An ever closer union . . . of linguistic diversity

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Abstract

The analysis carried out between October 2014 and February 2015 by a team of researchers from the University of Westminster with support from colleagues from across the EU identified the linguistic communities across the 28 EU member states as recognized (or not) by the country's legislation and the linguistic rights of these communities in education, judiciary and public services. The findings present a complex picture of different linguistic traditions, as well as different levels of minority language use. Education and media appear as the two areas where these minority languages are most used. The diversity of national policies across the EU towards minority languages is highlighted. At the same time, a number of factors that influence the use of minority languages in one context and not in another are identified. Finally, a policy approach that would enhance education in minority languages, strengthen community cohesion and diversity in a globalizing world is put forward.

Keywords: linguistic diversity; less-dominant languages; education policy; European Union

1. Introduction

Linguistic diversity is an acknowledged reality in the European Union (EU). Across the 28 member-states "over 60 indigenous regional or minority languages, spoken by some 40 million people" (EU Multilingualism, 2016) are being used in every day communication. European Union linguistic diversity was acknowledged by the

treaties of Rome in 1957; this acknowledgement was further reinforced by subsequent treaties, most recently in the Treaty on European Union: "It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced" (European Union, 2007, art. 3). The same concept was put forward from a human rights perspective in the European Charter of Human Rights: "The Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity" (European Union, 2000, art. 22). As can be noticed, the two treaties make no distinction between national, regional or minority languages; they provide "blanket recognition" of cultural and linguistic diversity. This passive EU approach was recalibrated with a more active one, under which linguistic diversity was to be maintained across the EU through education, in order to "increase individual multilingualism until every citizen has practical skills in at least two languages in addition to his or her mother tongue" (European Commission, 2005). In this New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism published by the European Commission in 2005 there was little explanation as to which languages the framework strategy refers to and to what extent it addresses the challenges faced by minority languages. The new framework was adopted by the promoters of multilingualism mainly in order to encourage the learning of EU official languages in schools, and little evidence was found of its use to support or promote minority languages. As the New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism makes it clear, "responsibility for making further progress (in promoting multilingualism) mainly rests with Member States" (European Commission, 2005). This top down approach has been criticized as being unsuitable: "Current approach of nation states, defining both national and regional/minority languages from the top down, is increasingly at odds with the idea of cross-border migration and communications" (Hornsby & Agarin, 2012, p. 88). The current horizon-scanning research set out to identify what is the situation of minority languages across the 28 EU-member states now, ten years after the launch of the New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism in the EU.

The research investigated the status and treatment of minority languages across the EU-member states. Given that "regional or minority languages are spoken in all European countries, except for Iceland" (Minority languages . . ., 2012), it follows that all EU member states have minority languages. The legal status of these languages, whether they are acknowledged as official or not, and their daily use in the public sphere were the two main research foci. Obviously the analysis of the use in the public sphere should be correlated with the use of minority languages in the private sphere, for example in the context of family life; however, that was considered to be outside the scope of the current research. This is a limitation of the research approach and methodology; all the data collected and presented in the current paper refers only to activity in minority languages undertaken in the public sphere, in the EU member states.

Regarding the legal status of minority languages, the aim of the research was not to pass judgement on any legal set-up or linguistic rights that different groups might enjoy in a particular member state. The research was designed (see Section 2) as a horizon-scanning exercise in which the national approach to minority languages, their use and the linguistic rights of their users are presented and discussed. For the purposes of this research, no particular minority-majority language legal model is considered superior to the others, and wherever possible the names of the countries adopting a particular approach have been left out. The author acknowledges that the status of minority languages and their use is very much linked to national and regional history, as discussed further in the article. The current status enjoyed by a minority language has developed over a long period of time, and it is outside the scope of the current article to pass judgement on this development. The study looks only at the current status of minority languages, drawing parallels between the approaches of different EU member states in the area of minority language recognition and use.

