

European Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity

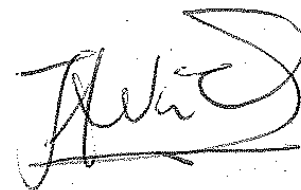
PRESS RELEASE

The European Commission has recently unveiled the composition of the new team and the new portfolios assigned to the 28 Commissioners. The NPLD is disappointed to see that multilingualism has not been assigned any specific portfolio and wishes to note the decreasing importance languages have had over the past few years, going from a Commissioner for Multilingualism (Leonard Orban, 2007-2010), to a Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth (Androulla Vassiliou, 2010-2014), to no Commissioner in charge of the multilingualism portfolio.

In the Commission's recent press release announcing the new team, the Commission notes that *the current unit dealing with Multilingualism Policy; Skills and Qualification Strategy will move from DG Education and Culture to DG Employment*. NPLD completely shares the Commission's view of stimulating growth and jobs in the current economic and social scenario and believes that languages can greatly contribute to stimulate Europe's economy. We wish to note, however, that all European languages – EU official languages but also regional, minority or small-state languages – serve for much more than for economic purposes.

The new Commission's approach on multilingualism gives a utilitarian, market-oriented approach to the languages of Europe, which will only prioritize big, hegemonic languages and will leave a remarkable number of lesser-used languages – small-state, regional or minority languages – aside.

NPLD is highly concerned on the increasingly wide gap between the European institutions and its citizens. We strongly believe that the new narrative that the European Union is currently forging must bring together all the peoples of Europe and ensure that no one is left behind, with their wide variety of histories, cultures and languages – which is one of its main features – which can be shared as a common asset. Strengthening the European economies and ensuring high levels of employment will be key issues in the near future, but other elements will need to be included in the European strategy if it is to lead, ultimately, to a more stable, prosperous and inclusive society.



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