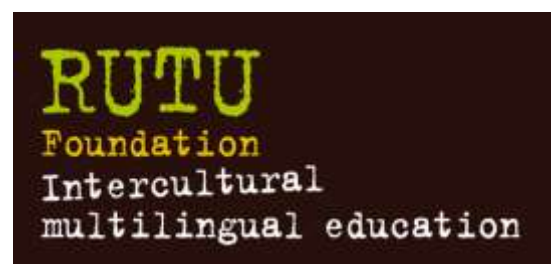




Language Support for Migrant Children in Early School Years: Mapping European Policies

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The Sirius European Policy Network

Sirius is a European Policy Network on the Education of Children and Young People with a Migrant Background. Sirius brings together key stakeholders in migration and education from around Europe, including policy makers, researchers, practitioners and representatives of migrant communities.

Sirius transfers knowledge and influences policy developments in order to help pupils from a migrant background achieve the same educational standards as their native peers. For more information: <http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/about-us/>

About this report

In 2013, the Sirius Citizenship education report (2013, see paragraph 1.2) noted significant variation in the provision of mother tongue education in the member countries. It was recommended that Sirius members use the opportunity to question positions and learn from each other. Two concrete activities were proposed:

1. **Mapping of language policy:** in accordance with a preset format, the national partners will be asked to map the general language policies in the early school years (as this early stage is most important in language development).
2. **Trilateral Country Meetings for Policy Makers:** organization of two trilateral country meetings for policy makers in which they can exchange and question their different positions.

The **objective** of these activities is *to stimulate policy development in language policy in early school years for migrant children, aiming to further improve the educational position of migrant children.*

The first part of this report gives an overview of the various studies, workshops and expert meetings that were organized within the Sirius framework with regard to language policies. This overview indicates that Sirius partners have a pretty good idea of what language policies for migrant children should look like. There is also a reasonably good insight into the existing European policies, so there was no need to perform a comprehensive survey on the language policies as such. However, an important question that was left unanswered, was: why are language policies the way they are? Why have some governments decided to support mother tongue instruction whereas most others have not? Several explanations have been offered - notably the financial aspect and the complications of organizing mother tongue and second language instruction for many different groups of migrant students - but there has not yet been a systematic survey on the reasoning behind the policies.

The second part of this report contains the results of the mapping exercise that was conducted among 12 Sirius member states. The survey was not meant to result in extensive analyses of the existing language policies, but to underpin the organization of two trilateral country meetings for policy makers, enabling them to exchange and question their different positions.

Part 3 provides a summary of the trilateral meetings. During these meetings, language policies were discussed from three different national perspectives. The first trilateral meeting was organized in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, with participants from the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. The second meeting took place in Tallinn, Estonia, with participants from Estonia, Spain and Norway. Countries with divergent language policies were selected, to allow for a real exchange about the decision making behind the policies.

The survey and the trilateral meetings were carried out and organized by Tom Tudjman of [Risbo](#), a research institute affiliated to the Erasmus University in Rotterdam and partner of Sirius and by Ellen-Rose Kambel of the [Rutu Foundation for Intercultural Multilingual Education](#) based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

1.1 Mapping European Stakeholders on Migrant Education (2012)

This study was conducted by Maria Golubeva with the objective of mapping the positions of European civil society stakeholders and some stakeholders in EU member states on the education of migrants in Europe.¹ The study focused on the question: *what are the key areas of education policy where European education and migration stakeholders' positions coincide with each other and with local stakeholders and what are the areas where they diverge?*

Different groups of stakeholders were interviewed: EU education stakeholders, such as associations of parents, teachers, school leaders and advisory bodies; EU migration and integration stakeholders and umbrella organisations of migrants at national or regional level, as well as local or national education initiatives targeting marginalised groups.

Findings with regard to language:

- Not many EU education stakeholders focus on specific barriers or adverse conditions within education systems that affect migrants and other vulnerable groups (pg. 5).
- For the most part, European stakeholders find no consensus among their members on these issues, and they hesitate to formulate positions on the role of language support in access to quality education at school, despite the existence of substantial research evidence (pg. 5).
- Among others, an OECD study² found that several types of school - level policies arguably could improve the educational attainment of migrant students, including early language assistance (in pre - school education and day care), individual monitoring of language development and systematic support for language learning throughout school, teachers trained in second language teaching skills, integrating content and language learning, using various approaches to include migrants' mother tongue at school, including intercultural perspectives in the curricula and other policies at school level (pg. 5).

¹ Maria Golubeva, *Mapping European Stakeholders on Migrant Education*, Sirius Policy Network, April 2012
<http://www.migpolgroup.com/public/docs/Mapping%20European%20stakeholders%20on%20migrant%20education.pdf>

² Deborah Nusche (2009), *What Works in Migrant Education? A Review of Evidence and Policy options*, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 22, OECD.

1.2 Citizenship Education And Cultural Diversity: A Scoping Study Of Sirius Network Countries On The Education Of Children From A Migrant Background (2013)

This survey was conducted as part of a Citizenship Education scoping study.³ It was completed by 13 representatives from 12 countries (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands). One of the key questions of this survey was the extent to which the linguistic and cultural experiences of the minority communities are perceived and implemented within the scope of citizenship education.

Findings with regard to language:

- Most of the member countries provide some form of mother tongue provision for their minority communities (pg. 31).
- In one country, mother tongue instruction is a constitutionally protected right (Croatia). In other countries, mother tongue instruction is offered as an optional subject (Estonia, Cyprus), whereas Lithuania enables minority students to be educated entirely in their mother tongue (pg. 31-33).
- In two cases no mother tongue instruction was offered at all (Hungary and the Netherlands). In these countries, the emphasis is on assimilation and instruction in the language of the state (pg. 41).

1.3 Comparative Analysis On Policy Implementation By National Educational Agents And Other Stakeholders (May 2013)

This report was prepared by Claudia Koehler⁴ and brings together the results of focus group interviews conducted in 10 Sirius partner countries to assess the perceptions of agents and stakeholders in each country with regard to:

- the national approach on educating children with a migrant background
- the national implementation of the European Council conclusions on the education of children with a migrant background

³Tözün Issa, Jone Ordoño Olabarrieta, Sumi Hollingworth and Sabine Severiens, *Citizenship Education and Ethnic and Cultural Diversity. A scoping study of SIRIUS Network countries on the education of children from a migrant background*, Sirius Policy Network, 2013. http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CitizenshipEducationReport-tot_SIRIUS_131203.pdf

⁴ Claudia Koehler, *Comparative Analysis on Policy Implementation by national Educational Agents and Other Stakeholders through Focus Group/Group Discussion Data Collection: Comparative Report*, Sirius Policy Network, May 2013. http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/SIRIUS-Comparative-Report-def-editat_SIRIUS_130531.pdf. A summary can be viewed here: http://www.praxis.ee/fileadmin/tarmo/Projektid/Innovatsioon_i_poliitika/Claudia_Koehler_SIRIUS_Comparative_analysis_on_policy_implementation_by_national_educational_agents_and_other_stakeholders.pdf

- the national implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy and the ET 2020 Targets⁵ and
- the added value of the SIRIUS Network for their own work.

The focus group participants included: policy makers at national or federal level, policy makers at local/municipal level; researchers specialized in migration and education, NGO representatives working with migrant children, school/high school principals, migrant/minoritized community leaders.

Main findings on language:

- The main focus on teaching children with a migrant background in all analysed countries is the successful acquisition of the language of the receiving country. Some countries (Latvia and Lithuania) pursue a bilingual approach by integrating the mother tongue of migrant pupils into the educational progress (pg. 11).
- Another key aspect is the training of teachers in intercultural competences and language teaching methods (the language of the receiving country as well as of the country of origin of migrant students' families). The implementation of teaching methods of high quality with content of high relevance represents a major challenge in all analyzed countries (pg. 11).
- Perceived challenges in implementing the national approach on educating children with a migrant background primarily refer to insufficient language support due to a lack of financial resources and insufficiently trained teachers (pg. 11).
- In some countries, the progress through the school system for migrants often starts off with being inserted into classes that do not correspond to their age, due to deficiencies in the host language (pg. 19).
- Although the educational system of a country is of high quality, certain regulations can hinder a successful progress through the school system. This is the case in countries where very early on, crucial decisions in the choice of educational pathways are taken. This places migrant students who need to catch up language-wise at a disadvantage in their school career (pg. 19).
- In the discussion on the issues countries feel a need to learn from each other and gain more experience, the participants of nearly all countries consider it necessary to improve the qualifications of teachers, particularly in the fields of intercultural education, the implementation of principles of diversity, language teaching (the language of the receiving country as well as of the countries of origin of migrants), and the general ability to deal with a diverse composition of the student body. (pg. 20).
- In all analyzed countries, language support for the respective language of the country is available for migrant children. However, the quality of this support varies widely and is often insufficient (pg. 28).
- Most of the countries do not provide extra support for teaching migrants' mother tongue due to financial restrictions and the lack of understanding for the potentials and positive effects of mother tongue competences (pg. 28).

