

Annual Report

Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning

2015



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on Multilingualism and Language Learning
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Introduction

In this annual report on the year 2015, the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning is looking back on its activities. From its origin in 1987, when Mercator was initiated by the European Commission, the focus of Mercator was to be found in documentation and information of Regional and Minority Languages (RML) in the European Union. Nowadays, the Mercator European Research Centre is more oriented to research with a clear focus on multilingualism and language learning specially linked to Regional and Minority Languages in Europe and beyond. Mercator has an open eye for other developments in the field of multilingualism, such as sign languages and immigrant languages. The interest in the diversity of languages in Europe is expressed first of all in Mercator's assessment of indigenous, regional and minority languages. Second, in language teaching in formal and informal settings and third, in a growing need for reliable data and comparative research. Mercator serves as a platform in Europe, it brings people together to share knowledge, exchange experiences and good practices and it connects scientists with practitioners, politicians and policy makers. All together these functions are of major importance for the Mercator European Research Centre to fulfil its mission, received by the local authorities with flair: "bring Fryslân to Europe and Europe to Fryslân".

The activities of the Mercator Research Centre have the following four components:

1. Knowledge Acquisition and Inventory: Mercator focuses on existing research on multilingualism in the Netherlands and collaborating institutes in Europe. It collects and stores findings, policies and practices in the domain of regional and minority languages and multilingual education, both on paper and digitally.
2. Knowledge Transfer and Dissemination: Mercator transfers knowledge in various ways.
3. Knowledge Use and Application: The expertise of Mercator is applied by professionals in the multilingual practice in pre-school development, in innovations in language education, in pedagogical concepts in multilingual teaching and language acquisition and in overall language policy and planning. Mercator also advises in issues of multilingual education with respect to schools, trainer-institutes and school boards and to local and regional government agencies.
4. Knowledge Creation / Scientific Research in a theoretical (theory construction and testing) and empirical (data gathering) sense. The above-mentioned expertise of Mercator results in conducting scientific research at its own institute and in collaboration with universities and other European academic research centres. This research is normally carried out with standard scientific methods and techniques such as surveys, experiments, and case studies and is used as a tool for knowledge acquisition, knowledge application and knowledge circulation as well as other related knowledge activities.

Brief history

The earmarked funding of the European Commission came to an end in 2006. In 2007 funding obtained from both the Province of Fryslân and the municipality of Ljouwert/Leeuwarden gave the Mercator Research Centre a new firm financial basis. The Mercator Research Centre also signed a research contract with the Basque Autonomous Community (November 2007) for the period till 2012 and later on for the period 2012 – 2014. The centre obtained new EU-funding for a Mercator Network project called LEARNMe (2013-2015) and in 2014 (2014-2016) for the LangOER project (more information on projects can be found below).

Thanks to this financial security the Mercator Research Centre was able to expand and realise its ambitious goals. For example by participating in various EU-funded projects and networks, as well as acquiring research projects from other sources.

General description

The Mercator Research Centre is part of the Fryske Akademy and is based in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden. The Fryske Akademy is a multidisciplinary institute whose main task is to conduct fundamental and applied scientific research in the areas of the Frisian language, its culture, its history and society. The main expertise of the Fryske Akademy concerns fields of education, language sociology, language systems in multilingual societies, and regional culture and identity in a comparative perspective. On these fields the Akademy delivers high qualitative and innovative achievements with a clear social relevance.

The Mercator Research Centre aims at the acquisition and creation, dissemination and application of knowledge on various aspects of language vitality and multilingualism in a wide context. Therefore the Mercator Research Centre:

- gathers and mobilises expertise in the field of language learning at school, at home and through cultural participation in favour of linguistic diversity of Europe;
- is an independent and recognised reference centre for policy makers and professional workers in the field of multilingual education and language learning;
- addresses the growing interest in multilingualism and the increasing need of language communities to exchange experiences and to cooperate in a European context. The starting point of research lies in the field of regional and minority languages. Yet, immigrant languages and smaller state languages are also topic of study.

The Mercator Research Centre focuses on research, policy and practice in the field of multilingualism and language learning. Its activities can be divided in research, documentation services, applying results of research, (international) events and (joint) projects. Documentation services are a continuation of services such as the library, a database of experts and organisations and the answering of incoming questions. Research projects are usually externally funded. They are a good way for the Mercator Research Centre to further improve its reputation in the field.

Current state and ambitions

Through the years the Mercator Research Centre achieved an increasing reputation as a reliable project partner in the field of multilingualism in Europe. This results in an increasing amount of special requests for expertise, conference (key) presentations and to become partner in projects, etc. The high profile of the Mercator Research Centre's activities and the good reputation it gained in Europe and beyond also has a positive side effect for the Province of Fryslân and the municipality of Ljouwert/Leeuwarden.