A word on terminology: The term *minority language* is used here as an over-encompassing term that includes lesser-used languages (LULs) and one that does not usually include official EU member state languages. *Less widely used languages* (LWULs) is a term that usually includes LULs and the small EU member state languages, or regional or minority languages (RMLs). Also, by not naming specific minority languages, the article attempts to stay away from the language versus dialect debate (for more on this see, for example, Auer, Hinskens, & Kerswil, 2005). Given the focus and remit of the current study, this over-encompassing approach was found to be satisfactory.

2. The research approach

The current research was carried out between October 2014 and March 2015 by a group of researchers[1] from the University of Westminster, and it involved desktop research, interviews, triangulations and fact-checking exercises across the different EU member states. In order to address the research question as detailed above, the research looked first at the official legal status of the different languages. For this part of the study the primary source of information on the status of languages in each member state was either the state constitution or a legislative act detailing the position and usage of the different languages in the territory of the state. This provided a sense of how, from a legal perspective, the state defines its linguistic landscape.

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[1] The researchers that collected the data for the current study are: Ilenia Chindamo, Tara Golkar, Kristina Kand, Valeria Mezzanu, Mayahuel Petillo (research students in MA International Liaison and Communication), under the supervision of Dr Daniel Tomozeiu.

In order to identify the use of minority languages in the public sphere, the second part of the research involved selecting three different areas (education, judiciary and public services) and researching the use of minority languages in each EU member state in each of these three areas. The three areas were chosen as significant and representative for the public life of an individual. Other areas of public engagement were considered, such as healthcare and the languages used in patient-doctor relations. However, due to the different and sometimes overlapping medical systems which operate across the 28 EU member states and the different approaches to this relation (see, for example, Pena, 2005 or Verrept, 1997), this proved unfeasible.

Based on its research set-up, the research encountered three major challenges. The first relates to defining what constitutes a minority language. There are academic definitions of minority languages as discussed for example by Grin (1992, p. 69); however, the definitions adopted by the EU member states appear to vary from one state to another. Therefore, when analysing the national legislative framework, the research had to use national definitions of minorities and minority languages. Also, acknowledging the migration that is taking place form outside the EU, which brings with it new languages which then tend to become minority languages in the territory of the EU member state, as well as the historical minority groups with their own languages, the research had to identify a way to manage this complexity. Given that most constitutions and linguistic laws are written in relation to historical minority languages and because the situation of the new migrant languages is rather fluid, a research design decision was made to focus only on the historical minority languages. The findings regarding the state approach to minority languages applies, in some cases, also to newer minority languages; however, the data was collected in respect of historical minority languages.

The second challenge encountered in the research phase had to do with access to documents in various languages. While the research team could, between its members, master over a half of the national EU languages, it still had to rely on translations of legislative acts at times. While the position of minority languages was always well understood and checked through a triangulation process and every effort has been made to reflect it appropriately, some of the nuances of the minority language status might have been affected by this process.

The third challenge had to do again with language accessibility. Despite all attempts to be fair when representing the usage of each minority language on the ground, the research team sometimes had access to less-than-objective sources. Discrepancies were found for example between the number of speakers quoted by national sources and those of the cultural and linguistic associations. Best efforts were made to reach an objective conclusion in each case.

3. The research protocol

The research protocol used for the current study was designed with the above-mentioned challenges in mind. While they could not all be addressed or accommodated in the research-design phase, efforts were made to create a research protocol that mitigated at least some of these challenges. The research protocol is presented in the appendix. In the protocol, the collected data are split into three categories.

The first part of the protocol looks at the official languages across the national territory, as defined by the state constitution and other representative legislation. For this section, four different scenarios were prepared and presented: one language, more languages across whole territory, one language and regional languages, and different languages in different regions. These four scenarios proved to be appropriate for the data collection and provided interesting results, which are presented and analysed in Sections 5 and 6.