⁵ Council of the European Union, Council Conclusions on the Education of Children with a Migrant Background, November 2009: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/111482.pdf

1.4 Stakeholder Meeting on Promotion of Multilingualism among Immigrants (Brussels, 2013)

The SIRIUS stakeholder meeting on the promotion of multilingualism among immigrants gathered a number of European stakeholders dealing with migration, education and/or language competencies, as well as representatives of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, to discuss recommendations 3 and 7 of the Language Rich Europe project (LRE) in order to come up with specific standards/benchmarks that could be used to put these recommendations into practice.⁶

The LRE project focuses on the right of children to learn the official language and to give all students the opportunity to learn the languages of their community. The project surveyed multi/plurilingual policies and practices in 24 countries and put forward several key recommendations.⁷

LRE found that there are hardly any countries which support immigrant languages:

- In Denmark, Spain and Switzerland immigrant languages are offered to very young children in pre-primary education.
- In primary education, support is offered in a few more countries for immigrants' mother tongue, but the level of provision varies. In France and Switzerland, immigrant language classes, where they exist are open to all pupils, while in Austria, Denmark and Spain they are reserved only for native speakers. France, Spain and Switzerland offer lessons partly in school hours, whereas in the other countries they are only offered as extra-curricular activities.

LRE Recommendation # 3:

Every child and adult should have the right to learn the official language of his/her country of residence to the level of academic fluency. Authorities should remove any major obstacles; for example, by providing free additional support.

LRE Recommendation no. 7:

'Migrant,' 'Immigrant,' 'Community' languages should be explicitly recognised through appropriate instruments at European level. They should be eligible for more funding support in national and European policies. The offer of languages other than the national language(s) should be adapted so that all students, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to learn the languages of their community, from pre-primary to university education. Where in-school support is not possible for less commonly spoken languages, education authorities should provide financial support for language learning outside of school and find ways to

⁶ Report of the stakeholder meeting: <http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/promoting-multilingualism-among-immigrants-stakeholder-meeting-report/>. Background paper: <http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Multilingualism-discussion-paper.pdf>. Keynote lecture by Guus Extra: <http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Luxemburg-2013-updated.pdf>

⁷ http://www.language-rich.eu/fileadmin/content/pdf/LRE_Review_and_Recommendations.pdf

recognise the value of all these languages in the daily life of the school. Language skills should be developed for more inclusive societies and teaching should reflect the diversity of the student population.

1.5 Thematic Workshop on Language Support to Immigrant (Minority) Children in Europe (Vilnius, 2013)

The 3rd Sirius Workshop, organized in Vilnius (Lithuania), was aimed at discussing the state of art of host language/mother tongue acquisition approaches in Europe; to clarify the roles of various stakeholders in language support policies; to establish best practices and universal approaches in providing teaching of languages of the host country and respecting the languages of the country of origin; and to assess possibilities of their transferability to different countries.⁸

Challenges of European language policies

Based on the literature review and presentations made by the participants of the workshop the current language policies usually face the following challenges:

- Lack of effective initial language assessment tests.
- Lack of continuous language support. In most countries the support usually ceases after 1-2 years of intensive instruction.
- Lack of structural and effective teacher training and of available teacher resources.
- Support to immigrant's mother tongue is very limited across Europe, and in many cases its provision is sporadic.
- Schools and education policies are not tolerant to language diversity. The list of available foreign language for learning is often limited to the most popular EU languages.
- In many countries schools do not receive necessary governmental support to organise immigrant children's education effectively. Even though additional funding (in terms of students' basket) is foreseen, professional and knowledge support is lacking

(Report of the workshop, pg. 15).

Good practices in language support policies

Participants agreed on the good practices as identified by keynote speaker, Dr Jana Huttova:

- Comprehensive system of assessment so that support can be tailored according to the needs of individual student.
- Culturally diverse materials and appropriate testing at entry. Some countries have national screening (Denmark at age of 3, Norway when they enter school) and continuous assessment, especially for late entry students.
- Developing migrant student skills in the instruction language with continuous language support. In some countries it is limited to 2 years after entry.

⁸ Report of the workshop: <http://sirius-migrationeducation.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ab66c945fd&id=6d524ca9b4&e=1dec7f3b33>. Summary: <http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/3rd-sirius-thematic-workshop-on-language-support-to-immigrant-minority-children-in-europe/>.

- Centralizing second language curriculum (like in Sweden, Denmark etc.).
- Integrating language and content learning in school (to develop academic language acquisition).
- Using mother tongue for the development of the host language.
- Recognising the diversity of students' cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource, rather than a difficulty.
- Effective compulsory teacher training for diversity.
- Providing opportunities for instruction in mother tongue as part of the regular curriculum. They could also be offered as modern second language courses.
- Use of bilingual classroom assistants.
- Diversity of mother tongue languages at school level, which is visible and accepted.
- Providing out-of-school lessons and activities, in the school or within the community (Report of the workshop, pg. 12).

Key policy elements for effective language support

During the discussion, all participants agreed on the following key policy elements for effective language support:

- Provision of systemic and continuous language support
- Necessity to incorporate bilingual teaching and understanding of the influence of the heritage language, in both initial teacher training and in-service training, for both language teachers and subject teachers.
- Community involvement is one of the crucial elements of language support policy and a major resource that can bridge the lack of funds and human capacities within the school;
- Parents have to be involved as much as possible and adult education should be connected with schools that have migrant students
- Informal education is a powerful tool that has to be promoted by education staff and policy makers, and learning should not be limited to the school context

(Report of the workshop, pg. 22).

Main recommendations for language policy improvement:

Since most countries face budget cuts, participants made a strong recommendation to promote collaboration and use of different resources like NGOs, communities of migrants, parents and other schools. Therefore, the main recommendations for language policy improvement that came out of the discussion are:

- Multiple approaches to the support with certain fundamental things that have to be implemented and adaptive flexibility to answer specific needs;
- Continuous language support and mother tongue instruction organized in the way that the country finds possible;
- Community based and whole school approach, involving parents;
- Teacher training, leadership training and professionalization of everyone in the process;
- Inclusion of informal education;
- Thinking in terms of inclusive education for all, which refers both to staff, students, parents and communities (Report of the Workshop, pg. 22).

1.6 Sirius Policy Brief: Language Support for Youth with a Migrant Background: Policies that Effectively Promote Inclusion (2014)

The objective of this policy brief prepared by Hanna Siarova and Miquel Angel Essomba is to provide a synthesized overview of language support policies available to immigrant students in Europe and identify gaps in their implementation.⁹ It provides key points and good practice examples and recommends actions and directions that can be taken when developing national language strategies to address immigrant students' needs.

Policy recommendations:

- There is more than one potential solution or policy for effective language support. Multiple approaches need to be developed based on fundamental implementation goals but with flexibility to adapt to specific needs.
- Continued language support and mother-tongue instruction need to be organized in a way that is feasible for each country, depending on the specific political and economic context.
- A greater emphasis should be put on a community-based comprehensive approach that involves parents and seeks to quickly include the children of immigrants in mainstream classrooms and activities, and integrate them into society.
- Teacher training, leadership training, and the professionalization of everyone in the education process including policy makers, schools, teachers, parents, communities and children are key to success.
- Inclusive education is for everyone and encompasses school staff, students, parents and communities.

(Language Support Policy Brief, Box 6, pg. 5).

1.7 A Clear Agenda for Migrant Education in Europe (November 2014)

Based on three years of research and debate, the Sirius Agenda for Migrant Education in Europe¹⁰ is a 'summary of the policies that prove to be effective in promoting equal access to high quality education and training for all.' It was developed through a collaborative process and is endorsed by a wide variety of actors, including Sirius members and supporters.

Language and multilingualism take a prominent place in the Agenda and in the recommendations addressed to educational authorities and EU institutions.

⁹ Hanna Siarova and Miquel Ángel Essomba, Language Support for Youth with a Migrant Background. Policies that effectively promote inclusion. Sirius Network Policy Brief Series, Issue No. 4. http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Polciy-Brief-4_Language-Support.pdf.

