



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Directorate-General for Education and Culture  
Culture, Multilingualism and Communication  
**Multilingualism policy**

## **Call for expressions of interest Civil Society Platform to promote multilingualism**

**This call is published in order to give organisations from the culture, non formal and informal education and learning and other sectors of the civil society and the media, the opportunity to express interest in participating in a structured dialogue with the European Commission.**

Organisations wishing to participate in this platform are kindly requested to submit their application by the **18 September 2009** at the latest.

### **CONTEXT**

In September 2008, the Commission adopted the Communication "Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment"<sup>1</sup>. The Communication foresees that the Commission will pursue a structured dialogue with a wide range of authorities and stakeholders complementing the structured system of cooperation with the Member States, through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the fields of education and training.

The success of the new multilingualism strategy depends on the active involvement of the civil society sector. Following the on-line consultation in 2007 and the public hearing in 2008 that allowed a large number of individuals and organisations to express their views and expectations concerning language policy, the Commission moves now a step further by putting in place an on-going process aiming to give a voice to all those committed to promoting multilingualism in Europe.

This structured dialogue should:

- Complement existing consultation processes (such as online consultations, public hearings, etc);
- Encourage the various interested actors in language policy to work in a more trans-sectoral way and to better structure and organise themselves at EU level;

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2008)566  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/news/news2853\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/news/news2853_en.htm)

- Help the interested stakeholders to formulate recommendations with a view to contributing to the development of a multilingualism policy in Europe;
- Provide opportunities for these recommendations to be presented to the European Commission and the Member States.

The Communication identifies priority target groups, indeed an increasing part of European society, which is missing out on the advantages of multilingualism, who are monolingual or still struggle with their first foreign language: school dropouts, adults and young people in vocational education and training (VET), senior citizens, other adults no longer in education.

The implementation of a structured dialogue with civil society stakeholders to discuss and exchange practices to promote multilingualism is expected to contribute to bring multilingualism closer to the citizen.

## **LEGAL SETTING**

According to Articles 149, 150 and 151 of the Treaty establishing the European Community Member States have the sole responsibility for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity. The Community shall encourage cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, shall support and supplement their action.

## **THE PLATFORM**

### **Scope of the platform**

In this context, the Commission proposes that the civil society platform should concentrate its work on the three main objectives of the 2008 Communication:

- **raise awareness of the value and opportunities of the EU's linguistic diversity;**
- **encourage the removal of barriers to intercultural dialogue and social inclusion;**
- **achieve the Barcelona objective<sup>2</sup> to communicate in two foreign languages.**

The suggested themes will also integrate the external dimension of multilingualism in the platform mandate.

The platform will provide recommendations for an EU language conference in 2011 (action 9.4. of the Communication).

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<sup>2</sup> In 2002 in Barcelona the Heads of State and Government invited the Member States and the Commission to take measures so each citizen should learn at least two foreign languages since a very early age.

## **Who can participate in the platform?**

The platform shall be open to cultural, non formal and informal education organisations **interested in issues connected to multilingualism** (e.g. networks, foundations, professional organisations, etc.), as well as to the media - **with a trans-national or European-wide dimension**, regrouping entities in several countries. In order to avoid duplication and to have workable platforms of highly committed organisations, whenever an organisation is part of a bigger structure representing its interests at the European level, it is suggested that in principle the European structures alone should take part, channelling contributions up and down the line.

The platform is intended for **non-governmental** organisations of civil society only and the media. Public authorities, whether national, regional or local, are not invited to participate. They will be offered other channels for contributing to multilingualism policy, in particular the open method of coordination in education.

## **Governance of the platform**

The platform will be responsible for defining its work programme, modus operandi (frequency of the meetings, organisation of the work between the meetings) and the governance (designation of a Chair and of a Secretariat) of the platform.

The Commission will act as a facilitator and inform the platform on the ongoing work carried out at Community and Member States' levels as part of the Multilingualism policy agenda.

## **Proposed timetable**

**October 2009:** First constitutive meeting of the platform in Brussels.

**1st semester 2010:** Second plenary meeting in Brussels in order to take stock of the progress.

**2nd semester 2010:** Third plenary meeting in Brussels to review progress.

## **Support given by the Commission to the platform**

The Commission will offer a logistical support for a maximum of two meetings per year: a meeting room within its own premises, interpretation facilities from and to several languages and technical support for collaborative work between the meetings through a dedicated website. The Commission will not cover any travel or subsistence expenses.

In the medium term, and provided that it fulfils the eligibility criteria of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013), the platform could ask for funding under this programme as from 2010.

## **CONTACT**

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