The second part of the protocol aimed at engaging in detail with the usage of minority languages in the three areas mentioned above: education, judiciary and public services. At the same time, this second part contains an "other" category, allowing the researcher to note other areas where minority languages are being used. This approach was designed in order to avoid the challenge of being too restrictive with the areas of public engagement, as explained Section 2. The aim was to have an objective evaluation of the usage of minority languages in different areas of public life. The level of objectivity a researcher can have while analysing this area came under question several times during the study, for example due to the (sometimes significantly) different numbers of speakers and language usage provided by different sources. During the triangulation process every effort was made to maintain objectivity; this at times proved difficult given how some of the sources were quoting each other rather than relying on primary research.

The third part of the protocol was designed to be more subjective, based on the experience of the researcher in evaluating the approach of the government towards minority languages. The individual views of the researcher were then discussed and moderated within the research team. In order to facilitate the task of the researcher doing the evaluation, three different categories were established regarding the attitude of the government towards minority languages: support/promote, protect and ignore. The divergent data collected for this part made this type of analysis highly problematic. The challenges of this approach are further discussed in Section 5.

4. The legal framework

Besides the EU treaties and the European Charter of Human Rights, the document that protects and promotes historical and minority languages in Europe is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe, 1992a), signed under the auspices of the Council of Europe in the early 1990s. The fact that as of March 2015, 11 EU member states had not yet ratified this Charter provides an insight into the different national approaches the member states take towards minority languages. Interestingly, as of March 2015 the Charter did have 25 signatories in total, which demonstrates that some of the non-EU members of the Council of Europe acknowledged the principles of the Charter. While the reasons for not ratifying the Charter vary from state to state, they do provide a first indication of the diversity of legislative approaches that exist.

The ratification of the Charter requires states to acknowledge their minority languages and to either protect them (Part II languages) or promote and allow their use in public (Part III languages; Council of Europe, 1992b). This differentiation between protection and promotion already allows for significant differentiation in the approach signatories have towards the minority languages. This differentiation was built into the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in order to provide flexibility of approach and to allow the different countries to find the best formula to accommodate their minority languages (Nic Craith, 2003). Judging from the numbers that have ratified the Charter in the first 25 years of its existence, it could be argued that the flexibility that was incorporated in its approach was not deemed sufficient by almost a half of the EU member states.

Given that the study was not longitudinal, in the current article the trend over time adopted by individual countries when it comes to addressing their minority languages is not analysed. What the article does provide is a snapshot of the current situation, 10 years after the EU launched its New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism. It could be argued that the Charter, together with the other social and legislative developments, have helped bring the approaches to minority languages of the 17 EU member states that ratified it closer together. It could well be the case that the Charter also influenced the approaches of the remaining 11 EU member states that have not ratified it, to a certain extent. However, the research for the study focused on the situation as it currently stands rather than any shifts in approach over time. The research does not pass judgement on the effectiveness of specific legislative tools, such as the Charter, but analyses the current situation as the result of the impact and influence of those EU and national social and legislative developments.

One could wonder why the protection of minority languages is addressed by the Council of Europe rather than the EU. The EU did touch upon the topic in

the European Charter of Human Rights and continues to be engaged at research level, for example though the Euromosaic study (Euromosaic, 1996) which identified communities using minority languages, as well as other specific projects. Despite these practical efforts, the EU is not the legal framework provider in this area. The high number of non-EU members states that have signed the Charter could be an indication of the interest that exists outside the EU to provide a legal framework for the actions taken (or not) in this policy area. At the same time, the high number of EU member states that have not ratified the Charter could indicate that the positions of the EU member states on this issue are significantly apart and therefore consensus building on approaches towards minority languages in the EU remains difficult.

5. Findings

In the view of the author, any discussion of the treatment of minority language should start with an analysis of the official language(s) in the given territory. The view and treatment of minority languages will be influenced by the legal context as well as national and regional discourses regarding majority/minority and official languages. Therefore, the first part of the research protocol analysed the situation of the national language(s) as defined by the legislation of the state. The findings for the 28 EU member states are presented below in Table 1. This first part of the research already provides an indication of the different linguistic contexts and approaches that exist across the EU member states. Different potential reasons for these approaches as well as their implication for the status of minority languages will be analysed in detail in the discussion section.