¹⁰ *A Clear Agenda for Migrant Education in Europe*, Sirius Network, November 2014. <http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/a-clear-agenda-for-migrant-education-in-europe/>

Sirius Starting Points on Language:

Multilingualism should be seen and encouraged as an asset for all languages and for all learners in order to boost learners' self-confidence, intercultural skills, and employment prospects in a globalised world:

10) Everyone should have the right to become **fluent in the official language of instruction**. The education system should facilitate this right and remove any obstacles by providing free general and targeted support from pre-primary to adult education, including for newly arrived migrant learners and for learners without a migrant background.

11) Countries should reaffirm their commitment to the **European Commission's trilingual formula** aiming for all learners to become fluent in at least three languages of their choice: their first language and two other languages.

12) Among the options to learn other languages, the **learning of local migrant languages** should be supported for interested migrant learners and non-migrant-learners, either within the school day or as an extra-curricular activity. Teachers can also find ways to recognise the value of all these languages in the daily life of the school, thus supporting and promoting the mother tongues of all learners.

Recommendations to Educational Authorities in Member States:

Promoting multilingualism among all learners

1. There are numerous personal, social, cultural and economic advantages to speaking multiple languages. Governments should appreciate the value of linguistic diversity for all languages and all learners as a means to foster personal growth, encourage social inclusion, enrich society culturally so that it becomes more open-minded and provide economic opportunities, boosting jobs and growth.

2. Starting in pre-primary education and continuing through to secondary, vocational, and adult education, all learners with limited skills in the language(s) of instruction should receive general and targeted language support that is free of. To achieve academic fluency, support programmes should be based on a coherent curriculum for second language learning and include regular formative assessments.

3. As much as possible, governments should incorporate Content and Language Integration Learning methods (CLIL) into teaching languages, whether for the language of instruction or for other languages taught in schools (including immigrant languages).

4. Authorities can support the learning of immigrant languages for learners interested to learn other European and non-European languages¹⁸ through additional in-school courses (e.g. adaptation of the foreign language offer), after-school supplement classes or summer programmes and in cooperation with centres of language expertise and migrant communities that offer after-school language courses.

5. Schools should consider how to recognise and benefit from linguistic diversity in the classroom by using European Language Portfolios, testing new methodologies in the classroom, and implementing school-based projects, such as Language of the Month initiatives where migrant students teach their peers about immigrant language(s)¹⁹.

Recommendations to EU Institutions:

Promoting multilingualism among all learners

1. E-Twinning programmes between schools under the Erasmus+ programme are an important step towards strengthening the cooperation between schools and enabling peer learning on multilingual education. The Commission should include peer visits and workshops in the funding scheme to increase knowledge transfer and encourage more projects in the field of multilingualism among migrant learners.

2. The EU should support further research on the economic, social and personal benefits of multilingualism. Furthermore policy experimentation should be encouraged on the most effective methods for teaching the language of instruction to all migrant and non-migrant learners with limited language proficiency, especially newly arrived learners, as well as for recognising and teaching migrant languages as a foreign language option.

3. The EU should widen the scope of the Directive 77/486/EEC⁴⁰ on the education of non-native language speaking children to non-EU nationals and renew its commitment to proper implementation. The EU could also propose non-binding interpretative guidelines on support for newly arrived learners, including the teaching of the language of instruction and migrant languages.

PART II. MAPPING RESULTS: LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN IN EARLY SCHOOL YEARS

Introduction

The review in part I shows that in 2012, few stakeholders on the education of migrant children in Europe engaged in advocacy for improving language support for immigrants in schools. They hesitated to formulate positions on the role of language support, because there was no consensus among their members. The survey that was carried out as part of the Citizenship Education scoping exercise, showed that national policies differed considerably across Europe. This is why it was suggested to bring together policy makers and allow them to question their positions and learn from each other.

The primary goal of the survey is therefore not to perform a comprehensive survey on European language policies, but to serve as the basis for two trilateral meetings for policy makers in which they can exchange and question their different positions regarding language policies for migrant children in early school years. An important question that this mapping exercises focuses on is: why are language policies the way they are in the different European countries? What is behind the decision making? Why have some governments decided to support mother tongue instruction whereas most others have not?

Methodology

The survey was sent to Sirius partners in 19 countries and completed by 12 respondents from 12 countries (63% of the total): Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Spain. We did not receive a response from 7 countries: Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Romania, France, Croatia, Bulgaria.

The respondents of the survey were selected by the Sirius partners based on their expertise in the field of migrant education and their answers may therefore be viewed as ‘informed personal opinions’.

Note on the terms used

We copied the terms used in the Sirius Citizenship Education review: “*children from a migrant background*” and “*migrant children*”. Both terms refer to the children of citizens who live in an EU country where they were not born. The term also includes the “*second generation*”; the children who are descendants of immigrants.

The survey focuses on “*children in early school years*”: this refers to children from age 4 to 8 years.

2.1 Summary of the Findings

The survey covers three main issues:

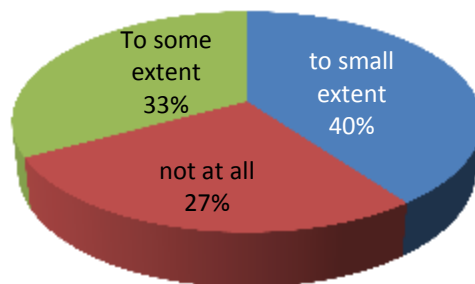
1. supporting migrant children through mother tongue education (paragraph 2.2); which arguments play a role in the debate whether or not to support mother tongue instruction for migrant children (paragraph 2.3)?
2. supporting migrant children with learning the host language/language of instruction (paragraph 2.4);
3. the involvement of parents and migrant communities (paragraph 2.5).

Supporting Migrant Children's Ethnic or Cultural Heritage Through Mother Tongue Education

In order to gain a broader insight into the question to what extent European countries support migrant children's heritage through the use of their mother tongue, we combined the results from the Sirius Citizenship Education survey. This showed that only 4 out of 15 European countries, do not support migrant children's ethnic and cultural heritage through MT education *at all* (these are Belgium/Flanders, Hungary, Italy and the Netherlands).

In a majority of European countries, however, migrant children receive some form of support, mostly 'to a small extent' (40%) and nowhere 'to a large extent'.

Fig. 1. Support for migrant students' cultural heritage through mother tongue education in 15 European countries



Mother Tongue Support: Policy or Practice?

While most countries have some form of support of the mother tongue, it was unclear whether this support was part of an actual (written) policy or whether MT support was implemented as a practice, on an ad hoc basis.

The survey found that:

- 4 of the 12 countries have a written policy at the national level (Austria, Estonia, Norway and Lithuania).

- 3 countries have regional or local initiatives within schools (Germany, Portugal, Spain)
- 3 countries have initiatives outside schools (Cyprus, Greece and the Netherlands)
- 2 countries have neither a policy or practices relating to mother tongue support for children with a migrant background (Belgium, Italy).

Type of Mother Tongue Support

European countries provide different types of mother tongue support, ranging from the use of bilingual class assistants, parents and migrant organizations, to the provision of a school budget and funding for out-of-school language support initiatives.

Behind the decision making: arguments pro/contra mother tongue support

Policy makers make decisions based on a variety of arguments and opinions. To gain a better understanding which arguments are used either in favour of, or against mother tongue education, we asked respondents to indicate which arguments play a role in this debate.

For three countries, the *positive impact that mother tongue education has on migrant children's self-esteem, its benefits for achieving intercultural and inclusive education, the improved educational outcomes for migrant students as shown by research and that the benefits outweigh the costs*, were the main underlying reasons in favour of mother tongue support. These are - unsurprisingly - the same countries where mother tongue education is part of the national policy, namely Austria, Estonia and Norway.

Whether *mother tongue education helps migrant children to learn the host language* or that it *is part of EU commitments*, played no role in the discussion or these arguments were rarely mentioned in at least 6 countries.

Although most European countries provide some form of mother tongue support, few do this as part of the national policy. The argument that *mother tongue education hampers the integration of migrants* was mentioned as the main underlying policy reason not to provide mother tongue education in four countries. Other important underlying reasons against MT education are arguments that *all school time should be reserved for host language instruction* (four countries), that *it hampers the educational outcomes of migrant children* (Belgium) and that *there are insufficient trained teachers to offer MT education* (Norway).

Convincing the policy makers

We also asked respondents which arguments would most likely encourage policy makers to change their views (in favour of or against) supporting mother tongue education. For 9 out of the 12 countries, it is considered a compelling argument in favour of MTE that *MTE has positive psycho-social benefits such as improved migrant children's self-esteem*. That there is *research evidence which shows that MTE also results in improved educational outcomes for migrant students*, was only considered compelling in three countries. The most compelling argument against MTE, are *the costs involved*, according to respondents from 5 countries.

