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Bachelor thesis

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION - ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES

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SUMMARY

European languages co-exist in harmony, which can be seen as a powerful example of unity through diversity, the cornerstone of the European project. The EU is no stranger to linguistic diversity with its 24 official languages, and a few of them are spoken worldwide like English, Spanish, and French. In the thesis, we will not only discuss linguistic diversity but also its advantages and disadvantages.

Keywords: language, linguistic diversity, EU, advantages, disadvantages.

POVZETEK

Evropski jeziki soobstajajo v harmoniji, kar je mogoče videti kot močan primer enotnosti s pomočjo raznolikosti, temelj evropskega projekta. S 24 uradnimi jeziki EU ni izjema nekaterim svetovnim jezikom, kot so angleščina, španščina in francoščina. K njim pa sodi jezikovna raznolikost. V svoji nalogi ne bomo govorili le o jezikovni raznolikosti, temveč tudi o njenih prednostih in slabostih ter kako se vidi v današnji EU s primeri s političnega vidika in vidika mladih glede na jezikovno raznolikost.

Ključne besede: jezik, jezikovna raznolikost, EU, prednosti, slabosti.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CEEPUS	Central European Exchange Program for University Studies
EEC	European Economic Community
ELRC	European Language Resource Coordination
EU	European Union
EVS	European Voluntary Service
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America

1   INTRODUCTION

In the thesis, linguistic diversity within the EU is highlighted, with enphasis on its pros and cons for citizens and enterprises operating in the area.

Linguistic diversity since its first acknowledgement until today is taken under consideration. Not to mention its advantages and disadvantages.

At the end the results of my questionnaire about linguistic diversity are analysed, its advantages and its disadvantages.

1.1   Definition of the problem and theoretical starting points

The language is one of the fundamental human qualities; the means for communication and interaction. It is a feature that separates a man from other creatures. Linguistic diversity is an inherently enabling condition to its speakers and humankind – a resource to be protected and promoted – as each language is the repository of immense knowledge built over centuries of development and use. Linguistic diversity is unevenly distributed across populations and regions. Sometimes it is a specific measure of the density of a language, or concentration of unique languages together. This diversity covers varied types of traits including language family, grammar, and vocabulary. The unique power of language, expressing our own thoughts and feelings, is common to all humanity and has played a key role in the development of the human race over millions of years. Through language, we can exchange our knowledge, opinions, desires, fears, requests, thanks, and promises – only imagination sets boundaries for us, but it also expresses our identity. Communication through language is a verbal way of communication. Almost all living beings can share information with each other, but none of them has such a complex system of communication comparable to a language. They are rooted in vast amounts of knowledge about the world, the past and the experiences of people. If it comes to language extinction, all this knowledge is lost (Prys Jones 2013, 4). Learning and use of language are fundamental conditions for cohabitation and coexistence in a common European space, especially in those environments, as Čok (2009) believes, where languages and cultures have existed for centuries. "L Europe sera multilingue ou elle ne sera pas," wrote the French linguist Claude Hagege a few years ago and with that he expressed his conviction of need to preserve and respect other languages in Europe today. By this he meant the integration of Europe which, as the Maastricht Treaty states, will only be possible if we succeed to preserve European linguistic diversity and encourage multilingualism. This certainly applies to at least two: to preservation of minority languages and with that the linguistic diversity of the continent and the teaching of foreign languages in schools (Lipavic Oštir 2011).

The lack of foreign language skills in companies, especially the lack of communication in the customer's language, not only reduces the opportunity to sell, but it is increasingly becoming a

necessity. Customers abroad turn to other suppliers due to communication barriers. Due to lack of language knowledge, small and medium-sized enterprises can remain lacking in their expected business. Although English seems to be a global language in the business world and will remain so, other languages are crucial to distinguishing between average and excellence – because as such they will bring the company a competitive advantage. Due to increased intra-European mobility, migration and economic globalisation, interactions between speakers of different languages have increased. This trend will certainly continue in the future and, therefore, multilingualism can be a way of adapting to this process of globalisation, which becomes an opportunity rather than a challenge (Mrljak 2011, 6).

Linguistic diversity has great social importance in the world. It is the foundation of European identity and the European Union. "If the origin of most European nations is based on their identity languages, can European Union can base on its linguistic diversity." (Maalouf et al. 2008, 5) "For every human society, linguistic, cultural, ethnic or religious diversity, means strengths but at the same time also weaknesses, a source of wealth, but also a source of tension ." (Maalouf et al. 2008, 3) The system is blamed for not being cost-efficient, time-consuming and logistically inefficient (Gazzola 2006, 393), while for some linguistic diversity is a barrier to economic progress, political integration and true democracy (Ammon 2006, 322).

Linguistic diversity and language learning have been strongly promoted in the last decade as part of multilingualism in Europe. Plus, regional and minority languages were also encouraged (Prys Jones 2013, 6).

Changing the vitality of language has a beneficial impact on individuals and society (Gorter et al. 2020, 2). Our society is very diverse. Differences between people may include, e.g. where the person was born and raised, his or her family and cultural group, the actual difference in personal identity and the selected difference in important beliefs. Cultural diversity involves shared beliefs and behaviours. Biological diversity includes race, age and gender. Linguistic diversity includes mother tongue and language learning.

However, some diversity can be defined in a personal sense (sexual orientation, religion). Diversity generally includes things that can significantly affect the perceptions to others around us (Treven and Mulej 2005, 321). As stated by Banjica (2016, 69), this is reflected in a multicultural social community and enables all individuals to develop bilingualism and multilingualism, in families with mixed marriages and in social environments with formal education systems. Although each person is unique, we can also say that each individual is a member of a certain identity group. Some identities are chosen by the individual himself, such as membership in a professional association or religious belonging, but there are also identities that are assigned to us by society according to an individual's external characteristics, such as gender, race, physical abilities, and speech abilities (Dreachslin 2007, 81).

In the European Union and elsewhere over the world, societies are under constant pressure to

confront multilingualism or multiculturalism. Gorter et al. (2020, 5–6) defines multilingualism in different ways, but basically referring to more than two languages. These developments have their roots in global, local, social and economic processes (Nikula et al. 2020, 41). The occurrence of multilingualism strengthens its importance in the global society in which people live today. It brings both pros and cons. The benefits it brings are too numerous and important to let go. Multilingualism not only works for the development of an individual, but also to ensure that society continues to grow, bloom and remain united. Weaknesses are much less important and can be limited through social, national and global efforts. Advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Multilingualism is very important and needed in a global society in the 21st century (Sun and Sallahuddin 2016, 11).

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

In this thesis, the hypotheses are not tested. They are explored within the situation in the European Union.

The purpose of this diploma thesis is to study the domestic and foreign literature on the linguistic diversity of the European Union and its advantages and disadvantages. The emphasis lies on finding out how the respondents are currently familiar with linguistic diversity in the European Union.

The research objectives are as follows:
−   Review and study the literature on linguistic diversity.
−   To present European languages, the history of linguistic diversity, and multilingualism.
−   Make recommendations for language practice.
−   Explore the consequences of linguistic diversity for people and companies within the EU.
−   To compose a survey questionnaire and conduct a survey.
−   Analyse and interpret the data obtained.
−   Make a decision and recommendations.

1.3 Methods for achieving the objectives

The thesis is composed of both theoretical and empirical work.

In the theoretical part, domestic and foreign literature are studied as well as online resources using a descriptive method.

In the empirical part, primary sources and use the quantitative method of working are used - a survey questionnaire being used as an instrument. 72 randomly selected individuals (students, employees) have been used. The survey questionnaire is available as   an online format, which have been sent to various e-mail addresses of students and employees. The questionnaire

contains 11 closed and open-ended questions. The resulting data have been revied, edited and statistically processed in the word computer program. Quantitative methodology is used for the survey.

Instead of hypothesizing, the research is a snapshot of the situation in the EU. The limitations of the survey are: problems with the acquisition of respondents, submission of the survey, an incorrectly set sample and method of sampling, inaccessibility of data due to the law on the protection of personal data, and an unproductive field search.

The task is limited to the European Union. Further on it is limited to students and employees. Limitations are also expected in literature, since there is not much literature or literature on the subject of linguistic diversity. The texts of the authors are repeated.