Table 1 Official languages in the 28 EU member states

Official language category	Number of EU member states
A. One language	11
B. More languages across whole territory	7
C. One language and regional languages	9
D. Different languages in different regions	1

If the first part of the research protocol produced clear-cut results, for the second part the findings were much more nuanced. In order to address the subjectivity of the documents that were consulted and the interviews that were carried out, the author decided to focus on the trends that were clear and obvious in the dataset, rather than the ones that were open to discussion. Two conclusions stood out when this approach was taken. First, education is the area where minority languages seem to be more present than in judiciary or public

services. This was obvious across virtually all the EU member states. All states had a form of minority language instruction. In some cases, the provision was limited to certain minority languages. In others, it was limited to certain levels, either primary or university, for example. Also, in other cases, minority language education took place in parallel with the official education system, as will be discussed in detail below. If some form of minority language education was identified in all EU member states, 17 of the 28 counties appeared to offer some form of public service in a minority language. Oftentimes, this happened at regional or local level, and only 11 countries allowed the use of minority languages in the judiciary. (For a more qualitative analysis of the use of minority languages in the judiciary see, e.g., Cardi, 2007). Moreover, the research identified another domain which appeared to have significant minority language representation: the media. The reasons behind these two areas appearing to be more sensitive to minority language use will be discussed in the discussion section.

The third and final part of the protocol was meant to provide a set of researcher-subjective appraisals of the attitude of the government of each EU member state towards minority languages. The subjectivity of the individual researcher was to be mitigated through moderation inside the research team. During the data collection phase, due to the identified data divergence, it quickly became clear that an in-depth evaluation of the government's attitude towards minority languages would be highly subjective. The one conclusion that could be drawn was that there appeared to be a high level of correlation between the government approach as identified by the project researchers and the list of signatories and non-signatories of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages produced by the Council of Europe. Virtually all signatories appeared to allow the use of minority languages in the judiciary, public services or both. Only a couple of non-signatories had any provisions in this direction. This would indicate that the adoption of the Charter had a positive impact on the promotion and protection of minority languages. This conclusion is supported by O'Reilly's (2001) finding that the developments triggered by the ratification of the Charter "have been largely positive" (p. 11). Suggestions on how this particular line of research could be carried forward are made in the further research section.

6. Discussion

The diversity of approaches regarding official languages and language recognition across the 28 EU member states could be explained through different historical and cultural processes. The research team was interested in some of the potential historical reasons that have led to such a diverse approach to designating official languages. The team was not interested in passing judgement on

the appropriateness of a particular approach, but rather in understanding the reasons why a particular approach was taken and a specific policy implemented, which has led to such a diversity of approaches. During the research a number of factors became apparent. The first of these factors has to do with historical influences. As Haugen (1966) argues, the creation of the nation states has had a significant impact on the recognition of particular languages (or dialects) as the official language of the nation, and this had to do with the "the development of a vernacular, popularly called a dialect, into a language, [which] is intimately related to the development of writing and the growth of nationalism" (p. 922). Given the complex nation-building history of most EU member states, the process of establishing a national language is not particularly linear or straightforward. Just as complex to fully identify is the impact that the establishment of one or more official languages had on the development and recognition of minority languages. The tumultuous nation-building process experienced by most EU member states goes some way towards explaining the difference in approaches.

Alongside nation-building, nation-branding also appears to play a pivotal role in the development and selection of official languages. The national discourse explaining the genesis of the nation and its main values and characteristics appears often to be another important factor in determining the official language approach. How unitary the whole nation is seen and presented, how linguistic diversity is understood and taught in schools, as well as various representations of minority language communities appear to play an important role in identifying and defining official languages. The research indicated that the first two factors are strongest when it comes to the A (one language), B (more languages across whole territory) and D (different languages in different regions) categories in the first part of the research protocol.