Whether or not *mother tongue education was perceived by the majority population as unnecessary 'pampering' of migrants*, was not considered to be a compelling argument for policy makers to change course, at least not in Austria, Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal.

Host Language support

With the only exception of Spain, all of the countries participating in the survey have a national policy to support migrant children with learning the host language (language of instruction) at school. Language assessment to measure the proficiency of the child in the host language is undertaken in 8 of the 12 countries. In 7 countries, language support is provided in a separate (reception) class. This is primarily for newcomers and the duration is between 1 and 2 years. Only 3 countries use the mother tongue to develop the host language. And in only 2 countries there is compulsory teacher training to teach the host language as a second language.

The role of parents and migrant communities

The expertise potentially offered by parents and migrant communities is widely used in European countries (with the only exceptions: Austria and Lithuania). Their role is limited however: 20% indicated that they were used 'to a small extent' and 60% said 'to some extent'. Nowhere are parents and/or migrant communities involved 'to a large extent'.



Photo: Work in progress at the Trilateral Meeting Tallinn.

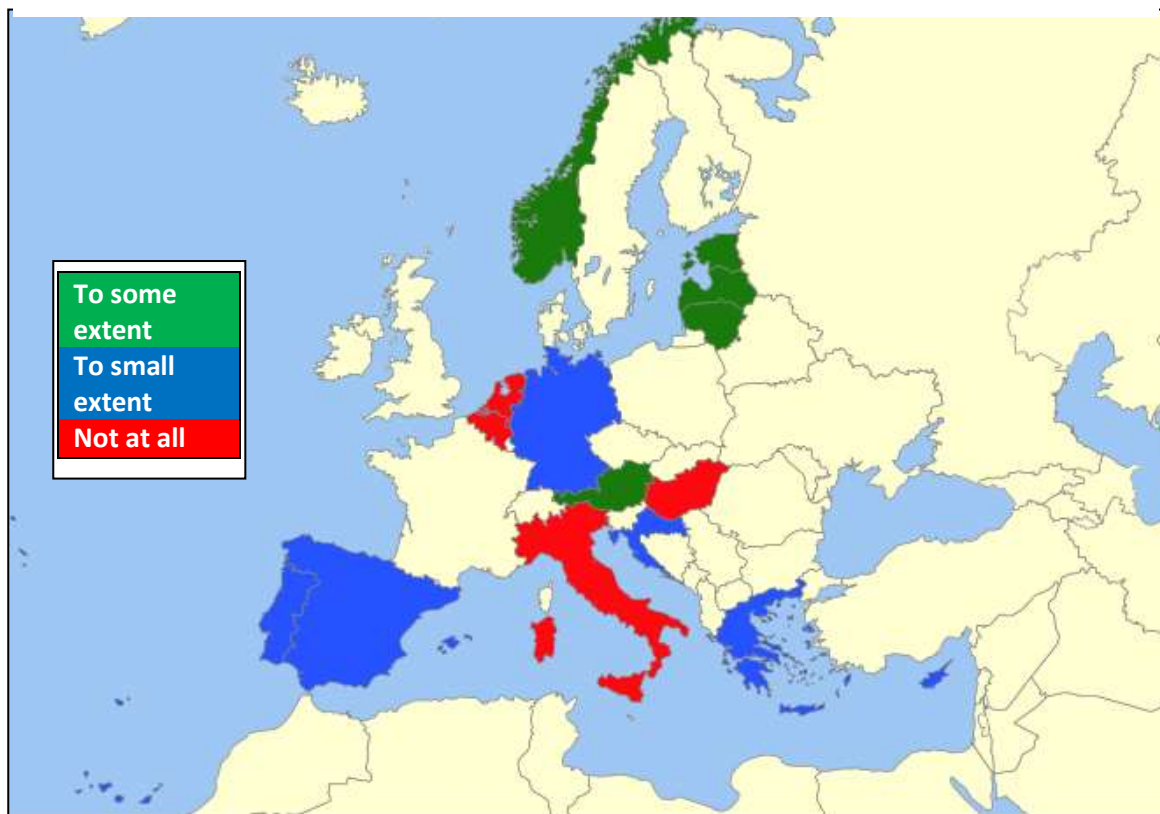
2.2 Supporting Migrant Children Through Mother Tongue Education: Policies and Practices

In the Sirius Citizenship Education survey (2013), respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their country supported migrant children in school to maintain and develop their ethnic and cultural heritage through the mother tongue. This question was repeated in this survey for countries which had not participated in the Citizenship survey (Belgium, Greece and Italy). Respondents who had previously participated (Germany, Austria, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Portugal) were offered a chance to check their previous answers and indicate whether this qualification was still accurate. Only Portugal changed its position from 'to some extent' to 'a small extent'. Countries which participated in the Citizenship survey but not in this survey are: Hungary, Croatia, Cyprus and Latvia.

Of the total number of respondents (15 countries), one third indicated that there was no support at all, 40% said 'to a small extent' and 33 % provided support 'to some extent'. This means that about two thirds of European countries do 'something' with mother tongue education for migrant children. None of the countries indicated however that they supported migrant children 'to a great extent'.

1	Austria	To some extent
2	Estonia	To some extent
3	Latvia	To some extent
4	Lithuania	To some extent
5	Norway	To some extent
6	Croatia	To a small extent
7	Cyprus	To a small extent
8	Germany	To a small extent
9	Greece	To a small extent
10	Portugal	To small extent
11	Spain	To a small extent
12	Belgium-Flanders	Not at all
13	Hungary	Not at all
14	Italy	Not at all
15	Netherlands	Not at all

Fig. 2 Support for migrant students' cultural heritage through mother tongue education in 15 European countries (map produced with <http://philarcher.org/diary/2013/euromap/>)



Policies and Practices in Twelve European Countries

The next question in the survey served to gain an understanding of the actual policies and practices with regard to mother tongue education for migrant children. Respondents were asked whether their country had a *written policy*, either at national, regional or local level. Of the 12 participating countries, this was the case only in Austria, Estonia, Norway and Lithuania:

In Austria, mother tongue education is regulated in the school curriculum.

In Estonia, this is regulated in the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act.¹¹ Besides formal education, so called “Sunday schools” are also systematically supported by the state

¹¹ § 21. “In a municipal basic school or in single classes thereof the language of instruction may be any language on the basis of a decision of the council of the rural municipality or city government relying on a proposal of the board of trustees of the school and in a state basic school or in single classes thereof the language of instruction may be any language on the basis of a decision of the Minister of Education and Research.” Also the same law allows the organization of language and cultural teaching for students acquiring basic education whose native language is not the language of instruction or who communicate at home in a language different

in Estonia. Sunday schools are not religious institutions but non-formal education institutions for ethnic minorities.

In Lithuania, the Law on Education¹² provides that children belonging to ethnic minorities (mostly Polish and Russian) have the right to receive instruction of and in their mother tongue (Polish, Russian or Belarusian) .“Public minority schools (also called bilingual schools) on average have about 80 percent of their curriculum taught in a minority language. The majority of immigrants in Lithuania are from Russian speaking countries; they enroll into minority schools and receive instruction of their mother tongue (Russian). However, this is only true for Russian, Polish and Belarusian languages. Other languages can be provided upon need and availability of resources. However, in reality in most of the cases instruction of other [immigrant] languages is not provided.” (additional information Lithuania).

In Norway, the national policy is laid down in the Education Act (Opplæringsloven § 2-8).

Regional/local policies and school practices

Three countries indicated that they had no national policy, but that there were some regional or local initiatives at individual schools (Germany¹³, Portugal¹⁴ and Spain).

Cyprus, Greece and the Netherlands reported having only initiatives outside schools. These initiatives may be implemented at municipality level or at the initiative of NGO's (Cyprus). Often, they are initiatives by single schools, as is the case in Greece. The respondent from Greece pointed out that:

“[although] there is no national policy in Greece on providing support for mother tongue education of migrant children . . . in some intercultural primary schools, head teachers take the initiative of organising classes for the teaching of mother tongue to immigrant pupils. Nevertheless, these actions are fragmented, not continuing and they depend on the economic circumstances of the schools, as these classes are not funded by the National Ministry of Education.”

There are also foreign schools in Greece. They may have a foreign curriculum, such as a Polish afternoon school which is attended twice or three times a week after their regular

from the language of instruction, which is the native language of at least one parent, provided that at least ten students with the same native language or with the same language of household communication request it.