To facilitate the research task, the following solutions have been made: division of the research into smaller research, identification of research areas, adjustment of the research of schedules, retrying of contact with politicians, student services, faculties, and improving field researching.

2   LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN THE EU

The European Union is based on linguistic diversity, diversity of cultures, traditions, and beliefs. It is committed to European integration but, in this context, it promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and language teaching and learning. This strengthens solidarity and mutual understanding of European populations from different countries and regions. The European Union also takes special care to protect and promote the use of regional languages, minority languages, and to signpost languages as an important part of European linguistic diversity. The main decision-makers in the field of language policy are the national governments of the Member States, including in the languages covered by the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages of the Council of Europe. This means that the main language of political action is still left to every Member State.

The European Union encourages its citizens to learn other European languages, not just official languages, but also regional and minority. The EU's linguistic policy aims to achieve having every EU citizen speaking at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue.

The Member States are developing their educational policies and the European Union provides regular monitoring of progress in language teaching and learning. The EU feedback helps the governments of the Member States to adopt measures to improve the results of language learning. For a concerted action and a common strategy in education, the EU has developed its strategic framework for education and Training 2020.

According to the fundamental principles of the European Union's language policy, each citizen should be able to participate in its operation and should be informed of what institutions are working on its behalf. For this reason, all texts of EU legal acts must be accessible in all official languages. The right of each person to speak in their own language is the cornerstone of the democratic legitimacy of the European Union. Interpreters in the EU institutions allow multilingual communication between speakers, while the principle of multilingualism in the European Parliament allows EU citizens to monitor the democratic decision-making process (Jezikovna Slovenija 2015–2021).

The official languages of the Member States have reached the status of Officiality. These languages are equal in all respects in addition to the official languages, the European Union's working languages, which means that they are used at the plenary sessions of the European Parliament; to print in all these languages the Official Journal of the community and that every citizen of the EU Member States can use any of these languages in their relations with all the Community institutions and also has the right to reply in the same language. This principle has been established since the start of the European Economic Community almost 30 years ago when the languages were four and the members were six. French, German, Italian, and Dutch have become the first official and working languages of the Community (Brezigar 2003, 6–17).

Every year on European Languages Day, 26 September, the Commission – together with the Council of Europe, the European Centre for Modern Languages and the linguistic institutions and citizens of Europe – draws attention to linguistic diversity and language learning. This initiative marks linguistic diversity through various events.

The EU educational and cultural programs will continue to support language learning projects. Through funding programs such as Erasmus + and Creative Europe, the European Union supports language learning and linguistic diversity, for example, through mobility programs, cooperation projects and support for European Capitals of Culture. Through these programs, the learning and visibility of regional and minority languages are fostered by several successful projects. Some examples are in the Eurydice Network's report on teaching regional and minority languages in schools in Europe.

The Creative Europe program also supports literary translation to give wider access to important works of literature and maintain linguistic diversity in the EU (Evropska komisija b. 1.).

Linguistic diversity is indispensable in the European Union. Because languages are a major part of European identity and a direct expression of culture. The European Union is based on the motto «united in diversity». Therefore, the ability to communicate in multiple languages is a valuable tool for individuals as well as organisations and businesses. Languages are crucial to respecting cultural and linguistic diversity in the European Union.

Respect for linguistic diversity is a fundamental value of the European Union, and it shows respect for the individual and openness to other cultures. This is also stated in the preamble to the Treaty on the European Union, which is about taking inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanistic heritage of Europe and expressing its commitment to the principles of freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights. Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union attaches great importance to respect for human rights and non-discrimination. Article 3 states that the Union respects its rich cultural and linguistic diversity. Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union emphasises that one of the objectives of the Union's activities is also to develop a European dimension in education, in particular through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States, taking full account of cultural and linguistic diversity. This is stated in Article 165 (European Faculty of Law 2016):

Concerning linguistic diversity, in determining exclusivity concerning primary law provisions, a distinction between linguistic rights and linguistic law must be made. Both the existing and the new EU Treaties do not allow translations into the official languages of the Member States other than the official languages of the Union, but it cannot be understood from the text that they would also be considered as authentic versions and whether EU citizens could also be addressed in these additional languages. It can be assumed whether, in a possible action, the ECJ would place the right to use its mother tongue in contact with Union bodies among those procedural rights that it regards as general principles of Community law, thus incorporating the

Union's off-line languages into the language regime. Primary linguistic law is less restrictive in this respect, or the basic provisions of regional and minority languages do not explicitly exclude it (Smrkolj 2009, 5).

About 4 % of the world population speaks world languages and vice versa: 3 % of the world population speaks about 96 % of the world languages (Bernard 1996). Only 3 % of world languages come from Europe. Atlas of Endangered Languages (UNESCO) states that 128 European languages are at risk. All those considered are single languages and they have their ISO code.

There are 28 official languages along with 150 regional and minority languages like Catalan, Galician, Basque, Scottish Gaelic, and Welsh. These are not official languages however they are still important for communication. With so many languages, most of the official tasks possibly reach linguistic diversity, especially when two or more languages collide. Though French, Spanish, and English are worldwide languages and are part of the EU education system, some people prefer to use their native tongue when speaking rather than a foreign language. So, communication may be a problem, but luckily the EU raises awareness of linguistic diversity and comes with solutions to lessen problems with communication between members. It can be seen on a daily basis in international and industrial areas, educational levels, government and the everyday life of citizens. Before the EU was formed, each of the European countries had their official language. If two or more citizens or politicians from different countries met, they either used interpreters or had to learn other foreign languages. Pan-European political ideals truly emerged during the 19th century, inspired by the liberal ideas of both French and American revolutions after the fall of Napoleon's empire in 1815. In the following decades following the outcomes of the Congress of Vienna, ideals of European unity swept across Europe via the works of Wojciech Jastrzębowski, Giuseppe Mazzini or Theodore de Korwin Szymanowski. The term United States of Europe or 'French: États-Peace Unis d'Europe' was used by French novelist Victor Hugo during a speech at the International Congress in Paris, 1849. With WWI and WWII, much stronger countries such as Germany and Russia had people of conquered countries speak their language only. Italy not only had teachers in schools and universities teach their native language but also Italian. Literature, newspapers, and languages at school had to use the language of their conquerors, for other languages were forbidden and people speaking them were persecuted and even killed. In 1920 a European economic union was created. After WWII, as countries began to rebuild themselves from the horrors of war and new markets opened in Europe, languages became more acknowledged and were being taught in schools more. The creation of the European Coal and Steel Community was the first step in the federation of Europe. When France, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and West Germany signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957, the European Economic Community (EEC) was created. During the 1960s, tensions began to show when France sought to limit supranational power. On 1st July 1967, the Merger treaty created a single set of institutions for three communities, which were referred to as the European Communities. In the following years, more countries joined

European communities and, with the fall of the iron curtain in 1989, the former East Germany became part of reunified Germany. In 1986, the European flag was being used and the Single European Act was signed. The EU was formed and its expansion introduced a new level of complexity and discord. The EU was formally established when the Maastricht Treaty came into force on 1st November 1993. With its establishment, soon many other countries joined. Many languages were spoken and some like English, French, German and Italian were taught at schools. Those languages and many more like Spanish and Russian are still taught today, not to mention linguistic courses at linguistic schools and institutions.

2.1 Students' opinions on linguistic diversity

Language policy is the responsibility of all Member States and the European Union has not yet developed a common language policy. The European Union policy is based on respect for linguistic diversity in all Member States, as well as on the creation of intercultural dialogue. To achieve mutual respect, the European Union promotes the teaching and learning of foreign languages through programs aimed at vocational training (European Parliament b. 1.).

As students, we heard a lot about mobility and some students were even interested in applying for one of the mobility programs. International student exchanges are a good opportunity, though they depend on a faculty, a student's interest, and mobility programs. When talking about mobility, we often think of student exchanges, foreign students and various programs. But there is still a dilemma as to whether the students decide on one of the mobility programs or not. Linguistic diversity is still shown among students, especially those who travel to a foreign country or are part of one of the student mobility programs.

Students see advantages in learning about a new culture, making new friends, establishing future business contacts for job hunting, learning the language of the host country, gaining experiences that are important when looking for a job, and learning about the culture of the host country.

As disadvantaged students would point out: linguistic problems, translating, confusion over language choosing, making a good first impression, etc. The same disadvantages can be seen among travellers and students going on holidays.

