tongue)
- ▶ **MULTILINGUALISM** (communication in foreign languages)
- ▶ MATHEMATICAL COMPETENCE & BASIC COMP. IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
- ▶ DIGITAL COMPETENCE
- ▶ LEARNING TO LEARN
- ▶ SOCIAL & CIVIC COMPETENCES
- ▶ SENSE OF INITIATIVE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- ▶ CULTURAL AWARENESS & EXPRESSION

Survey: Understanding of EU Education Policy on Foreign Languages



Arguments to support language learning

Multilingual competence provides a better understanding of other cultures, contributing to the development of citizenship and democratic competences.

- ▶ For **individuals**: creates personal and professional opportunities
- ▶ For **companies**: workers with language and intercultural competences are a vital resource, helping businesses to succeed and grow in global markets
- ▶ For **society**: it fosters cultural awareness, mutual understanding and social cohesion

Key aspects of EU Language Policy:

- ▶ Promoting Multilingualism
- ▶ Encouraging Language Skills
- ▶ Fostering Mobility and Understanding
- ▶ Valuing Linguistic Diversity

Promoting multilingualism

It is one of eight key competences needed for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion, as outlined by EU Member States in the Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning

- ▶ Foster intercultural understanding
- ▶ Enhance mobility and employability
- ▶ Protect Europe's cultural heritage
- ▶ Fundamental aspect of the European identity, culture and competitiveness

Encouraging language skills

- ▶ Promoting mobility
- ▶ EU Commission recommendations to encourage young people to improve their language proficiency
- ▶ 76% of Europeans: improving language skills should be a policy priority

EU's official policy - each citizen to master their mother tongue + more than one foreign language

Fostering mobility and understanding

- ▶ Enabling people to interact and cooperate with citizens of other cultures across borders
- ▶ United in diversity, one of the cornerstones of the European project
- ▶ Cultural awareness, mutual understanding and social cohesion

Language competences are indispensable for mobility, cooperation and mutual understanding across borders

Valuing linguistic diversity

- ▶ EU: 24 official languages and cca.60 regional and minority languages - example of the European cultural diversity
- ▶ Languages define personal identities but are also part of a shared (European) inheritance
- ▶ Strengthening European identity, vital parts of its cultural heritage

The co-existence of many languages in Europe is a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be united in diversity.

Strong public support for the EU policies regarding language learning and teaching

Eurobarometer survey:

85% believe English is the most important language for children to learn for their future

- ▶ Eurobarometer showing citizens value linguistic diversity and believe improving language skills should be a priority
- ▶ 86% believe that everyone should speak at least 1 foreign language
- ▶ 59% can have a conversation in one f.lang. which is 3/5 Europeans, or
- ▶ 79% or 4/5 young Europeans (15 - 24 years old)
- ▶ English spoken by 47% of the EU population, 7/10 young Europeans can have a conversation in English
- ▶ 31% of Europeans use their 1st foreign language daily

What about the 2nd foreign language learning and teaching?

- ▶ 28% of Europeans can have a conversation in more than one foreign language, or
- ▶ 39% of young people (15 - 24 years old)
- ▶ After English, French (11%), German (10%) and Spanish (7%) are the most often spoken foreign languages in the EU
- ▶ EU policies strongly emphasize the need of 2nd foreign language teaching and learning / 2nd F. Lang. proficiency

2019 Council Recommendation:
comprehensive approach to the
teaching & learning of languages
aims at acquiring proficiency in 2
other languages (besides the
mother tongue) before the end of
upper secondary education

Some more info/stats...

The OECD study shows that young people are increasingly learning languages outside of the classroom by using internet, social media or watching content in the original language and 65% of them prefer subtitled to dubbed content.

► 2023 Eurydice Key data:

- 98,3% of European students in lower secondary school and increasingly from an earlier age are learning English

► *The main benefits of learning a new language include:*

- 51% job opportunities
- 45% understanding ppl from other cultures
- 42% getting a better job in their country
- 42% using it on holidays/travel
- 40% using it at work and business travel

It all comes down to...

- ▶ Collaborating with our foreign languages teachers/colleagues
- ▶ Strengthening language bonds and connecting language learning and teaching in more than just one lang.
- ▶ Planning common PD meetings and sharing info, practices and goals
- ▶ Obtaining support from the educational/school infrastructure

Fostering language competences is at the heart of the EU's role in education.

Multilingual competence is acquired throughout life and opportunities for learning and improving language skills should be made available at all stages in life.

Literatura:

- COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages (2019/C 189/03), Official Journal of the European Union, C 189/15
- Multilingualism as a key competence - European Education Area
- <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/142/language-policy>
- <https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy>

Hvala na pažnji!