¹² 17 March 2011 No XI-1281.

¹³ “There are some individual programs which support the mother tongue education of migrant children in the early school years. But these are usually initiatives which only concern one single school. Some schools for example have native language classes but this is just a voluntary offer. Most schools don't offer native language classes” (respondent from Germany).

¹⁴ “In 2009 there was a pilot project supported by the MoE on bilingual classrooms (Portuguese-Mandarin and Portuguese-Crioule. There is also the possibility for children to learn their parents mother tongue in weekend schools. organized by several migrants associations. In two schools. in São João da Madeira and Bragança. it was integrated in primary slower secondary education Mandarin with the support of the MoE.”(respondent from Portugal).

school. There are also schools with both a Greek and a foreign curriculum, such as the Armenian school which is supervised by the National Ministry of Education. In the Netherlands, children may attend mosques or migrant initiatives/ self organizations in the weekends. There, they may have the opportunity for language lessons.

The respondents from Belgium and Italy indicated that there is no policy and that in Belgium 'all initiatives were stopped a few years ago'.

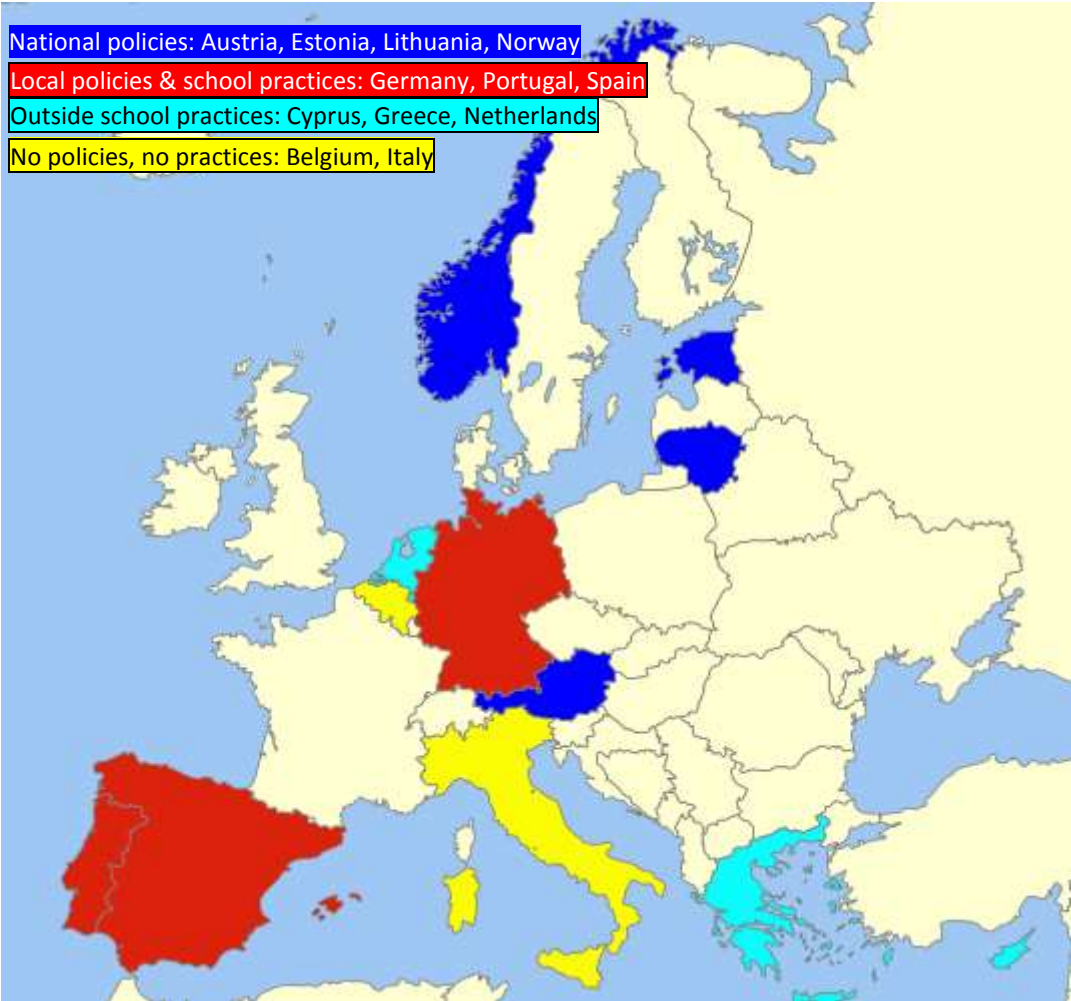


Fig. 3 Map of State Policies and Practices to Support Mother Tongue Education of Migrant Children

Type of Mother Tongue Support

Respondents were asked to indicate which type of mother tongue support was provided, either as part of the official policies or as a practice by schools or other organizations.

Table 2: Type of mother tongue support in 12 European countries

	Bilingual assistants	Inclusion of parents in MTE*	Inclusion of migrant orgs in MTE	School budget for MTE	MTE as part of regular curriculum	MTE outside schools publicly funded	MTE by private institutes
Austria	•						
Belgium							
Cyprus							•
Estonia		•		•		•	•
Germany	•	•			•		•
Greece		•					
Italy							
Lithuania	•			•	•		•
Netherlands		•	•				•
Norway	•				•		
Portugal	•	•	•				
Spain			•			•	

(*MTE: Mother Tongue Education)

Bilingual Assistants

The use of bilingual assistants is included as part of the national policy in Austria and Norway. In Austria, this depends on the pupils or their parents: if they register for mother tongue instruction in school, then either a budget or teacher hours are provided or organized.

Bilingual classroom assistants were also reported as part of practices in Germany, Estonia and Greece.

Parents

Parents are frequently used by schools to assist in mother tongue education. However this is not part of a policy but it is a practice reported in Estonia, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Portugal.

Migrant Organizations

Migrant organization also participate only in practice, not as part of a policy, by providing support to schools with mother tongue education of migrant students. This is reported in Austria, Greece, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal. In Portugal, these may be associations of migrants from Eastern Europe, China, Cape Verde and Guinea.

In the Netherlands these are organizations that want to improve the education position of the children of their own group (respondent from The Netherlands).

School Budget

In Estonia and Lithuania schools receive a budget that they may use for mother tongue instruction.

In Lithuania, the respondent stated that “minority schools receive 20% of extra funding (for every pupil based on pupil's basket) which they use for organising the instruction. All public schools receive an extra 30% of additional funding for every immigrant pupil.” In Greece, instruction in mother tongue may be offered outside school and funded from the public budget.

Part of the school curriculum

Schools in Germany and Lithuania offer mother tongue instruction as part of the curriculum, whereas in Estonia mother tongue instruction may be offered as part of the curriculum to schools and funded by the government.

Outside schools

Outside schools, private institutions offer mother tongue instruction (not funded by the state) in Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands and Lithuania. In Spain there is public funding for mother tongue classes outside schools.

Other

Eight countries reported the use of ‘other’ school practices, but did not elaborate on what these are.

2.3 Behind the Decision Making: Arguments in Favour of and Against Mother Tongue Support for Migrant Children

Policy makers make decisions based on a variety of arguments and opinions. From previous research carried out within the Sirius framework (see part I), we collected the most frequently mentioned arguments and asked our respondents which arguments played a role in the decision making process in their countries with regard to mother tongue education support for migrant children.

Arguments in favour of supporting mother tongue education of migrant children:

- *Research has shown that mother tongue education in early school years improves educational outcomes for migrant children*
- *The benefits of providing mother tongue support to migrant children outweigh the costs, it is therefore considered a good investment*
- *Providing mother tongue support to migrant children supports the integration of migrants in our country*
- *Providing mother tongue education helps migrant children to learn the host language.*

- *Providing mother tongue support to migrant children is part of our commitment as a member of the European Union*
- *Mother tongue education has a positive impact on migrant children's self-esteem*
- *Mother tongue education is a human right of ethnic and/or linguistic minorities*
- *Mother tongue education is beneficial to the goals of intercultural and inclusive education*

Arguments against supporting mother tongue education of migrant children:

- *Providing mother tongue education to migrant children in early school years is too expensive*
- *Providing mother tongue support to migrant children in early school years is too complicated to organize*
- *Mother tongue education hampers the educational outcome of migrant children*
- *There are insufficiently trained teachers available for all minority languages*
- *There are no migrant organizations who can provide support for mother tongue education*
- *Mother tongue education hampers the integration of migrants in our country*
- *All school time for language should be spent on learning the official language of the state.*

Of course, not all arguments play an equally important role in the discussion. Therefore we asked the respondents which arguments, in their opinion, either 'played no role', were 'rarely mentioned', were 'often mentioned' or which formed the 'main underlying reason' for the policy.