Along with making connections, student mobility programs like Erasmus and EVS (European Voluntary Service), together with work experience in the EU, help students to learn a lot about other cultures and languages, which comes in handy when looking for work, especially when looking for a job in forever countries. Then there are the European Solidarity Corps, which is a new European Union initiative that creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. Students can register at the age of 17 and start a project aged 18. European Solidarity Corps

projects are available to people up to the age of 30. After completing a registration process, European Solidarity Corps participants could be selected and invited to join a wide range of projects, such as helping to prevent natural disasters or rebuild afterward, assisting in centres for asylum seekers, or addressing different social issues in communities. Projects supported by the European Solidarity Corps can last from two to twelve months and they will usually be located within the European Union Member States.

CEEPUS is a regional program that began operations in March 1995. The program aims to establish and promote student and professor mobility between participating countries (Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Serbia) and take advantage of academic links and opportunities to create joint study programs.

Bilateral agreements are an opportunity for Slovenian students to exchange their studies through bilateral agreements and to obtain scholarships through calls from foreign institutions. Some universities or independent institutions also participate in other mobility programs with selected countries or countries.

Summer schools are open during the holidays and last only a few weeks compared to other programs. They are intended to deepen knowledge or become familiar with a particular topic. By participating, the student acquires different knowledge and broadens the horizon in a foreign country or at home. It can also earn ECTS credits, which are taken into account at the home faculty, but a pre-arranged arrangement is required.

The mobility of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds is a new mobility program aimed at students who would otherwise not be able to afford mobility. The student applies to cover the cost of mobility for the selected program. With its introduction in 2018, in addition to funds to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students were offered the opportunity to acquire competencies and knowledge that they could not afford due to hardship.

2.2   Programs and measures to promote linguistic diversity

2.2.1   Program Erasmus

The Erasmus program, which is aimed at education and training, youth and sport, and covers the period from 2014 to 2020. Among the most important objectives of the program are also linguistic diversity and language learning. At the same time, it strives for the personal development of young people and the improvement of job opportunities, together with education to allow training and youth institutions to do so to prepare people for acting in society as well as in the job market. The program itself there are three key actions, the first offering opportunities for learning mobility students, trainees and other young people, as well as

lecturers, trainers, and other youth workers, and the second covers opportunities for organisations to participate in education and training and youth organisations. The third is to support different processes aimed at promoting education reforms, training and youth (European Union 2019).

2.2.2 The Creative Europe program

The purpose of the program is to fund language projects and promote and safeguard European linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as to strengthen the competitiveness of the creative and cultural sectors, thereby increasing the number of new job places. Among the most important sectors is audiovisual, which is targeted at most appropriations. Only contracting entities may participate in the program's cultural and creative activities, but only if they come from Member States designated by third party countries or international organisations (e.g. UNESCO, World Intellectual Property Organization). The program is managed by the European Commission. Its Directorate-General for the field education and culture and communication networks, content and technology, executive EACEA, which is responsible inter alia for the implementation of calls for proposals, the notification of beneficiaries and the conclusion of project co-financing agreements, and the Creative Europe Centre (CED), which has locations throughout the EU and is dedicated to promoting the program (European Commission 2018).

2.2.3 European Centre for Modern Languages

It helps Europeans to learn languages at the same time as this encourages innovation to help make language education more effective. Objectives are realised by focusing on language learning and teaching, encouraging exchanges and dialogue between individuals active in the field and supporting research projects. However, the programs implemented by the European Centre for Languages are four years old (European Union 2020).

2.3 The advantages and disadvantages of linguistic diversity in the EU

The table below shows the advantages and disadvantages of linguistic diversity.

Table 1: The advantages and disadvantages of linguistic diversity in the EU

Advantages	Disadvantages
– Learning about foreign languages and cultures.	– It can cause a communication gap between people from different countries.
– The diversity of the population itself.	– It can lead to social disparities between people with foreign language skills and residents who do not have.
– Rich linguistic heritage.	
– Improving the competitiveness of businesses and persons.	– It results in additional costs arising from the translation of official documents, as they can be translated into all official languages of the European Union.
– It can improve employment opportunities both at home and abroad.	
– We can better take advantage of the opportunities offered to us by the EU or the Council (field of education, acquisition of funding, etc.).	– May hinder the international participation of municipalities, businesses and other institutions.
	– It can lead to the exposure or use of larger peoples' languages, which are more valuable due to a higher number of speakers.

2.4 Linguistic diversity in everyday live

People meet daily with linguistic diversity. Whether it is a translation, business, shopping and communicating online, even on social media. Companies produce products and offer services, but each product either needs instructions for use; such as medicine, appliances of all kind, computer hardware/games, DVDs and CDs, etc., or have ingredients written on the packaging along with instructions of use if it is cosmetics, health products, certain food products, and frozen food. The instructions are mostly written in mother tongue, including worldwide languages like English, Spanish, French, German, even Croatian and other languages. Ikea and Lego also use picture instructions for their products to help their customers by putting their products like furniture and toys together.

The books, manuals, and many other materials are often translated for foreign users in the mother tongue of the country. Books and manuals are sold in many languages; from the original to many translated versions of the same publications. Translators are those who translate books, manuals and various material, even helping to translating movies and writing subtitles for the movie.

As for movies, cartoons, and other media, they are translated and/or subtitled for those who can't understand the language in which they were filmed. They are a few exceptions and translating, including voice casting, takes a lot of time, so some movies don't come to the cinema at their release date but a few weeks later, depending on the movie director's decision-making and translators' busy schedules. Of course, translating a book or a movie is not an easy

process and translators need to vary in making possible linguistic mistakes while translating. The same cannot be said for songs, for there are a lot of songs that are sung in only one language, minus the songs from movies and some Eurovision songs – mostly Slovene songs.

Advantages of linguistic diversity from everyday life would be: improvement of an individual's vocabulary; learning more of other nations and cultures; improving communication; being able to promote Slovenia's culture, historical sights, and history to tourists, foreign students and travellers from around the world, including Asia, China, Japan, even the USA; improvement of social skills in respect of other cultures; and sharing knowledge and experiences among students and young travellers.

Disadvantages would be seen as: confusion over which languages should people speak; translating unreadable translations by using apps and internet translators like Google Translate; problems of people living in bilingual areas, etc.

People face linguistic diversity daily and come up with good ways to lessen its effect, such as: watching foreign shows and episodes on TV; learning foreign languages to improve their vocabulary and communication through linguistic courses, which some cannot afford due to financial and social problems; reading foreign language material; using apps for translating; sourcing traveling brochures; learning language through online courses, etc.

Operas tend to be sung in German, Italian or French, with only few sung in English. To help the audience understand what the singers and choir are singing, most operas houses have the lyrics translated into two languages and they are shown on a screen above the stage. Unlike operas, musicals are sung in many languages, like English (*Aladdin*, *Mamma Mia*, etc.), French (*Les Miserables*), German, etc. There are a few acceptations like the touring show Disney on Ice, where songs are sung in English, but the narrative is spoken in the host country's official language, or the whole show is translated, for example, when Disney on Ice first performed in Slovenia in January 2019. The shows were performed for three days in Arena Stožice and the whole show was performed in Slovene for the guests to enjoy. We went to the show on the second day, in the evening, and we enjoyed it. A lot of families came to see the show and children were able to understand the Disney characters better.

The EU thinks of many ways to lessen linguistic diversity and raise awareness of it. One such example is Europe Day - 9th May. The European Year of Languages, 2001, was the first step to actively celebrate linguistic diversity in Europe and promote language learning. Thus, the council of Europe declared a European Day of Languages to be celebrated on the 26th of September each year. The objectives are:
- Alerting the public to the importance of language learning and diversifying the range of languages learned to increase plurilingualism and intercultural understanding;
- Promoting the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe, which must be preserved and fostered;

- Encouraging lifelong language learning in and out of school, whether for study purposes, for professional needs, for purposes of mobility or pleasure and exchanges.

On 26th of September 2011 was the 10th anniversary of the European Day of Languages (EDL), which was celebrated at the Council of Europe and throughout its 47 member states. On 26th September, the celebration is held at the following levels:

- among policy-makers (specific measures or discussions on language policy issues, for instance);
- among the general public (awareness-raising on the overall objectives of the day, including the importance of lifelong language learning, starting at any age, in educational establishments, at work, etc.);
- in the voluntary sector (specific actions by and/or for NGOs, associations, companies, etc.).

