

# **Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe (MIME)**

A preview of research  
results

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

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# The MIME project and its goals

## A research project with a very broad scope

- In response to a call for proposals from DGRI, the MIME addresses the *multilingual challenge* that Europeans as individual citizens, and Europe as a political project and institutions, are facing.
- Languages and multilingualism are everywhere; they pervade practically every aspect of human experience
- Addressing such questions gives rise to an unusually broad project with 25 teams from 16 European countries.
- The core goal is to

*formulate a consistent set of policy proposals offering well-targeted solutions to the multilingual challenge*



# A gallery of language challenges

In practice, this means addressing a wide array of very different questions, *such as*:

- the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages
- the management of the presence and visibility, in a member state, of the official languages of other member states
- the challenges of effective (and cost-effective) second / foreign language learning in the education systems and around them
- the management of additional languages associated with migration flows of third-country nationals
- the problem of efficient and fair communication in multilingual organisations (not least in EU institutions)
- etc.



# The MIME structure

This is why the MIME project is organized in six research work packages as follows:

- WP1 – Politics: Language, Society, and Power (3 teams)
- WP2 – Society: Mobility, Identity, and Social Cohesion (3 teams)
- WP3 – Education: Language Teaching and Learning (3 teams)
- WP4 – Mediation: Beyond Communication in a Multilingual World (4 teams)
- WP5 – Policy: Evaluation, Selection and Design (5 teams)
- WP6 – Frontiers of Multilingualism (5 teams)

In addition, the project includes two work packages accompanying those dedicated to research and respectively devoted to:

- WP7 – Dissemination
- WP8 – Management



# The MIME approach

In order to deal with these questions and manage the considerable range of questions at hand, MIME has adopted four principles:

1. genuine interdisciplinarity: the project combines 10 different disciplines across the social sciences and humanities
2. micro-meso-macro integration: we recognize that what happens at the level of the individual person, at the level of organisations (businesses, associations, universities, etc.) and at the level of society as a whole is *interrelated*
3. anchoring in policy analysis (PA): PA provides an integrative framework (see leaflet) and guides our work, which is aimed at identifying and proposing orientation for the selection and design of language policies
4. structured linkage with users ( “stakeholders”): we maintain regular contact with professionals of linguistic diversity through a *Forum* convened yearly



# Suggesting policy orientations: specific challenges

These issues are *complex*. Handling them requires combining the inputs of many disciplines (*interdisciplinarity*); organising this interdisciplinarity constitutes a challenge in its own right

Three additional challenges arise:

- uniqueness (idiosyncrasy)
- change
- effective communication to users



# The challenge of uniqueness

- The project rests on a general, *integrative framework*, which is indispensable to arrive at a systemic vision of multilingualism and how to manage it
- At the same time, *each situation is unique* (whether for RML protection, linguistic integration of adult migrants, etc.)
- This means that our use of the integrative framework must remain *highly flexible*



# The challenge of change

- The world is undergoing rapid transformations (technological development, globalization, etc.) with direct impacts on
  - the objective extent of linguistic diversity
  - our subjective experience of being confronted with linguistic diversity and of having to deal with it
- This means that in addition to ensuring the flexibility of our approach, we must also maintain a dose of empiricism, constantly confronting the approach to new realities and focusing less on *answers* than on *tools for addressing and answering questions*





# The challenge of effective communication to users

- MIME has developed a novel, policy analysis-based approach to the management of multilingualism
- This approach proposes:
  - a set of concepts and tools
  - illustrations of these concepts and tools with empirical analyses that identify instances of *successful practice*
- However, we also need to make sure that these results are communicated effectively, in a user-friendly way
- This is one the chief reasons for today's event



# The MIME *Vademecum*

- The MIME project has started generating a wide range of scientific products (articles, chapters of books) and events (seminars, panels, conferences)
- A scientific volume is planned for an academic readership
- **One very special product is also planned – the MIME *Vademecum***
- The *Vademecum* is organised as a set of about 60 questions and answers spanning the entire project



# Goals and use of the MIME Vademecum

- These questions and their treatment are intended to be directly practical...
- ... not in the sense of offering ready-made answers to *specific* situations (they are too varied and too unique for that)
- ... but in the sense of offering concepts, tools and illustrations based on observed successful practice
- ... that is, a toolbox that users can appropriate and tailor to their specific needs



# A preview of selected *Vademecum* entries

- In what follows, we'll hear about the preliminary treatment of five future *Vademecum* entries
- They have been selected from:
  - WP1 ("politics"); entry presented by Prof. László Marácz (Universiteit van Amsterdam), First deputy coordinator of the MIME project and manager of WP1
  - WP2 ("society"); entry presented by Prof. Peter Kraus (Universität Augsburg), manager of WP2 and "interdisciplinarity officer" of the project
  - WP3 ("education"); entry presented by Prof. Célio Conceição (Universidade do Algarve), manager of WP3
  - WP4 ("mediation"); entry presented by Prof. Nike Pokorn (Univerza v Ljubljani), Second deputy coordinator of the MIME project
  - WP6 ("frontiers"); entry presented by Dr. Guillaume Fürst (Observatoire de la Finance, Geneva)



# Discussion

- Following these presentations of 12-14 minutes each, we have planned a general discussion, which will be chaired by Prof. Wolfgang Mackiewicz (Freie Universität Berlin), special advisor of the MIME project
- This discussion will be an opportunity to exchange ideas, provide feedback and make suggestions, with a particular emphasis for fine-tuning the presentation of research results in order to make them as user-friendly as possible, in particular:
  - for decision-makers (in European institutions, in national or regional authorities and administrations, in specialist agencies)
  - for people who, owing to their political and/or professional activities, need to compare alternative language policy options and set priorities in this respect





Thank you for your attention  
Thank you for your feedback  
and suggestions !



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