The third and final factor that was identified during the research is a much more contemporary one. It has to do with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages understood as a human rights document. Its ratification (or not) does seem to have had an impact on the policies adopted by some countries. This appears to be a more significant factor for states that fall under the C category (one language and regional languages). The recognition of these regional and minority languages and the status they enjoy as official languages (or not) appears to be particularly influenced by this third factor.

The use of minority languages in the three areas of public engagement (education, judiciary and public services) that were initially considered proved to be a relatively good indicator of the status of minority languages in the respective EU member state. Education (alongside media) will be discussed in the following section, and therefore the focus here is on judiciary and public services. In the case of the judiciary, for the states that allowed minority language

usage, two distinct approaches were identified. One of them relied on the use of courtroom interpreters, while the second on the use of the minority language directly in court proceedings. While a number of states opted for the second approach, this appeared to be unsustainable as the case moved to higher courts. If for local and sometimes regional courts the two approaches exist, when the case moves to higher courts, sometimes outside the area where the minority language is used, the former approach (using interpreters) appears predominant.

The term *public services* was sometimes used during the research. The initial designation referred to the interaction of the citizens with the authorities in terms of tax collection, provision of services and local management. It soon became clear that given the complex mix of nationally and regionally provided services, the use of minority languages in public service contexts was hard to identify and quantify. A good indicator for this provision seemed to be the requirement that existed in some states that local state employees should be fluent in or have a good knowledge of the respective minority language. However, given the limited scope of the current study, it was not possible to establish a clear correlation between the indicator and the use of minority languages in a public service environment. This idea is discussed in detail in the further research section.

6.1. Education and media

Education and the media were by far the two areas where the use of minority languages appeared to be most extensive. Virtually all EU member states have some provisions for education in minority languages. Although this provision appears to exist across the board, it varies significantly across five different dimensions which were identified during the research. The first dimension has to do with state versus private education. While in some states minority language education is provided by the state, in others the state merely approves the creation of private minority language educational units. This state-private education dichotomy appears to be strongly linked to a free versus fee paying differentiation. Given that EU member states have such different historical approaches to private education (James, 1991), it is hard to draw any conclusions as to the impact of the different approaches. However, the diversity of approaches along this first dimension appears significant.

The second dimension that was identified during the education-relation analysis was official versus unofficial educational systems. Official education system in this context is to be understood as state recognized and sanctioned. The term *official education system* is preferred as any reference to a state would raise questions over, for example, recognition by the national or regional authorities. The use to the term here is similar to that employed by Izumi and

Baker (2010). While in some EU member states education in minority languages is official and parallel to majority language education, the level of the two being measured through standardised national tests in different languages for example, in others minority language education exists only as an unofficial system. This unofficial system takes many different shapes and forms, some more integrated with and others more removed from the majority language education system. The lack of standardisation of the various forms of minority language education appears to be significant.

The third dimension has to do with the level at which minority language education is made available. The level that appeared most frequently during the research is primary education. The minority language primary education then seems to feed into the majority language education system at secondary and tertiary level. Again, significant variation exists as to the level of official testing and evaluation of the minority language provision. The impact of this fragmented linguistic education on the learner falls outside the scope of the current article. Another interesting, although limited, trend in this dimension has to do with the provision of university education in minority languages. This appears to be mostly based on the initiative of universities located in areas with large minority language speaking populations. The support these initiatives received from national authorities has not been investigated for the current study.

The fourth dimension has to do with on-demand versus "as-standard" approaches. Some EU member states have defined in legislation an on-demand approach for the provision of education in minority languages. Where this type of education does not materialize, it remains unclear if this is due to lack of demand or other reasons. In the states where certain criteria, mostly related to the number or percentage of speakers of minority languages, trigger an automatic provision of education in minority languages, this appears to be more established. Without passing judgement on the level of flexibility that needs to be built into such a system and the sustainability of on-demand systems, the study simply highlights the diversity of approaches.

The fifth and final dimension that was identified in the minority language education provision has to do with the status of the minority language. While in some cases all or some of the regular classroom subjects are being taught in the minority language, there are also instances where the minority language is taught as a second language. The phrase *second language* here does not refer to the pedagogical approach employed by teachers in the classroom, but it simply refers to its classification in the education system curricula. Without discussing the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach for the state or the minority language speaking community, the present study identified this as a distinctive approach that was implemented by a number of EU member states.