There are also many festivals held in the EU and Slovenia itself. To point out the Volunteer Festival, which we not only visited but we also had a chance to learn more about student mobility. We had a small talk with a Spanish EVS volunteer in English though we were very interested in learning Spanish since my graduation trip to Barcelona, Spain. During our travels, we experienced how it feels when you try to make a good impression on locals but cannot speak their language well or not at all. The same thing can happen to any traveler, so we always practice our language skills and have a dictionary with us just in case of emergency when we cannot remember or do not know a word.

2.5 Linguistic diversity in politics

Being part of the EU comes with political problem-solving, due to activities in the EU parliament and its many sectors. My mother's friend (Valentina Herlah, message to author, 21st May 2020) works as a translator in the EU commission in Luxemburg and here is her opinion on linguistic diversity in the EU:

"We mostly translate legislation in the Commission (80%), press releases, Internet content (all that is published on europa.eu) and correspondence with citizens. As you know, there are currently 24 official languages in the EU, and all of the legislation, which is binding on the Member States, is translated into all the official languages because every citizen has the right to read the laws in his language. Similarly, every citizen has the right to communicate with the EU institutions in his language, so that sometimes we receive different letters from citizens, which we then translate into English and then answer back in the original language, etc. Most of the content on europa.eu is also available in other official languages. For this reason, an entire army of translators and interpreters is employed in EU institutions (Commission, Parliament, Court, Council, etc.). "

"Most institutions use English and French – in mutual (official) communication, in meetings,

and informally (for example, in corridors). French is dominant in court, but English is increasingly important. Concerning the role of English, there is currently uncertainty about Brexit, and otherwise English is problematic, for example, among the authors of the texts there very few original speakers of the English language, and this is very familiar to the quality of the texts that we get for translation. However, there is no fear that English would no longer be the official language of the EU even after Brexit, because it is already so dominant and rooted in the EU that there is no longer a way back to French and/or German. Besides, English is the official language in Ireland and Malta and, as such, remains an official language in the EU as well. It is true that due to its syntax is often not the clearest, so translators often check how other languages (most often French and German) translate something that is not clear or ambiguous in English."

"Translators and interpreters are indispensable for ensuring multilingualism in the EU, because we are a bridge between nationals of Member States and EU institutions, and we allow communication in all official languages. We connect ordinary people to institutions. But I think that our role is not so important in the relations between politicians and officials at higher levels, because they can easily communicate without us. We offer a very important service for citizens, and even for relatively few amounts of money. I will try to find information about the total translation costs in institutions in the EU, but I can already say that it is approximately equal to the price of two coffees per year per capita, which I find very favorable for such an important service. Of course, all this diversity has its advantages and disadvantages. I already said about the advantages: it seems invaluable to me that an old mom from a Greek island or a car mechanic from Estonia can contact EU institutions in their language or find information on agricultural subsidies or the Erasmus program for their children in their language. However, there are also disadvantages: the legislative procedure is very time-consuming because all the documents (draft, amendments, final version, etc.) are translated into all languages, which takes time. When translating, errors may occur or certain specific nuances are lost. Although the theoretical assumption is that all legislative changes are essentially the same in all languages, in practice it has often been shown that differences in importance are sometimes significant. Recently, I was at a very interesting workshop where we analysed the translations of Article 50 of the EU Treaty (this is an article that allows the UK to leave the country and, as such, is very important because it is the basis for the whole process). We were shocked when we found out that the differences between the languages were very large. However, despite all this, multilingualism is a great value of the EU and it is necessary to preserve it because without it there is no European I can take very seriously and I try to get closer to the citizens of the EU every day."

Two years ago,we went to a conference about the EU in the House of Europe in Ljubljana. There were many interesting topics to discuss teamwork for each workgroup. Each group was given a topic to discuss among themselves. In the end, the results of the group discussion were shared with other groups and commissioner. Our group discussed about the euro and currency

matters. There were many opinions and we got to share our own point of view on our debate. Our opinion on the debate made an impression on our former commissioner, even though the conference was public and we were filming the whole conference. Not only did the commissioner agree with our view of the euro currency, but this also granted us a chance to ask the commissioner for her view on linguistic diversity. The question we asked after the conference was the following, "As Commissioner, you are meeting with representatives and individuals of different language communities who turn to you with suggestions, problems and compromises. How do you see linguistic diversity? Are there conversations in international languages or need for translator assistance? Where do you see the weaknesses of the language community and where are the benefits?" Knowing the commissioner (Violeta Bulc. 2018. Dialog with European commissioner Violeta Bulc. Conference about the EU, Ljubljana 9th May 2018.) was busy with her work, we knew it would be hard if not impossible for her to have enough time to answer my question. Luckily, this is what commissioner said:

"(Although I am not speaking on behalf of the Commissioner, I will summarise her speeches.)

In her speeches, the Commissioner frequently mentions the diversity of the European Union and its peoples, while much of the difference also comes from linguistic diversity. Although it complicates our work together, it also gives us different perspectives and makes us stronger together.

The Commissioner meets with different stakeholders at meetings, in which both parties must use a language that they can master. Thus, the Commissioner herself uses English and Slovenian, although she speaks several languages. Unless the other party uses another so interpreters are used. Such meetings are rare; 1.2 per month. It is different from written communication, where the rule is to respond in the language in which the letter was sent. This happens quite often.

Weaknesses: The logistical needs for such communication are greater and the meetings and written answers are, therefore, longer because it takes longer to prepare the answer.

Benefits: When you need to speak in multiple languages, it is easier to get into the culture and ways of thinking of your interlocutors, which ultimately makes communication easier. As a partisan of a smaller nation, I value the efforts of the entire European Union, which promotes the use of all official languages of the community in all its institutions."

Multilingualism

Comprehension of multilingualism is today, in comparison with the past, based on neuro-psycho-sociolinguistics and other sciences have changed a lot. Being multilingual does not only mean mastering two or more languages at about the same level, with the individual's goal of attaining the native speaker's language skills, but it means using multiple languages according

to the functions that they fulfill in our lives. The functions of the languages present in an individual's life vary and change. Modern research has shown that multilingualism is not a burden on individual development, but it provides us with a number of advantages over monolinguals. Economics studies show that multilingualism is indispensable since we are more successful in the business world if we are at least receptive to the language spoken by the target market. It is also essential that the knowledge of only one foreign language (English) causes the added value represented by the knowledge of foreign languages to disappear. Therefore, developing multilingualism today means acquiring different skills in multiple languages. Schools must, therefore, offer a complete multilingual repertoire in which language skills in each language are complemented. In doing so, they are, in fact, achieving one of the objectives of the EU's language policy; the 1 + 2 model (native and at least two foreign languages). Slovenia is far above the Union average in Eurobarometer surveys of foreign language communication, but there are many gaps in education that need to be improved. If it is early learning, i.e. pre-school learning and up to the age of ten, one of the most well-established paths to achieving the goals described and realizing functional multilingualism, then we can generally say that our steps towards multilingualism in the early learning period are too slow. While there are many examples of early learning found in primary schools, they have in common the fact that they are unsystematic, didactically incomplete, are not upgraded in accordance with the acquired skills and could still be enumerated (Lipavic Oštir et al. 2010, 5).

Linguistic diversity in the European Union has 24 official languages and around 60 regional and minority languages. Its equality with the official languages of the European Union is enshrined in European legal acts. The Digital Single Market Strategy states that the market can generate EUR 340 billion in additional growth, hundreds of thousands of jobs and a dynamic knowledge society. The market is also multilingual (Jakša 2020, 4):
- 90% of European consumers prefer to search the web in their own language;
- 82% of the 4,000+ online stores are monolingual;
- 42% of multilingual Internet users never buy goods and services online in a language other than their own.

Language barriers affect private and public services. The digital public sector is part of the Digital Single Market Strategy.

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) was established by Regulation (EU) No 1095/2010. 1316/2013. Digital CEF is the same as Europe-wide digital services infrastructures (also cross-border) (Jakša 2020, 5):
- e-Justice,
- e-procurement,
- eHealth,
- Europeana,
- open data portal.