Table 3. Arguments in favour of mother tongue education

	MTE has positive impact on migrant children's self-esteem	MTE is beneficial to intercultural and inclusive education	Research shows improved educational outcomes with MTE	MTE benefits outweigh costs	MTE helps migrant children to learn host language	MTE is part of our EU commitment
	Main underlying policy reason				Plays no role in discussions or rarely mentioned	
Austria	•	•				
Belgium						
Cyprus						
Estonia			•		•	
Germany					•	
Greece						
Italy					•	•
Lithuania					•	•
Netherlands					•	•
Norway			•	•		
Portugal					•	•
Spain						

Table 4.Arguments against mother tongue education

	Hampers integration of migrants	All school time for language should be used for host language instruction	Hampers educational outcomes	Insufficient trained teachers	MTE is too complicated
	Main underlying policy reason				Plays no role in discussions or rarely mentioned
Austria					
Belgium	•		•		
Cyprus					
Estonia					
Germany					
Greece					•
Italy	•	•			•
Lithuania					
Netherlands	•	•			•
Norway	•	•		•	
Portugal					
Spain		•			

Other arguments

The argument (pro) that bilingual citizens with a good command of their heritage language may be important for the economy, especially trade, played a role in the discussions in Austria.

Convincing the policy makers

Apart from which arguments play a role in the decision making process, we also wanted to know which arguments – at present – are the most convincing for the current policy maker (i.e. the Ministry of Education). Which arguments would more likely encourage them to change their views (in favour of or against) supporting mother tongue education for migrant children in early school years?

- *whether there is scientific evidence of positive educational outcomes for migrant students*
- *the costs involved (teacher training, development of curricula, materials and assessments)*
- *whether it helps/hinders the integration of migrants*
- *the psychological-social benefits (e.g. improved self-esteem of students)*
- *whether it is part of European policy*
- *whether it is part of international human rights obligations (e.g. in treaty ratified by your country)*
- *whether it helps reaching intercultural inclusive education goals*

- *whether it is perceived by the majority population as unnecessary ‘pampering’ of migrants.*

Table 5: Most compelling arguments

	Pro MTE		Contra MTE
	MTE has positive psycho-social benefits (e.g. improved migrant children’s self-esteem)	Research evidence for better educational outcomes for migrant students	The costs involved
Austria	•	•	
Belgium	•		
Cyprus	•	•	
Estonia	•		•
Germany	•	•	
Greece	•		
Italy	•		
Lithuania	•		
Netherlands		•	•
Norway		•	•
Portugal	•		•
Spain			•

Other compelling arguments

- the economic success of a country; whether this can be improved by raising the number of proficient bilingual individuals (Austria); similar argument raised by Portugal
- the availability of good practice examples from neighboring countries and evidence based on the ex-ante evaluation of potential implementation of such practices (Lithuania);

Not compelling

Whether or not mother tongue education was perceived by the majority population as unnecessary ‘pampering’ of migrants, was not considered to be a compelling argument for policy makers to change course, at least not in Austria, Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal.

Respondents from Belgium, Estonia, Italy, Portugal did not think that the psychological-social benefits, including improved self-esteem of migrant students, would make a difference in convincing policy makers.

Differing opinions among political parties

To get a sense of the political support for mother tongue education, respondents were asked whether there are political parties with different opinions about the current language policy (pro or con). Of the 11 respondents, 55% said that there existed different opinions among the political parties in their country.

Austria: “The right wing party FPÖ is of the opinion that we don't need mother-tongue education and the other parties are more concerned about the quality. All parties think that migrant pupils should have better outcomes in their measured competences in school and should already be fluent in German when entering school (age 6). i.e. that they should learn sufficient German in kindergarten. Therefore, the last year of kindergarten is compulsory and there is support to improve the competence in German. At the moment, a second compulsory kindergarten year (age 4-5) is discussed. The question is whether it should be made compulsory for all or only for those whose proficiency in German is not age-adequate and if it will also be free of charge”.

Cyprus: “This is related to the parties’ migration policy”.

Estonia: “For the Nationalist party the emphasis is on learning host language policies. For the Socialist Democrats the emphasis is on multiculturalism”.

Germany: “Some political parties hold the opinion that mother tongue education is important for the development of a child and should be expanded. So they want native language classes to reach the goal of competent multilingualism. But other political parties hold the opinion that the first goal in language education should be the education in German language and so they want the financial resources to be used for German language courses because they believe that for the integration of migrants the competence in the German language is the most important thing”.

Lithuania: “The main opposition to the current language policy is coming from Polish party called ‘Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania’. This a populist party that stands for preserving Polish identity and culture and opposing language policies of the current government (e.g.. Law on Education was amended in 2011 and introduced additional hours of Lithuanian language and a number of compulsory subjects to be taught in Lithuanian in minority schools. The Polish minority perceived this step as a severe assimilation strategy. Interestingly. there was no such an opposition from Russian minority)”.

Norway: “The Fremskrittspartiet (The Progress Party) which is in Government with the Conservative Party, would like to give more priority to education in Norwegian and they are not positive to mother tongue instruction. They think it hampers integration.”

2.4 Support for learning the host language

Most countries have a national policy to support migrant children with learning the host language (language of instruction) at school.¹⁵ Only Spain indicated that there is no national policy, but that there are various regional and local initiatives in schools. In Cyprus, this policy is communicated through school directives which provide that “one of the goals of intercultural education in the country is learning the host language at school”.

Table 5: Host language support

	Assessment of language comprehension at entry level	Continuous language assessment	Compulsory teacher training to teach host language as L2	MT used to develop host language	Host language support in separate classes	Duration of host language support
Austria	•	•	•			6 yrs
Belgium	•	•			•	
Cyprus						2 yrs
Estonia	•				•	
Germany	•	•	•		•	
Greece				•	•	2 yrs
Italy	•	•				1 yr
Lithuania	•	•		•		1-2 yrs
Netherlands		•			•	1-2 yrs
Norway	•	•		•	•	2 yrs
Portugal						
Spain	•	•			•	2 yrs

Language assessment at entry level

Most countries (73%) indicated that migrant children’s comprehension of the host language is tested at entry level. Exceptions are: Cyprus, Greece and the Netherlands.

Assessment throughout early school years

Of the countries who test at entry level (Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Italy and Lithuania), only Estonia does not undertake continuous language assessment. The respondent from the Netherlands indicated that there is continuous language assessment in the Netherlands.

Host language support

This is provided in all countries according to the respondents, except Estonia, which indicated that extra language lessons are financed, but schools must apply for it.

¹⁵ Portugal did not answer this question

In Flanders (Belgium), schools receive more money for staff when they have a lot of pupils who speak a language other than Dutch. They can use this money to teach Dutch as a second language.

In Germany, there are specific laws for support in the host language for migrant children in every respective school law (“Schulgesetz”) in each federal state of Germany. Between the end of the kindergarten and the start of the first school year, children with a migrant background who have problems with the German language can take part in extra classes “Vorkurs Deutsch”. These classes take one year and support the children in learning the German language.

Duration of language support:

In Cyprus, Greece, Norway and Spain, language support is provided for 2 years, in Italy for 1 year and in Lithuania and the Netherlands migrant children receive 1-2 years of language support. Austria is the only country which provides host language support for 6 years.

Compulsory teacher training to teach the host language as a second language

Teaching the host language as a second language is only compulsory for student teachers in Austria and Germany. In Estonia there is teacher training to teach the host language as a second language, but it is not compulsory. There is a lot of support and material to support teachers for teaching the host language as a second language.

Mother language of the child used to develop the host language

Three countries (Greece, Norway and Lithuania) use the mother language of the student to develop the host language.

Host language support classes are primarily provided in a separate class

Separate (reception) classes are provided in Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Norway and Spain.

In Greece, school teachers may ask for a reception class for foreign students who do not speak Greek and have serious difficulties in attending their class (Ministerial Decision of 1980). The respondent explained that “Although learning the Greek language is heavily emphasized, in these classes students are also taught the regular syllabus. Students who know Greek but are unable to respond to the demands of certain subjects can benefit from extra tuition if their school runs such a programme”.¹⁶

¹⁶ “By Law 1404 /1983, Reception Classes and the institution of Tuition Classes are provided. Additions and amendments have been made by the Ministerial Decisions issued in 1994 and issued in 1999” (respondent from Greece).