Besides the three different areas initially identified in the research protocol, a fourth area titled "other" was included in order to allow the researchers to name other social interaction contexts in which minority languages were used. These instances varied significantly with a number of minority languages being associated with specific religious or cultural events and rites, for example. However, there was a particular area that stood out as having significant minority language representation across the majority of EU member states: the media. Media here are understood mostly, but not exclusively, as traditional media, newspapers and radio stations in particular, but also television channels in several cases. Of course, the research identified several examples of new media outlets that were using minority languages: websites, blogs, online newsletters, and the like. However, given the difficulty in establishing where exactly the producer of the new media is located, it was difficult to identify if they indeed represented a minority language community.

Focusing exclusively on traditional media helped the research team get a much better picture of the rather dynamic landscape of minority language media. The frequency with which they appear or broadcast will depend on the interest of the community in keeping the minority language alive and on the resources, human and financial, they can employ for this task. Indexing the number of titles for particular minority languages was outside the scope of the current study. Besides, the number of titles would then have to be correlated with issue frequency or circulation of the specific paper in order to provide a realistic picture. What quickly became obvious during the research is that media, alongside education, is the area where minority languages appear to be most used in the 28 EU member states.

When looking at the three established categories: education, judiciary, public services, and adding the fourth one, media, the research team tried to understand why with the first and last the use of minority languages seemed to be more widespread. Through the analysis three different factors were identified. The first has to do with the legal restrictions and state involvement. In most EU member states the production of media as well as the establishment of private education is regulated but allowed. Unlike in the case of, say, judicial systems, where the establishment of parallel, even linguistically parallel, systems is not encouraged, in the case of media and education the judicial framework appears to be more permissive in many cases. In the case of legislative and public services, state involvement is definitely extensive in all the 28 EU member states. Media appears to have the looser regulatory framework, while in the case of education the approaches vary significantly from state to state.

The second factor, which is in a sense the flip-side of the above, has to do with citizen initiative. In the area of media and education, citizen initiative, either organized through NGOs and associations, or less organized, plays a major role. Based on their initiatives, the communities can establish and run their own

media outlets as well as education establishments. The official role of these establishments as well as the curricula and type of subjects they can teach is being regulated differently in different EU member states; however, their establishment relies very much upon community initiative. The same cannot be argued for the judiciary system or other public services, which are very much dependent on state input.

The final factor that appears to be driving the use of minority languages in these two areas has to do with costs. Due to the latest technological developments, it has become relatively inexpensive to set up a local newspaper or even radio station, or to provide educational services in a minority language. The costs still exist, but they are not exorbitant, making this type of activities accessible to minority language communities.

6.2. EU minority languages and language education

Although 7.9% of the EU population or 40 million people (EU Multilingualism, 2016) speak minority languages, there seems to be little coordinated policy on the role these languages can have in society. These decisions appear to have been left completely with the member states, and the member states have very different, even diverging, approaches to this topic. As discussed above, the reasons for these different approaches are multiple.

Through its New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism as well as though specific projects such as Euromosaic, the European Union has helped with identifying the minority language communities across the EU member states. This recognition appears to have helped several of these communities to raise their profile and enhance their activities. The strategy of the Council of Europe and of the one of the EU, which acknowledges the efforts of the Council of Europe in this area (European Commission, 2005), could benefit from further coordination particularly since the ratification process seems to have slowed down; the last country to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages did so in 2010. Further coordination between the two organizations, given that their interests, even if not necessarily their membership, overlap significantly, could enhance the status of minority languages. As demonstrated by this research, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages appears to have had an impact.