The EU supports multilingualism and, according to Jakša (2020, 6):

– support for language technologies and development and innovation programs,
– support for the use of machine translation in public administrations (MT @ EC), and,
– the introduction of mature language technologies through the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

The author Jakša (2020, 7) states that the multilingual challenge for pan-European public services is as follows:

– The European Digital Single Market is multilingual.
– Trans-European public services cover the whole of the EU.
– European public administrations do not have a common communication language.
– 90% of online users in the EU favor their own language when using online services.
– Existing translation solutions are not always the best choice.

Role of Member States (Jakša 2020, 9):

– CEF.AT as a step towards creating an accessible and multilingual pan-European online public service.
– The technology on which CEF.AT is based requires language data (language resources) in all EU languages.
– Member States should take responsibility for their language and ensure that their language is properly supported under CEF.AT.
– The involvement and assistance of Member States is key to the success of CEF.AT.
– European Language Resources Coordination (ELRC) is a digital CEF funded project to accelerate this process.

The benefits of CEF.AT for Member States are (Jakša 2020, 10):

– It provides Member States' administrations with access to information in other languages (Automatic translation for the duration of the CEF program).
– It is intended for translation of documents, messages or parts of texts.
– It allows information to be shared and better understood.
– It will make pan-European public services more accessible to citizens and administrations by reducing language barriers.
– Companies in your country can participate in calls in other EU countries.
– It will make it easier for citizens to access information and exercise their rights.

Multilingualism is a fundamental principle of the European Union, enshrined in the First Council Regulation of 1958 and incorporated in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The European Commission, through its language policy, promotes multilingualism and advocates for every EU citizen to have at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue. The European Commission Representation in Slovenia and other institutions are organizing numerous events this year, which take place in different locations and are primarily aimed at

young people and teachers of foreign languages (European Parliament 2017, 2).

The main objective of the European Union's language policy is multilingualism, the preservation of linguistic diversity and the enhancement of the linguistic and cultural sensibilities of its citizens. Within the framework of the EU's language policy, we can highlight some basic principles for its functioning.

The European Union is based on linguistic diversity, diversity of cultures, customs, and beliefs. It is committed to European integration, but it also promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and the teaching and learning of languages. Thus it strengthens the solidarity and mutual understanding of the European people from different countries and regions. The European Union is also particularly concerned with protecting and promoting the use of regional, minority and sign languages as an important part of European linguistic diversity.

The main decision-makers in the field of language policy are the national governments of the Member States, including in the languages covered by the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. This means that the bulk of linguistic political activity is still left to each Member State.

The European Union encourages its citizens to learn other European languages, not only official languages but also regional and minority languages. The EU's language policy seeks to ensure that every EU citizen, in addition to his or her mother, know at least two foreign languages.

It is up to the Member States to formulate their educational policies, and the European Union provides regular monitoring of progress in language teaching and learning. Through feedback, the EU assists Member State governments in taking measures to improve language learning outcomes. To coordinate action and a common strategy in education, the EU has developed its strategic framework for education and training in 2020.

According to the fundamental principles of the European Union's language policy, every citizen must be able to participate in its work and should be informed of what the institutions are doing on his behalf. It is, therefore, important that all texts of EU legal acts are available in all official languages (European Parliament, 2017; European Commission 2018).

It aims at:
– communicating with its citizens in their languages,
– protecting Europe's rich linguistic diversity.

Promoting language learning in Europe aims at:
– communicating with its citizens in their languages.

Protecting Europe's rich linguistic diversity:
– promoting language learning in Europe.

The approach has precedent, either among multilingual states or even international organisations.

EU law and other legislative texts are published in all official languages, except Irish, for resource-related reasons. Only Regulations adopted by both the Council of EU and the European Parliament are currently translated into Irish. Meetings of both the European Council and Council of EU are interpreted into all official languages. Members of the European Parliament have the right to use any official language when speaking in Parliament. The EU is home to over 60 indigenous regional or minority languages, spoken by about 40 million people. Among them are Basque, Catalan, Frisian, Saami, Welsh, and Yiddish. The European Commission sustains an open dialogue, encouraging linguistic diversity and trying to preserve this heritage. The national government regulates the legal status of these languages and the extent to which they are supported. This includes a source of funds for initiatives to protect and promote the teaching and learning of minority Erasmus+, an EU program that involves education and training. The EU's main goal is ambitious: enabling every EU citizen to communicate in two languages other than their mother tongue.

The best way to achieve it would be for children to learn two foreign languages from an early age. In Slovenia, language courses start in kindergarten (nursery) and continue at primary school to the university. More commonly taught languages at Slovenian schools are English, German, and Hungarian, as well as Italian at the coastline region.

There are also linguistic courses at many linguistic schools and publishers like PONS linguistic courses with textbooks and CDs. Linguistic courses are expensive and few can afford paying for them. Textbooks and CDs are affordable and, thus, a good way to increase people's interest in learning languages.

Other steps are being taken to help EU countries improve their educational programs, to assure school-leavers have better language skills.

The EU supports language learning to:
– help more people *study and work abroad,*
– help people from *different cultures* understand one another,
– *trade effectively* across Europe,
– *boost the language industry* (translation and interpreting, language teaching, language technologies, etc.) .

3   RESEARCH ANALYSIS

3.1   Research methodology

The survey was conducted with the help of questionnaires surveyed. The questions helped to shed light on the views of the research participants regarding the general views on the issues described.

In the general part of the questionnaire, basic data and information and demographic information about the respondent (gender level of education) were obtained. The second part of the questionnaire consists of a set related to linguistic diversity. Respondents were empowered to choose the answer format used in the 5-point Likert scale.

3.2   Sample description and data collection

Employees and students were surveyed. The anonymity of the respondents was ensured. The survey was an electronic one, placed on the webserver www.1ka.si. We sent the survey to about 136 people, which was a purposeful sample, since contacts were obtained from friends, classmates, etc. We sent invitations to the emails of employees of different profiles covered by the survey. 72 answers were received. The sample included 72 completed survey questionnaires.

3.3   Questionnaire

The survey was conducted using a composite questionnaire (Annex 1).

In the general part of the questionnaire, basic data and information as follows were received:

The second part of the questionnaire related to the advantages and disadvantages of linguistic diversity.

Also through the second part of the questionnaire data were received that showed how individuals cope with linguistic diversity.

The data was arranged in the form of tables and the analysis of the data in the form of visual representations.

4   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Based on the analysis of the research we have come to the conclusion that we make and interpret as follows.

Interpretation and presentation of results

The results and interpretation of the individual questions in the questionnaire.
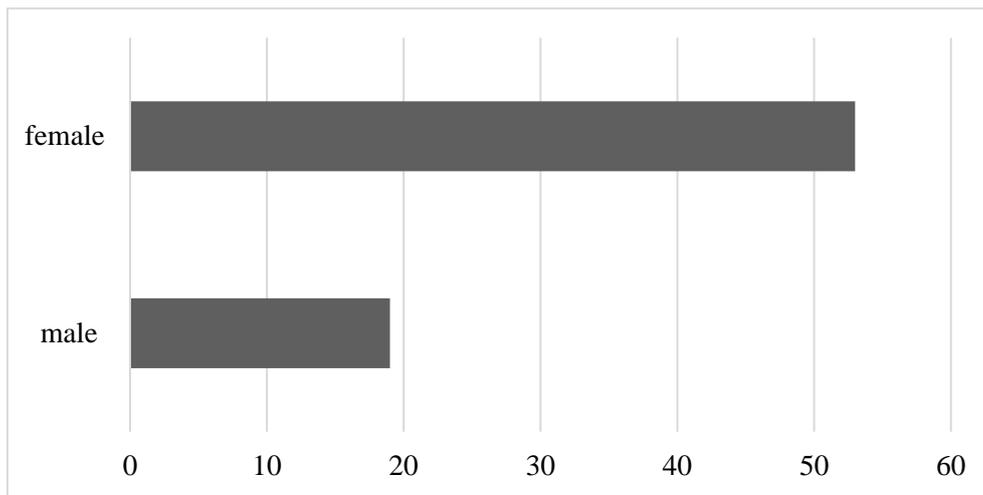
1. Gender (n = 72)

