EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES

The European Day of Languages on 26 September is
a well-established opportunity to raise awareness
about language learning and linguistic diversity.

The objectives of the European Day of Languages

The general objectives of the European Day of Languages are to:

·   Alert the public to the importance of language learning, diversity and the range of
languages learned in order to increase plurilingualism and
intercultural understanding.
·   Promote the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe.
·   Encourage lifelong language learning in and out of school.

*On the occasion of the day, a range of events are organised across Europe, including
those for children, television and radio programmes, language classes and conferences.
The events are not organised by the Council of Europe or the European Union nor do
they allocate special funding for the day. Member states and potential partners are given
a free hand to organise activities.
To coordinate the activities organised at the national level, the Council of Europe asks
participating countries to nominate "National Relay Persons" for the day. The national
relay in the UK used to be the National Centre for Languages.*

*In keeping with these rules, people, young and old, are encouraged to take up a
language, or to take special pride in their existing language skills.*

Languages of Europe

There are about 225 indigenous languages in Europe – roughly 3% of the world's total. Most of the European languages are of Indo-European origin. Since the end of the 18th century, the most widespread language of Europe (both in terms of geography and the number of native speakers) has been Russian, which replaced French. Counting only native speakers, approximately 150 million Europeans speak Russian on a daily basis, followed by German (approx. 95 mil.), Turkish (approx. 80 mil.), English and French (each by 65 mil.), Italian (by 60 mil.), Spanish and Polish (40 mil. Each), Ukrainian (30 mil.) and Romanian (26 mil.). As far as foreign language studies are concerned, English is currently the most popular foreign language in Europe, followed by German, French, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

Multilingualism today

  With greater numbers of immigrants and refugees, European cities have become more multilingual. For example: in Moscow and Saint Petersburg many recent immigrants speak *Ukrainian, Romanian, Armenian, Tatar, Azeri, Tajik, Chinese or one of many other languages.* In London some 300 languages are spoken *(English, French, Chinese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Bengali, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, Berber, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi etc.).*

STATISTICS

  According to the European Union survey "Europeans and their Languages",56% of EU citizens (25 member states) speak a language other than their mother tongue, while 44% admit to not knowing any languages other than their native language. Additionally, 28% have knowledge of two foreign languages. Among EU citizens, 38% indicate that they know English, followed by 14% knowing French or German, 7% Russian, 5% Spanish and 3% Italian. The typical multilingual European is a student or someone holding a managerial position or someone born in a country where the language of his/her parents is different from the main language of the country.

ΣΤΕΛΛΑ ΒΑΤΑΛΗ 2ο ΓΕ.Λ. ΚΟΖΑΝΗΣ ΤΜΗΜΑ Α1

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