As research centre on multilingualism in the city of Ljouwert/Leeuwarden the Mercator Research Centre strengthens the position of the city and its universities for applied sciences as the hotspot of new knowledge in the field of Multilingualism, and technologies within the University Campus Fryslân (UCF) nowadays called 11th faculty. In particular, the Mercator Research Centre is improving the expertise of all professionals with regard to language learning and linguistic diversity.

For the Province of Fryslân and the municipality of Leeuwarden, the Mercator Research Centre is a window to Europe. In that sense it is not only acting as an ambassador for Fryslân in Europe, but also providing Frisian partners with the inspiration of best practice examples in the field of multilingualism from across Europe.

More about the ambitions of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning can be found in Appendix I.

In 2015 the Mercator Research Centre hosted or (co)organised several (inter)national conferences. The staff members have also been active participants and presented their work at numerous events across Europe and even further. Mercator also answers several research questions that the province of Fryslân, municipalities or other regions in Europe or beyond may have on the field of regional or minority languages.

Other activities of the Mercator Research Centre include its own Network of Schools and the publication of Regional Dossiers, which give detailed descriptions of the actual language situation in multilingual regions in Europe, in particular with regard to education. Moreover, the Mercator Research Centre is an active member of the Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism, created by the European Commission in the end of 2009 and which mandate has been extended in 2012 by the EC. Mercator is long-standing member of the NPLD (Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity), a Europe wide network that receives co-EU funding. Mercator and the NPLD complement each other in a constructive way. Background of the Mercator Research Centre lies in academic research and NPLD has a strong background in policy. The Mercator Research Centre maintains close and good relations with the NPLD and foresee also good and fruitful co-operation in the coming years.

Preview

The Fryske Akademy including Mercator wants to strategically further develop into a 'laboratory Fryslân' which will bring the Frisian case effectively out in the open for the regional, national and international scientific community.

Around 2010 the province of Fryslân started an initiative called the University Campus Fryslân (UCF) to endorse the academic/university, educational and research culture in Fryslân with one of the hotspots being "multilingualism". The (U)CF will consist of a research school and offers a number of master degrees, in co-operation with universities. In 2013 a number of AIO's have been appointed in the research school. Mercator is involved in this development, which also includes a university research master on multilingualism. Moreover Mercator is closely involved in the initiation of a national Centre of Expertise on Multilingualism, working closely together with the University of Groningen (RUG) to establish a scientific research agenda.

This report will not provide an exhaustive list of all activities carried out, but will highlight and describe the activities most noteworthy. In the coming paragraphs these activities will be described.

Mercator activities in 2015

Product groups

In 2015 Mercator used for the first time the so called 'product groups' to fulfill the demands for what is called the framework of "boekjiersubsydzje" (subsidy) of the province of Fryslân. The product groups also can be found in the finances chapter.

Mercator used for 2015 the following eight product groups:

1. Project co-ordination
2. Research
3. Library and information
4. Publications
5. Network of Schools
6. Communication and PR
7. Secretariat and organization of conferences
8. Project acquisition

The content-wise part of the product groups will contain some overlap because the activities are often strongly connected. Some references between the paragraphs are made. 2015 is a year of transformation, to get used and to get familiar with the new reporting structure. From a simple but detailed reporting focused on content to a structure demanded for the new subsidy format, the so called "boekjaar subsidie". Quite probably the structure of the product groups will change again in 2016, this very much depends on the report experiences over the year 2015.

1. Project co-ordination

In general the co-ordination entails all activities and responsibilities following from the work-programme of the Mercator Research Centre, including the project activities carried out within the framework of the centre. For the co-ordinator a specific emphasis lies on representation, international networking, professional contacts, explore new projects, presentations, guest lectures and supervision of the activities carried out by Mercator.

Many of these co-ordination in 2015, such as presentations, guest lectures, projects and contacts are reported in the following chapters where the activities are described in more detail and in their context. Some of the other activities included exploration of international co-operation:

