Conclusions and Key Results

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Introduction

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 Mobility and inclusion are for everybody; it
must come along with arrangements facilitating
people’s mobility across the European Union
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fits that exceed their costs, and are conducive to
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ties that exceed their costs, and are conducive to
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disseminated more broadly and systemati-
cally.

The MIME project generates a wide range of research results providing orientations for the selection and
design of language policies in Europe. Let us begin by highlighting four major conclusions, from which
general policy orientations may be derived.

1 Multilingualism can’t be left to itself, and laiss-
er-faire isn’t an option. Language policies are
an unavoidable facet of governance; they are
necessary and justified. Language is deeply in-
tertwined with political, social, economic and
cultural processes affecting individuals and
groups. Not only do different responses to diver-
sity result in higher or lower levels of well-being
across society, but they also translate a more or
less just distribution of resources. Furthermore,
evidence suggests that policies encouraging in-
dividual multilingualism and embracing societal
multilingual yield material and symbolic bene-
cfits that exceed their costs, and are conducive to
more fairness in society. Information about the
positive effects, for society as a whole, of policies
that accommodate and support diversity, must
disseminated more broadly and systemati-
cally.

2 Mobility and inclusion are for everybody; it
follows that policies must rest on a compre-
hsensive view of mobility and inclusion. Such
a comprehensive view is necessary in order for
linguistic diversity to be experienced positively
also by citizens who are not particularly inter-
ested in it or concerned by it. Therefore, support-
ing people’s mobility across the European Union
must come along with arrangements facilitating
the inclusion of mobile persons and groups into
the local language(s) and culture(s). Inclusion
on local terms helps making others’ mobility
non-threatening; it generates the sense of safe-
ty that empowers residents to make space for
newcomers, including the diversity that these
newcomers can contribute to local society.

3 Well-designed policies combining mobility and
inclusion are often complex, but they are nec-
cessary and possible. Combining mobility and
inclusion is not easy and there is even a tension
between them, since facilitating mobility alone
risks undermining inclusion into local society,
with its specific linguistic and cultural features;
conversely, emphasising inclusion only ignores
the challenges of mobility, whose significance in-
creases together with globalisation. Thus, when
selecting measures that encourage inclusion,
priority should go to those that do not hamper
people’s capacity to move across the European
Union for work, study, leisure, or retirement.
Symmetrically, when selecting measures that
facilitate mobility, priority should go to those
that guarantee the conditions needed for the
linguistic and cultural features of each locale to
blossom, with their specific dynamics and (often
multilingual) uniqueness.

4 Social cohesion emerges from the balanced
combination of mobility and inclusion. Mobil-
ity expands the range of opportunities available
to citizens; inclusion nurtures people’s sense of
place and safeguards the specificity of different
locales in Europe. Achieving this balance, and
designing intelligent language policies for this
purpose, is arguably one of the conditions that
must be met in order to allow a regeneration of
the ideal of European integration in times of glo-
balisation and change.

Conclusions and Key Results

These four conclusions rest on the research findings which the reader can discover in the 75 entries that
follow. These findings are arranged in six thematic categories:

1 Language policy as a public policy, whose focus
is on advancing knowledge on the principles that
should guide the selection, design and evalua-
tion of language policies in order to make them
effective, cost-effective, and equitable, as they
address the “multilingual challenge of the Euro-
pean citizen” (entries 1 through 12).

2 The politics of language, where we look in par-
ticular at how existing constitutional, legal and
regulatory arrangements regarding the position
of European languages can be improved to en-
sure better cohesion through a fine-tuned bal-
ance of rights and practices between different
languages (entries 13 through 26).

3 The handling of linguistic diversity as a social
issue, which is key to defining the position of
people who speak different languages. The pro-
ject sheds light on how contemporary changes
affect people’s choices regarding language use,
how language features mesh with the formation
of group identity, and how this is reflected in the
visible features of the space in which we live (en-
tries 27 through 40).

4 The principles that should govern the steering
and language practices of education systems,
including at tertiary level, in order to address Eu-
ropes’ language needs and equip them with the
tools needed for mobility, but also ensure that
mobility isn’t disruptive and, in combina-
tion with measures reinforcing inclusion into
local societies, improves the resulting cohesion
of Europe (entries 41 through 55).

5 The optimal use of mutually complementary
strategies for communication in multilingual
settings, encompassing classic ones like trans-
lation and interpreting, but also machine trans-
lation, the use of different lingua francas, and
the development of receptive skills in languages
closely related to one’s first language (entries 56
through 65).

6 An exploration of the frontiers of multilingual-
ism through a set of pilot studies on little-explo-
red special topics. These topics include the
(geopolitical) security implications of diversity,
the linguistic requirements of consumer pro-
tection, the potential of the Roma’s historical
experience with linguistic diversity for suggest-
ing unexpected approaches to the challenges
of multilingualism, the particular language needs
of internationally mobile retirees, the connec-
tions between individual multilingualism and
creativity, and the implications of linguistic di-
versity for responding to financial crises (entries
66 through 72).