2.5 The Role of Parents and Migrant Communities

As we saw earlier, parents and migrant communities frequently play a role in migrant children's language learning. Only two countries (Austria and Lithuania) indicated that the expertise that parents and migrant communities may offer, is not used at all. The extent to which parents and migrant organizations play a role is limited however: 20% said to 'a small extent' and 60% said 'to some extent'. Nowhere are they said to be involved 'to a great extent'.¹⁷

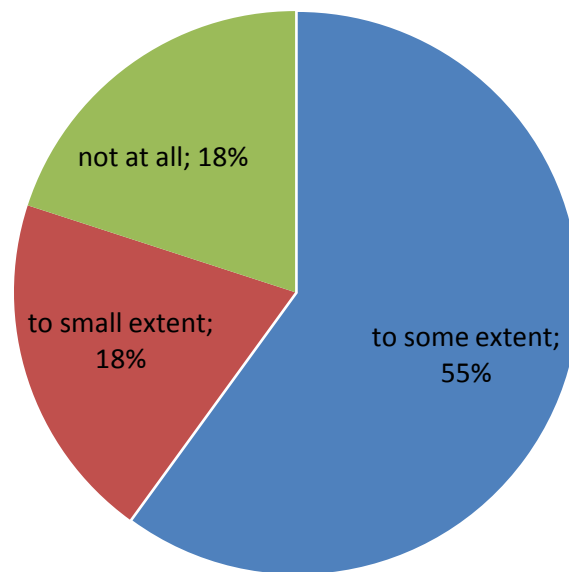


Figure 4: Extent to which parents and migrant organizations are involved

Examples of local initiatives, parental and migrant community involvement

Respondents provided several examples of how parents and migrant communities are involved in language learning:

Belgium: There are some local initiatives outside schools where children are trained in the host language outside schools or during holidays.

Cyprus: municipalities run afternoon schools where migrant children can do their homework or learn the host language or the mother tongue language or get involved in other activities. Sometimes these activities are part of initiatives for cooperation of the school and local authorities in zones of educational priority

Germany: mentioned several examples of projects:

¹⁷ The Netherlands did not respond to this question.

- the “Rucksack”-project: a project in which children are supported in the learning of their first language and the German language within their families in the age between 4-6.
- KIKUS: a project for children from three years on to improve their first and second language within their family under the instruction and control of a KIKUS course director before the start of the primary school.
- Family Literacy (FLY): an intergenerational approach to strengthen the linguistic competence of adults with migratory background and their children in Hamburg. The parents have to participate very actively in this program.
- Stiftung Mercator “Förderunterricht:” students of teacher training give special tuition for children with migratory background.

Greece: in some intercultural primary schools the head teachers take the initiative and organise afternoon classes for teaching immigrants their mother language. However, these classes are not funded by the National Ministry of Education and they do not operate every school year. It depends on the budget provided to the school by the Local Authorities. These kind of classes are fragmented and they are not offered on a continuous basis.

Lithuania: Integration classes can be organized, but practice shows that they are costly and are almost not practiced. Children receive support during the classes of Lithuanian language or after regular classes. Centre Plus and Migrant education centre are providing additional support for learning Lithuanian (free Lithuanian language courses) for adults and children coming from non-EU countries. They also organise intercultural activities for the same target group. The funding mostly comes from EU Integration Fund of Third-Country Nationals.

The Netherlands: Migrant organizations provide lessons to improve their learning skills in different courses such as math and physics.

Norway: Some minority groups, often their religious organizations offer mother tongue instruction on Saturdays or in the afternoons. For example the Tamils in Oslo and some mosques (Urdu and Arabic).

* * *

PART III. TRILATERAL MEETINGS ON LANGUAGE POLICY FOR CHILDREN OF MIGRANT BACKGROUND

As part of the Sirius project, two trilateral meetings were organized: one in Amsterdam, the Netherlands (8-9 September 2014) and one in Tallinn, Estonia (23-24 October 2014). At each meeting, a brief summary was provided of the outcome of the survey as a way to start the discussion. Also, at each meeting, a local expert was invited to provide background information about the language policy of the host country. In the Netherlands, this was Dr. Emmanuelle LePichon-Vorstman, lecturer in socio-linguistics at the University of Utrecht. In Tallinn, this was dr. Anna Golubeva from the Foundation Innove.¹⁸

Participants

The meetings were attended by two representatives from each country. In Amsterdam, there were representatives of city councils, teacher training institutes and researchers from the Netherlands, Austria and Germany. In Tallinn, the meeting was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Education, teacher training institutes and a research institute from Estonia, Norway and Spain.

3.1 Trilateral meeting Amsterdam: Netherlands – Germany - Austria

Commonalities

The participants identified several commonalities among the three countries:

- Teacher training needs improvement. In all three countries, the teachers need to be better prepared to work with children with a migrant/multilingual background. It would be better if there were more teachers with a bilingual background.
- In all three countries there seems to be a perception that some languages are ‘better’ than others: the ‘higher’ languages (e.g. English, French, German, Dutch) are encouraged, while the ‘lower’ languages (the immigrant languages such as Turkish, Somali) need to be forgotten.
- Everywhere it is a challenge to change tradition and the discussion about identity is sometimes very difficult as this is a sensitive topic.

Differences

There were also some noted differences:

- In Germany and the Netherlands, the general ideology is to support the German or Dutch language (there is no valuing of multilingualism).
- There is no mother tongue support in the Dutch educational system. The main goal is to learn to speak and understand Dutch. It is a difficult and sensitive political subject. Twenty years ago there was mother tongue education but due to different factors it

¹⁸ Dr. Golubeva was unable to attend but her powerpoint presentation was presented by Piret Kärtner from the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.



Photo: Participants at the Trilateral Meeting Amsterdam.

stopped and it is now legally prohibited. There are three different groups in the Netherlands: Newcomers, Dutch migrant children and native Dutch children. The second and third group are regarded the same, they receive no extra finance for language support. The newcomers are separated for one year and placed in a Dutch language class.

- In Germany, the main goal is to close the gap between migrant children and other children and the key to improve educational success is considered the acquisition of the German language. There are big differences between the federal states. In some regions 50% of the population has a migrant background, in other region it is 2%. The largest group is from Turkey, then follows Russia and Poland. In some federal states there is some mother tongue education (for instance in Hamburg), but it is very limited.
- By contrast, Austria values multilingualism. But here too, there is a tendency to increase the focus on learning Germany and to decrease the support for mother tongue education. It is obligatory for schools to know which languages are spoken in their school. The problem is that in Austria the government may only give recommendations, the regions can decide for themselves.

Which arguments are convincing?

- It is important to keep in mind that there are different reasons behind policies and it depends on who you ask which reasons are pointed out to be important/difficult.

- In the Netherlands: improved educational outcomes for migrant children is used as an argument to support Dutch as the only language of instruction (the more Dutch they get, the better the outcome, is the idea).
- However, there is a lot of scientific evidence available on the benefits of mother tongue education.

What works? Good practices

The Netherlands:

- Goed, Beter, Best (translation: Good, Better, Best); project started in 2012 which is aimed at learning the Dutch language by children and parents and to help parents support education at home for example through educational games. But it also focuses on what can you expect from a school, how does a school work in the Netherlands (school and home at same level). Parents will also play with children under teacher support to learn how to use the Dutch language in games. In the Netherlands we don't have homework at primary schools. That reduces contact with parents and means that parents have less insight in the schoolwork of children.
- The Language Café which focuses on learning each other languages in an informal way. We (the city Utrecht) asked students to implement these cafes in different neighbourhoods adjusted to the needs of these neighbourhoods. In these informal setting there is knowledge exchange and socialising. The school of arts created tools for this setting.
- Another older Dutch example (not sure if it still exists) is that young refugees got lessons together with their mother in the host language (Dutch) in an after-school program. The combination between child and mother is important because this way children and parents keep understanding each other. Children learn fast and in this project the mother can also learn along with the child.

Austria:

- Here there are also language programmes focused on mothers: Mama lern Deutsch. Mothers come together to learn German. Sometimes this is facilitated by schools.
- 'Oma Opa program' (grandma, grandpa): Grandparents know many words and have a lot of stories. This program was successful because grandparents could share their stories and the children could retell and draw them. There are books made from the stories and these books are in more than one language (2 or 3).

Germany:

- An example from Germany is 'backpack'. Materials about school subjects are translated so children can practice at home with their parents in their mother tongue.

3.2 Trilateral Meeting Tallinn: Estonia – Norway – Spain

Commonalities

- We all have multilingual societies.
- We all have a responsibility to deal with migrant students and other bilingual students.
- The wish and the will is there, but the challenge everywhere is what and how to implement it.