- contacts with the Yamal-Nenets region, since a number of years Mercator/Fryske Akademy has an agreement for co-operation with the Yamal-Nenets region. In 2015 this has led to the writing of the first Regional Dossier from this area about the Nenets-, Hanti- and Selkup languages. This dossier will also be published in the Russian language (Both language versions will be published in 2016). The Yamal-Nenets government has agreed to pay for the translation costs. More in general it need to be said that the (scientific) contacts with Russia are a bit cooled down since the plane 'accident' in 2014. Options to co-operate in research, as the initial plans were with this autonomous region, therefor have to wait until relations are normalised again. More regional dossiers on some of the indigenous languages of Russia are expected in the future.
- A few contacts have been established with representatives from Kazakhstan and Moldova. These all took place in the context of OSCE/HCNM meetings in The Hague. In 2015 no visits or participation in delegations were scheduled. Contacts with OSCE/HCNM are positive, professional and quite regurately.
- A small delegation from China visited Mercator/Fryske Akademy. The in 2014 newly at Fryske Akademy appointed senior researcher Hans Van de Velde has many contacts in China and visited China at least twice during the year. The interest in China for multilingualism is slowly growing which might explain their interest in the regional dossier series of the Mercator centre. Contact has been made with the University of Beijing, University of Nanjing and the ABA teacher training college at Chengdu
- Although the European Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism was functioning well, and fully satisfactory for the EU, the EU commission decided to stop their support for the platform in the spring of 2015, much against the wish of the members (European networks, such as the Mercator Network). In consultation with the EU the members of the platform decided to keep the platform running with small fees of the members because the platform has proven its success and effectiveness.
- Throughout the year 2015 a number of meetings were scheduled with the Bunjevac community in Serbia. This minority lives in the area of Subotica in the north, part of their culture can also be found in Hungary. Representatives came to Fryslân (Mercator) to look for experiences, research, good practices and guidance. These contacts have led to the co-organised conference in Subotica

where language documentation, the situation of endangered languages and the (educational) practices from Fryslân were presented.

- Co-operation with SOAS (London) is functioning very well, regularly contacts resulted in another successful SOAS-Mercator Expert Seminar (June 2015, see chapter 8). New ideas for projects are always being discussed, presently working on a project proposal in the CULT-COOP programme of the EU. SOAS and Mercator complement each other in an effective way.
- Mercator often works closely with Language Academies throughout Europe. Since a number of years, a wish has been expressed by some of them to create a network of language academies. Fryske Akademy/Mercator together with Euskaltzaindia (the language academy of the Basque country) have signed an agreement for co-operation between these two institutes, the start of a new European network.
- Furthermore the co-ordinator has been active and advising at different organisations or projects, such like: sociolinguistic survey Fryslân, EBLT, etc.

2. RESEARCH

Mercator has, amongst others, carried out the following (ongoing) research projects in 2015:

- Mercator in Fryslân (Focus on Fryslân)
- Regional dossier series
- Fryske MOOC
- The Bildts language status in a European contexts
- Factsheets
- Language vitality / social media

2.1 Mercator in Fryslân (Focus on Fryslân)

In 2015, the Mercator Research Centre has continued its efforts to strengthen its position within the province of Fryslân. Mercator takes this position very seriously, as it is a crucial element of its mission to 'bring Europe to Fryslân, and Fryslân to Europe'. In 2015, the 'relation-strengthening activities took multiple forms: a series of interviews with possible cooperation partners, including Frisian partners in Mercator's activities, and visiting events organized by others. Mercator wants to deliver valorising research.

An inventarisation of possibilities for cooperation with health care providers, held in 2014, did not have promising results. For this reason, the decision was made to focus first on those institutes closest to Mercator in terms of interests and activities. These are also the organisations Mercator has cooperated with in the past, and who know Mercator well. Over the summer and autumn of 2015, interviews were held with staff members / representatives of Cedin, Afûk, NHL and Stenden. Some of the interviewees also had roles outside these institutes, for example as teachers. Aside from these 'formal' contact moments, more information was gained from ad-hoc discussions on the sidelines of various events.

Out of all the contents a number of elements were distilled: some learning points which Mercator can use to more effectively cooperate in Fryslân in the future, some ideas for concrete cooperation and some themes which will be important in the work of the mentioned organizations in coming years.

Important learning points were:

- the need to actively involve Frisian partners in projects from an early stage, so that their questions and wishes may be taken into account effectively.
- the need to formalize and structuralize contact with Frisian partners, in order to be more aware of each other's activities and make cooperation less dependent of incidental meetings.
- the need for Mercator to strengthen its profile in terms of research themes and topics. A more clear profile would make it easier for other organisations to approach Mercator with questions and ideas.

Concrete options for cooperation are:

- Organization of expert seminars to allow Frisian partners to compare their work with similar activities carried out in other European regions.
- Assistance of Mercator in the organisation of existing international activities of the partner organisations, such as educational trips abroad for teachers and students.
- Finding new ways to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between organisations involved in minority language promotion and minority language education across Europe.

Important themes are

- New developments in didactics ('het nieuwe leren', '21st- century skills'), especially in relation to multilingual education
- Test development and progress tracking for (small) minority language education
- Economic value of small languages (and Frisian in particular) on the micro and macro levels

Based on these outcomes, Mercator plans to organize at least one event in the autumn of 2016, specifically catered to the wishes of its Frisian partners. The exact form of this event needs to be decided, but it will probably be some type of workshop or seminar on an 'hot topic' in the field of multilingual and/or minority language education.