Given the divergent approaches of the member states to this issue, as demonstrated above, a focussed approach in one particular area could prove most effective. Based on the analysis carried out for this study, that area could be education. There appears to be an interest on the part of the communities to have minority language education available, and several EU member states already provide it in one form or another. A more coordinated approach from the EU could encourage its member states to standardise their provisions. Given

the diversity of the educational systems that exist in the EU member states any policy interference is bound to encounter challenges. However, the Bologna process and the creation of the European Higher Education Area (European Union, 1999) offer a blueprint in this direction which could be adapted to different levels and could address the issue of minority language education directly.

This policy area would also benefit from an EU clarification on whether minority languages are included in the New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism. The author believes that if the answer is yes, minority language education will benefit from a boost in recognition and allocation of resources, both human and financial. A move in this direction would also help educational establishments across the EU to comply with the "native plus two" approach a lot faster. The existence of educational establishments teaching minority languages or teaching in minority languages demonstrates the interest of the population. The fact that educational establishments using minority languages have been set up and are currently running demonstrates that the human resource is available. What appears to be lacking is a unified policy approach that would link the available resources to the required demand.

Of course, such an approach might create tensions with some of the nation-building and nation-branding approaches employed by the EU member states. However, most EU citizens are accustomed or are becoming accustomed to having multiple identities. The people belonging to minority language speaking communities already have these different identities. A coherent second and third language education policy would only allow them to develop their linguistic abilities and to put these multiple identities to good use. This way the "native plus two" policy could offer EU citizens linguistic knowledge and fluency to engage with their own community, their nation state and the world.

7. Further research

A horizon-scanning study like this one is bound create and to lead to several other research directions. The scope and the resources of the study were limited, and the collected data opens the door to future, much more specific directions of investigation. Two particular research suggestions are being made here. The literature seems somewhat split on the impact the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages had on the provisions in the Council of Europe member states. A longitudinal study that tracks these provisions in a particular member state before and after the ratification of the Charter could provide evidence of its impact. This would further indicate whether the proposed coordinated approach regarding education, detailed in the section above, could be successful or whether other mechanisms are needed.

A second direction of research is a much more in-depth study into the current situation of minority languages in a particular public service area across several EU member states. The current research has identified a series of dimensions of education, judiciary, public services and media which vary from country to country. These dimensions were developed based on an inductive approach starting with the collected data. A deductive approach using these dimensions would now help categorize more accurately the approach of the different EU member states in regards to minority languages in, say, education, and would therefore better inform any future policy proposals.

8. Conclusion

Despite the fact that a sizable portion of the EU population speaks a minority language, there seems to be little in terms of legislative coordination between the member states towards these languages. Historical and national narrative appears to influence and shape the very diverse approaches towards minority languages taken by the EU member states. The work undertaken by the Council of Europe in providing a common legal framework through the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages seems to have produced some results in this direction, although 11 of the EU member states (and other non-EU members of the Council of Europe) are still to ratify the Charter. After 25 years since it was put forward, the Charter seems to be "running out of steam." The New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism proposed by the EU, although launched ten years ago, appears to have head limited impact when it comes to minority languages and education in minority languages, in particular. Further cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU could enhance the coherence of the national approaches to minority languages.

Education, as a public area with high use of minority languages, stands out as an important area where the EU can make a difference by providing support to grassroots initiatives and facilitating the creation of a more unified legislative framework towards minority languages. If the EU is serious about its New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism and its native language plus two principle, then minority languages offer an opportunity to engage constructively with European cultural and linguistic diversity, ensuring a coherent legislative framework across the 28 EU member states. This in turn would enhance community cohesion and at the same time ensure that, through education, the EU citizens are prepared for the challenges and opportunities brought by globalization.

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APPENDIX

Research protocol

Country	Author			References
Official languages	A. One language B. More languages across whole territory C. One language and regional languages D. Different languages in different regions			
Spoken languages	Language 1	No of speakers	Usage/status in a. Education b. Judiciary c. Public services d. Other (explain)	
	Language 2	No of speakers	Usage/status in a. Education b. Judiciary c. Public services d. Other (explain)	
	Language 3			
Government attitude towards minority languages	Delete all that does not apply: a. Support/promote b. Protect c. Ignore			