Figure 1: Gender of respondents

Figure 1 shows that a total of 72 respondents participated in the survey, with 74% (n = 53) women and 26% (n =19) men.
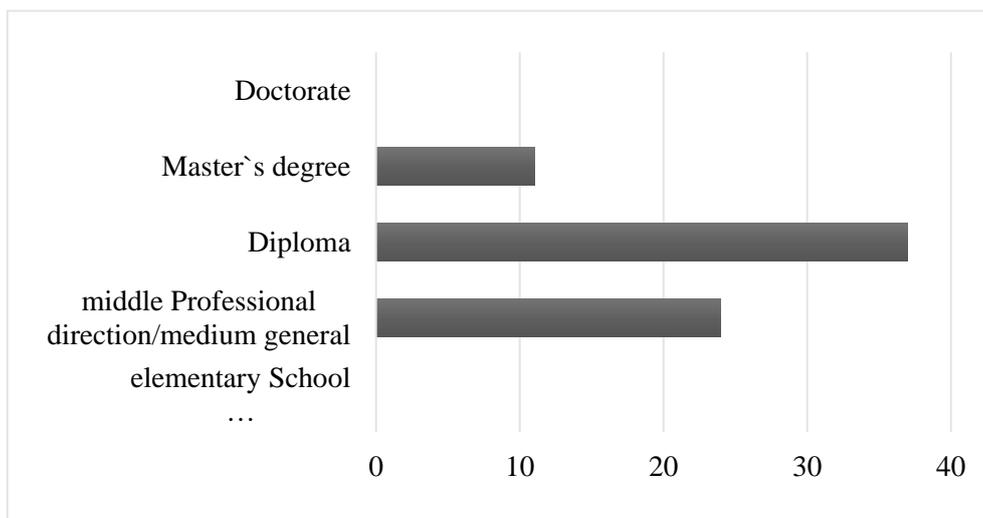
Education (n = 72)

Figure 2: Education

Figure 2 shows that a total of 72 respondents participated in the survey, with 33% (n=24) having Mid-career / medium general, 51% (n=37) having Diploma and 15% (n=11) having Master's degrees.

3. Linguistic diversity is an important topic in the context of the actions of individuals and businesses within the European Union. I wonder what the concept of linguistic diversity is for you. (n = 72)
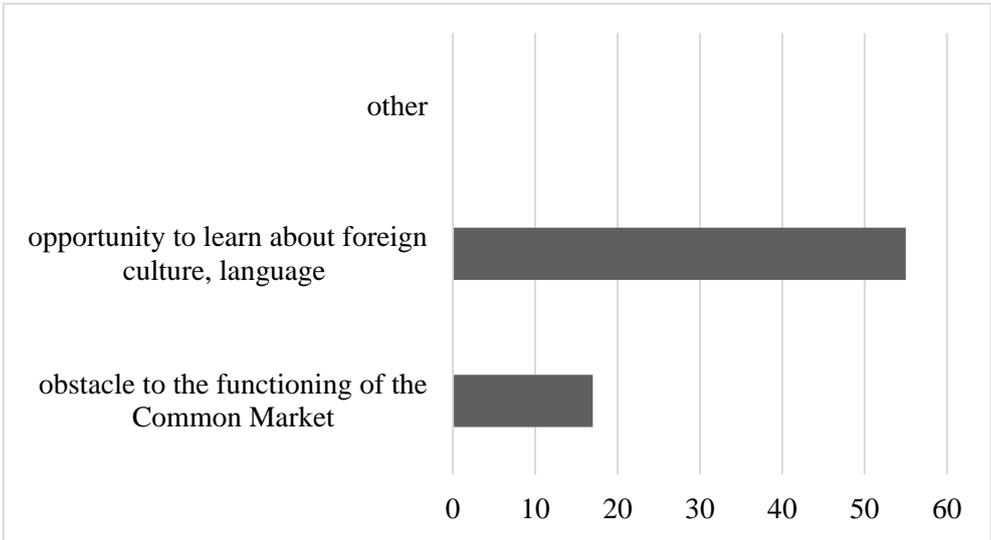

Figure 3: Concept of Linguistic diversity

Figure 3 shows how the 72 respondents who participated in the survey view the concept of linguistic diversity, with 24% (n=17) viewing it as an obstacle to the functioning of the common market and 76% (n=55) seeing it as the opportunity to learn about foreign culture and language.

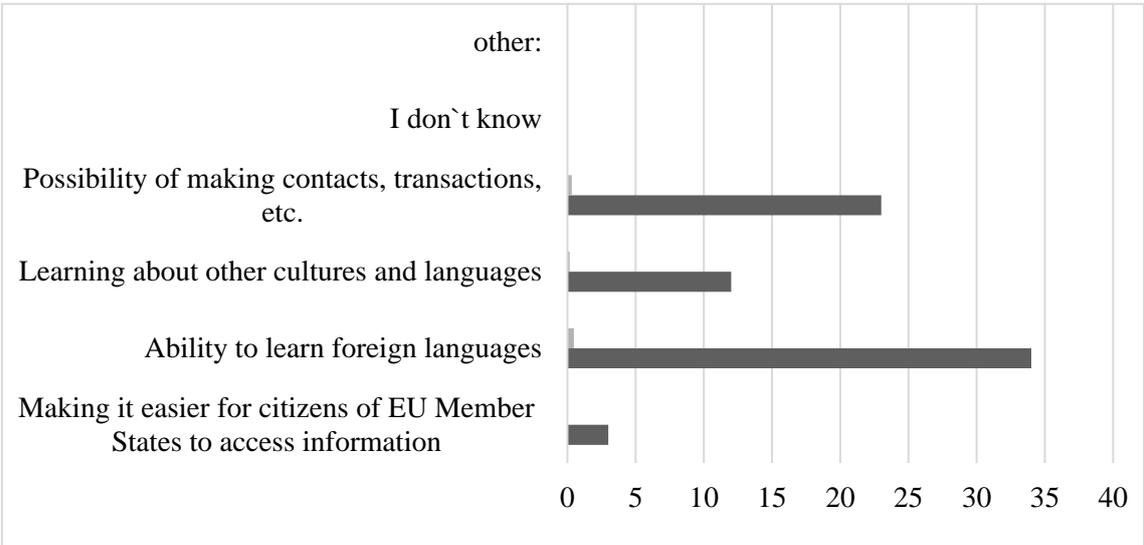4. What are the benefits of linguistic diversity? (n=72)

Figure 4: Benefits of linguistic diversity

22

Figure 4 shows the benefits of linguistic diversity, with results showing 4% (n=3) Making it easier for citizens of EU Member States to access information, 47% (n=34) Ability to learn foreign languages, 17% (n=12) Learning about other cultures and languages and 32% (n= 23) Possibility of making contacts, transactions, etc.
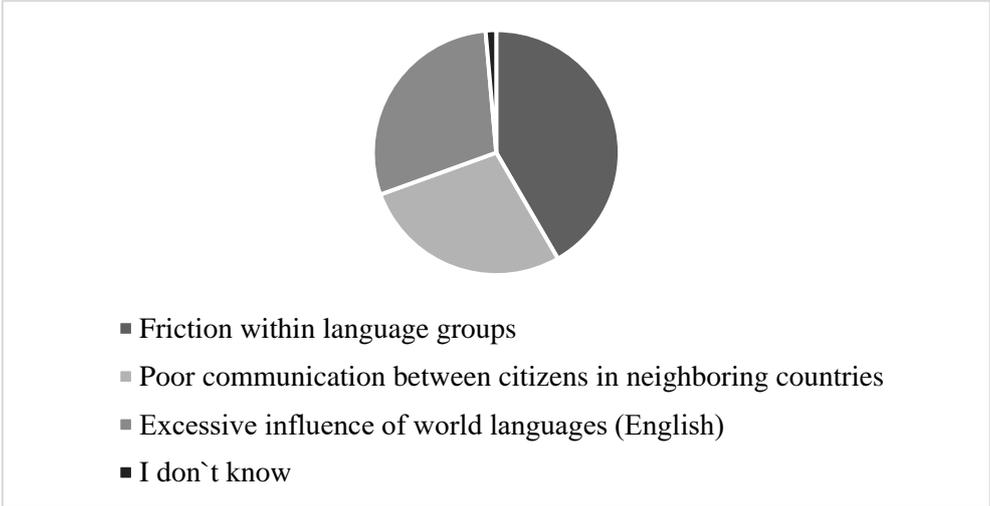
5. What are the disadvantages of linguistic diversity?