Differences

- There are big differences between the three countries in terms of size of the population, background and history of immigration, economic differences and history of dealing with bilingualism (e.g. in Norway bilingualism has never been properly launched, Estonia has a long history of bilingualism with its national minorities and Catalan in Spain is also bilingual).



Photo: Selection of Participants at the Trilateral Meeting Tallinn.

- In Norway, there are three groups of minorities: Saami (indigenous) population in the north (who have their own rights), national minorities (they have had a connection or link to Norway for centuries) and immigrant minorities from the latest period of immigration which started in 1970 and is ongoing. Today, around 14,9% of the population in Norway are immigrants. These three groups have different rights. The Saami population would be fully bilingual if their rights to full bilingual education

would be implemented. National minorities don't have these rights to that extent and they don't use them either. Immigrant minorities have weak support. Immigrants have the right to get mother tongue education but only if needed in order to speak, read and write in Norwegian. They don't have the right to get mother tongue education to develop their own mother tongue, that is not the aim. The aim is to learn the Norwegian language faster (transitional model). There is a discrepancy in policy and practice due to economical, practical and attitude reasons. It is obvious that more students are entitled to mother tongue education, but if parents are not aware of the possibilities, and don't react, nothing happens.

- In Spain, if students want to learn in mother tongue, it is only possible to learn as an extra-curricular activity. The situation in Catalonia is different from the rest of Spain. In Catalonia there were always two languages - Catalan and Spanish. There is a greater sensibility here about bilingualism and the value of languages. There was a big wave of internal (Spanish) migrants in 1960s and a second wave in 2000 from all over the world (Africa, Asia, Pakistan, China, Eastern Europe and Latin America). Schools had to deal with a lot of new children from everywhere. The rest of Spain is more monolingual. Because it is so recent Spain did not have the time to develop a policy and teach the trainers how to deal with these children.
- In Estonia, the policy is the school or municipality has to provide mother tongue lessons if a minimum of 10 students share the same mother tongue and apply for the lessons. Graduating from secondary education, everybody has to take three state exams: 1) foreign language (can take 2 if want), 2) mathematics, 3) Estonian language as mother tongue or Estonian language as second language. There are also immersion schools: for Russian/Estonian children. Learning Russian gives Estonian speaking children a better chance in the labor market. On the other hand, this provides Russian speaking students with possibilities to attend Estonian universities (where most courses are in Estonian). The outcome of immersion is complete bilingualism; both languages are equally valued; teachers are trained; there is a language center with 10 specialists who support and train teachers, give lectures. Also Russian students have bilingual dictionaries for all the subjects, to make it easier for them to take part in Estonian courses.

Which arguments are convincing?

- Catalonia in Spain is bilingual. Here, the arguments supporting bilingual education are psychological: learning another language is good for educational outcomes and for students' capabilities. Spain's public opinion is also that the more language a student learns, the easier it is to learn new languages.
- In Estonia, the leading argument is that mother tongue education helps children to learn the host language. Another notion is that Estonian is a rather small language and needs protection from the bigger languages such as Russian and English. On the other hand, it is rather expensive because of the small size of the population in Estonia. There is also a lack of qualified teachers.
- In Norway: there was recent research which showed that learning in mother tongue has no remarkable benefit. The studies were carried out without a single reference to opposing works. This has nevertheless received much attention from the public,

which has sparked a lot of debate. Educating a child in its mother tongue would be beneficial to the education outcome and also be beneficial to the host country, because it allows for a wider range of international relations. Altogether, all the arguments are intertwined. There are some negative attitudes towards bilingualism in Norway, not only economical but there are strong emotions and sentiments.

Challenges

- Dealing with the perception of different language statuses, changing people's attitude. Not every form of bilingualism is negatively viewed; elite bilingualism (English, French Italian) is appreciated. But being bilingual in languages from Turkey or Pakistan is not – there are social and political issues at play.
- In Norway, there have been cases where some students feel related to IS (Islamic State) because they don't feel like a part of the Norwegian community.
- In Norway it is also a financial issue: the costs are not only what you pay for the teacher, there are also the bills to pay in the long run when you have large numbers of drop-out immigrant students from secondary education.
- Not enough attention is placed on teacher training, there could be multiple teachers teaching but not many teachers are willing to teach with another teacher.

What works? Good Practices

Estonia:

- Immersion schools (see above).
- Mapping school children: EHIS (Estonian Educational Info-system) includes information about all Estonian students (mother tongue, spoken languages etc.), the school collects the information from the students.
- The ministry of Culture provides funds for Sunday schools. About 500 kids go to different Sunday schools. Not only language, but also culture, cooking, singing, dancing etc. Sunday schools take place in different regions in Estonia and the languages provided are Latvian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Russian, Uzbek, Azerbaijani, Tartar etc.

Spain:

- All the kids in Catalan are in immersion school and speak both Spanish and Catalan. The challenges are mainly about the cooperation between schools and universities.
- In some schools, the parents of Moroccan families volunteer and tell stories in Amazigh, afterwards together with the class teacher they translate the story.

Norway:

- There are some pilot programs, which have not taken their full potential. The success and benefits of those programs vary a lot throughout the various cities, this is because there are no national guidelines.
- In Norway you can choose between 40 languages to make a secondary language exam.
- There is a website with language resources to be used in schools.

- In general a lot is done trying to involve parents. Migrant communities receive funding if they show initiative to do something relating to language immersion among migrants

3.3 Concluding Remarks

From the very rich and engaging discussions among the participants of the trilateral meetings, several conclusions and ideas for strategies emerged:

Multilingualism is the norm

- There is consensus that all countries are multilingual, but that the policies on how to deal with multilingual students with migrant background diverge.
- All governments agree on the importance of having a good knowledge of the host language, but they do not back it up consistently. 1-2 years of language support is not sufficient, bilingual children need at least 5-6 years. Mother tongue can help when learning second language. It also helps in boosting self-esteem (the ranking of languages is witnessed everywhere).
- Multilingualism should be viewed as a competence instead of a delay.
- Everywhere, practical initiatives are being taken in spite of a negative national-level political climates.
- A systematic, nationwide strategy and policy is needed. Based on the assumption that governments want the success of newcomers, they should value the linguistic competences of migrants.

Teacher training

- Funding is needed to improve teacher training, to develop bilingual materials and to carry out proper assessments.
- There should be involvement of language at the earliest stages possible in a child's education – not just in a linguistic sense, but throughout all aspects of their education (e.g. recognition of 2nd language children in maths classes). This is already happening in Austria and Germany but not in The Netherlands.

Importance of networking and collaboration across Europe

- On the ground, in the schools, there are many good practices and initiatives, especially with parents and migrant organizations, but there is still a lack of knowledge and – as a result - lack of funding
- The Sirius network is important; exchanging knowledge and expertise across Europe; this is not just national problem, it's European (and even global) issue.
- We should create a wider network and more collaboration
- It is good to have connections with different cities and countries. To connect and join together and share information and experiences.

Raising awareness on multilingualism and interculturalism

- Intercultural and linguistic awareness should be accessible for both migrants and non-migrants – all of society should be adapting to cultural changes

- We should change the attitude towards the use of migrant children's mother-tongue: we need to embrace and be aware of the mother-tongue as a means of learning the host language faster.
- We should create awareness among teachers of the importance of multilingualism, about intercultural sensitivity and awareness of what language means to and for teachers themselves. Use their personal experience and address internalization of their own rejection of their mother-tongue or dialect.
- We could use expertise of International Schools

How to convince policy makers?

- The economic argument is important (multilingualism is good for the economy), so is the argument about raising the self-esteem of migrant students and improving educational outcomes. Here there is room for further advocacy.
- Lack of awareness and lack of funds are the main obstacles faced. By changing attitudes we can find more funding.
- National governments don't seem to feel pressure from the European or international level in terms of taking on more progressive language policies. The SIRIUS project can act as a *vehicle*: it showcases projects and results in different countries. A lot of the problem is a lack of knowledge. It is good to visit the school boards and schools to spread information and show what other countries are doing.
- We should create more conversation and bring awareness to higher levels of government through projects.
- We should use bottom-up as well as top-down methods to address the issue
- We should attempt to 'de-politicize' the issue – we should try to avoid the left/right divide so that more governments are willing to deal with the topic
- Emphasize economic benefits of multilingualism (it is good for any city to utilize the potential of its migrant citizens)
- Change the discourse on migration: it should be recognized as a natural part of globalization rather than a negative invasion of one's country.

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