■ Friction within language groups

■ Poor communication between citizens in neighboring countries

■ Excessive influence of world languages (English)

■ I don`t know

Figure 5: Disadvantages of linguistic diversity

Figure 5 shows the disadvantages of linguistic diversity, with results showing 42% (n=30) Friction within language groups, 47% (n=34) Ability to learn foreign languages, 28% (n=20) Poor communication between citizens in neighbouring countries, 29% (n=21) Excessive influence of world languages (English) and 1% (n=1) I don't know.

6. The EU is aware of the importance of raising Europeans' awareness of linguistic diversity.

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ i don`t know

Figure 6: Awareness of linguistic diversity

Figure 6 shows how the EU is aware of raising awareness of linguistic diversity, with results showing 67% (n=48) Yes, 18% (n=13) No and 15% (n=11) I don't know. This proves the EU's awareness of linguistic diversity and that people are aware of it.

7. As one of the solutions to the problems of linguistic diversity, the EU is introducing mobility programs. What is your perspective on mobility and the promotion of foreign language learning?
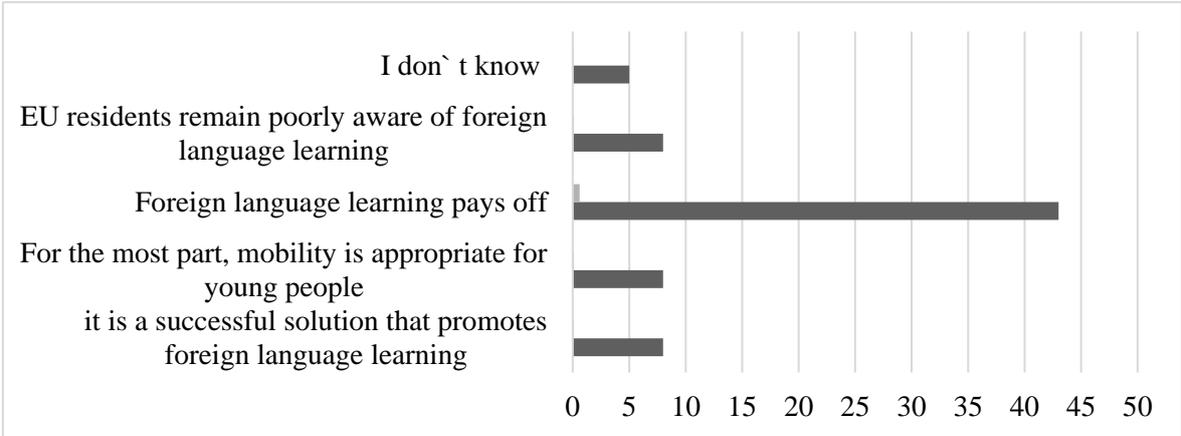

Figure 7: Mobility and the promotion of foreign language learning

Figure 7 shows how the 72 respondents who participated in the survey view mobility and the promotion of foreign language learning, with results showing 11% (n=8) It is a successful solution that promotes foreign language learning, 11% (n=8) For the most part, 60% (n=43) mobility is appropriate for young people, 11% (n=8) Foreign language learning pays off and 7% (n=5) Do you not know how to view it? Most of the participants believe that learning a foreign language is good and it pays off.

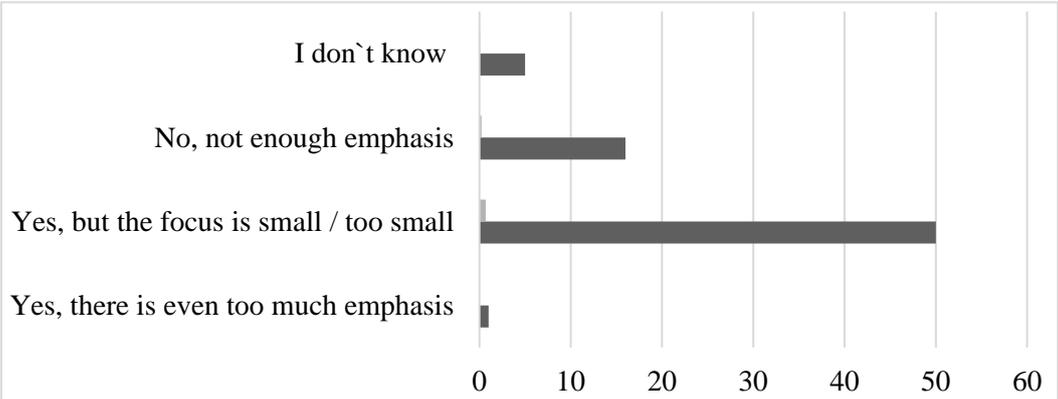8. Do we sufficiently emphasise the importance of linguistic diversity in the EU?

Figure 8: The importance of linguistic diversity

Figure 8 shows the importance of linguistic diversity, with results showing 1% (n=1) Yes, there is even too much emphasis, 69% (n=50) Yes, but the focus is small / too small, 22% (n=16) No, not enough emphasis and 7% (n=5) Do not know. It can be concluded that linguistic diversity is important, but rarely focused on.

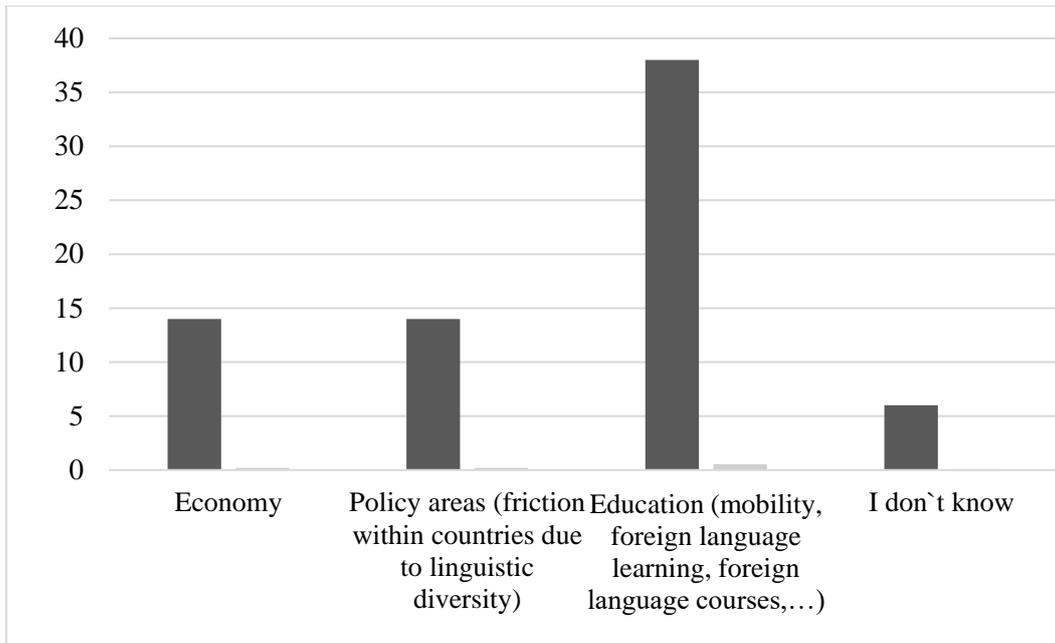9. What areas of linguistic diversity are most in need of change?

Figure 9: Areas of linguistic diversity in need of change

Figure 9 shows the areas of linguistic diversity in need of change, with results showing 19% (n=14) Economy, 19% (n=14) Policy areas (friction within countries due to linguistic diversity), 53% (n=38) Education (mobility, foreign language learning, foreign language courses…) and 8% (n=6) Don't know. The areas in linguistic diversity that need changing are education, economy, and policy areas.

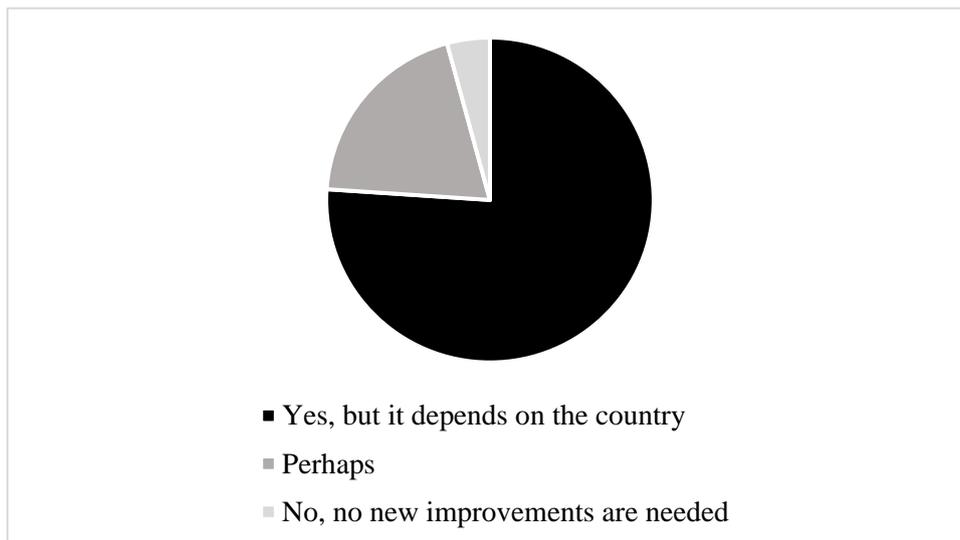10. Could the EU Member States improve the promotion of foreign language learning?

Figure 10: Improvement in the promotion of foreign language learning

Figure 10 shows improvement in the promotion of foreign language learning, with results showing 75% (n = 54), Yes, but it depends on the country, 19% (n=14) Perhaps and 4% (n=3) No, no new improvements are needed. The EU does not have a view on how its member states

are dealing with promotion of language learning. It is up to each country to deal with it in their way.

11. How could the Member States improve linguistic diversity problems?
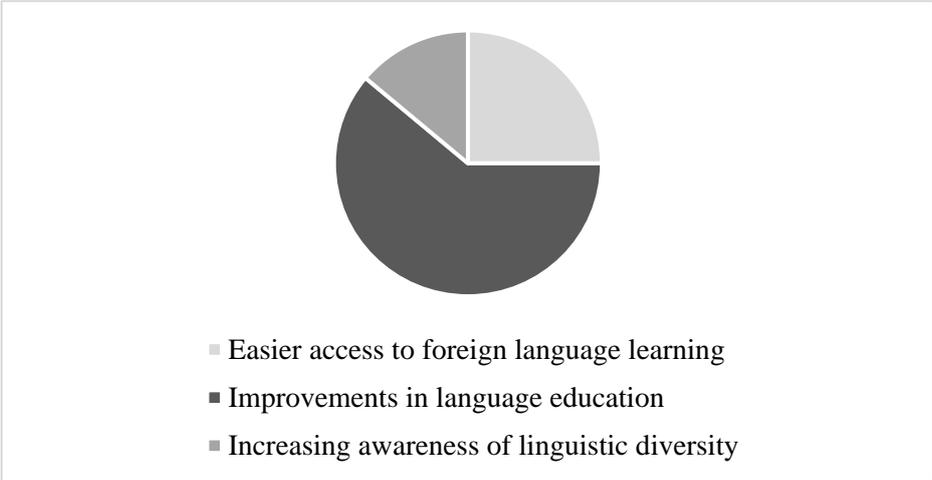

- Easier access to foreign language learning
- Improvements in language education
- Increasing awareness of linguistic diversity

Figure 11: Improvement of linguistic diversity problems

Figure 11 shows ways of improving linguistic diversity problems, with results showing 25% (n=18) Easier access to foreign language learning, 61% (n=44) Improvements in language education and 14% (n=10) Increasing awareness of linguistic diversity.

5 CONCLUSION

Let us conclude with a near-banal conclusion about linguistic diversity in the EU that the issue of linguistic diversity in the European Union is very complex and not restricted to just one question. The limited linguistic regimes of individual institutions, however, are merely paradoxical examples in which the European linguistic issue is reflected. From the small linguistic language being Slovenian, some processes seem particularly worrying, since not only political but also economic power is independent of the language. The loss of the linguistic diversity of the pan would be purely cultural but would also have implications for European transnational law. Rather than protecting linguistic diversity, the principle of equality of European languages should serve as a cornerstone of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law in the Union and, thus, the legitimacy of European integration itself, which European lawyers have so far failed to draw attention to.

When people mention linguistic diversity, they often have different concepts of it. But mostly mentioned are the following concepts: an obstacle to the functioning of the common market and the opportunity to learn about foreign culture and language. I write about advantages and disadvantages of linguistic diversity, as they are seen every day, by students and in politics. We speculate that the advantages of linguistic diversity are: learning about foreign languages and cultures, the diversity of the population itself, rich linguistic heritage, improving the competitiveness of businesses and persons, it can improve employment opportunities both at home and abroad and we can better take advantage of the opportunities offered to us by the EU or the Council (field of education, acquisition of funding, etc.).

Before it was assumed there were weaknesses, such as communication gap between people from different countries, social differences between people with foreign language skills and people who do not have them, additional costs arising from the translation of official documents, as they can be translated into all the official languages of the European Union; further on hindrance of international cooperation between municipalities, businesses and other institutions and exposure or use of larger languages of people who are more expensive due to the increased speakers. While the EU has many ideas to reduce linguistic diversity, its citizens use these ideas and their own ideas to reduce linguistic diversity and the ability to understand foreign languages. The survey has confirmed the assumptions made, as the data collected from the survey showed that the majority of respondents agreed on the advantages and disadvantages of linguistic diversity in the EU.

The study has also confirmed that the EU is aware of the importance of linguistic diversity. At the same time, the research has shown that the EU is reducing problems concerning linguistic diversity while not affecting the decisions of its members to promote foreign language learning. Change is first and foremost the need for education, followed by the economy and politics. As one solution to the problems of linguistic diversity, respondents highlighted changes in language education and easier access to foreign language learning.

In our opinion the complexity of linguistic diversity will require improvement on the part of the European Union as a whole. The changes in education, the economy and policy would alleviate the problems of linguistic diversity by the Member States and their institutions.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1   Survey

SURVEY

I'm Briana Bolcina, a student at the Faculty of Management Koper. In the Business English course, I am doing my diploma thesis Linguistic Diversity in the EU: Pros and Cons. Thank you for the answers that I will use in my thesis.

1. Sex
   a) Male
   b) Female

2. Education
   a) Primary school
   b) Mid-career / medium general
   c) Diploma
   d) Master's degree
   e) Ph.D.

3. Linguistic diversity is an important topic in the context of the actions of individuals and businesses within the European Union. I wonder what the concept of linguistic diversity is for you?
   a) Obstacle to the functioning of the common market
   b) Opportunity to learn about foreign culture, language
   c) Other: _____

4. What are the benefits of linguistic diversity?
   a) Making it easier for citizens of EU Member States to access information
   b) Ability to learn foreign languages
   c) Learning about other cultures and languages
   d) Possibility of making contacts, transactions, etc.
   e) I don't know
   f) Other: _____

5. What are the disadvantages of linguistic diversity?
   a) Friction within language groups
   b) Poor communication between citizens in neighbouring countries
   c) Excessive influence of world languages (English)
   d) I don't know
   e) Other: _____

6. The EU is aware of the importance of raising Europeans' awareness of linguistic diversity.
   a) Yes
   b) No

c) I don't know

7. As one of the solutions to the problems of linguistic diversity, the EU is introducing mobility programs. What is your perspective on mobility and the promotion of foreign language learning?
   a) It is a successful solution that promotes foreign language learning
   b) For the most part, mobility is appropriate for young people
   c) Foreign language learning pays off
   d) EU residents remain poorly aware of foreign language learning
   e) I don't know
   f) Other: _____

8. Do we sufficiently emphasise in the EU the importance of linguistic diversity?
   a) Yes, there is even too much emphasis
   b) Yes, but the focus is small / too small
   c) No, not enough emphasis
   d) I don't know

9. What areas of linguistic diversity are most in need of change?
   a) Economy
   b) Policy areas (friction within countries due to linguistic diversity)
   c) Education (mobility, foreign language learning, foreign language courses…)
   d) I don't know
   e) Other: _____

10. Could EU Member States improve the promotion of foreign language learning?
    a) Yes, but it depends on the country
    b) Perhaps
    c) No, no new improvements are needed
    d) I don't know

11. How could the Member States improve linguistic diversity problems?
    a) Easier access to foreign language learning
    b) Improvements in language education
    c) Increasing awareness of linguistic diversity
    d) Other: _____
    e) I don't know