A number of concrete forms of cooperation were continued, initiated or explored, some of which are explained in more detail elsewhere in this annual report. Some examples are:

- Cooperation with Afûk for Lysbeth Jongbloed's report on Frisian on social media (continued)
- Cooperation with Afûk for the creation of a MOOC on Frisian (initiated)
- Cooperation with NHL University on connecting NHL's MySchoolsNetwork with Mercator's Network of Schools (explored)
- Cooperation with Bibliotheekservice Fryslân (Library Services) on the development and implementation of their language policy.

In 2015, Mercator staff members attended various events organized by others in the province. Examples are the educational congress on multilingualism organized by Cedin, and the Autumn School of the UCF. Mercator also organized a number of events that were open to, and attended by, other organisations in Fryslân. Examples here were the lecture by professor Joe LoBianco and the seminar on Open Educational Resources organized as part of the LangOER project.

2.2 Regional dossiers series

The Regional dossiers series gives detailed descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in specific regions in Europe. The dossiers follow a set structure so as to enable easy comparison between different regions.

The Regional dossiers series is available in a printed version and can be downloaded from the website of the Mercator Research Centre. The Mercator Research Centre is responsible for the compilation and publication of the dossiers. The total number of downloads of Regional dossiers in 2015 was 26.236 times.

In 2015 two dossiers in the Regional dossiers series were published: one update of an existing dossier and one new dossier:

- “German. The German language in education in Denmark” (first edition);
Author: Anke Tästensen
- “North-Frisian. The North-Frisian language in education in Germany” (third edition);
Author: Alastair Walker

Other dossiers are close to being published (early 2016):

- “Sorbian. The Sorbian language in education in Germany” (second edition);
Author: Beate Brėzan
- “Galician. The Galician language in education in Spain” (second edition);
Authors: Xosé-Henrique Costas and Andrea Expósito-Loureiro;
- “Irish. The Irish language in education in the Republic of Ireland” (second edition); Author: Helen Ó Murchú;
- “Manx Gaelic. The Manx Gaelic language in education in the Isle of Man” (first edition)
Author: Robert Teare
- “Aragonese. The Aragonese language in education in Spain” (first edition);
Authors: Juan Pablo Martínez Cortés, Santiago Paricio and Iris Orosia Campos Bandrés.
- “Ladin. The Ladin language in education in Italy” (second edition);
Author: Roland Verra

All the regional dossiers – including the newest ones – can be found on our home page:

<http://www.mercator-research.eu/nl/onderzoekprojecten/regionale-dossiers/>

Furthermore, work on other Regional dossiers has been carried out. Below is an overview of the dossiers that are being worked on at the moment, including their status:

TITLE	AUTHOR	STATUS
Finnic languages in Sweden (2nd ed.)	Jarmo Lainio	Author is working on first draft
Gaelic in the UK (2nd ed.)	Boyd Robertson	Author is working on first draft
Hungarian in Romania	Papp. Z. Attila	Author is working on first draft.
Bunjevac in Serbia	Suzana Kujundzic Ostojic & Mirjana Savanov	Authors are working on first draft. Deadline: 01-06-2016.
Occitan in France (2nd ed.)	Pierre Escudé	Working on revision of the text

Nenets, Khanty, Selkup in the Yamal-region	Roza Laptander	Close to publishing
Ulster-Scots in Northern Ireland	Carol Baraniuk	Author is working on first draft. Deadline: 15-08-2016.
Papiamentu on the ABC islands	Unknown	In search of an author
German in South-Tyrol (2nd ed.)	Ulrike Huber	Found an author

2.3 Fryske MOOC

In the framework of the LangoER project, Mercator/De Fryske Akademy and the Afûk, took the first steps in 2015 to develop an online course for learning Frisian. An online course was already available for Frisian and Dutch speaking students. This new course should be available in English so that also speakers of other languages are able to learn the Frisian language. The goal is to develop a MOOC, a Massive Open Online Course.

To find out if there is demand for such a course, we asked potential users if they would welcome such a MOOC or not. We asked several target groups and organisations if they would follow a MOOC Frisian and, if so, what they would like to learn. We also investigated if there were already ‘best practices’ of other MOOCs for minority languages and if there has been already literature about the relation between MOOCs and languages. If yes, what could we learn from that?

Generally the idea of a MOOC for the Frisian language is received positively. A lot of organizations are willing to join in a pilot and introduce the MOOC to their customers or members. People from the Netherlands as well as from outside the country are interested in joining. Potential target groups are among others international students, tourists, and root-seekers.

Not a lot of other MOOCs have been developed in minority languages. Therefore, Fryslân would take the lead. Some articles have been written about Language MOOCs. A learning point from the literature is that it is very important that students can learn interactively. They need to meet other students virtually or in real life. It is also necessary that students can practice talking in the target language.

In February 2016 the report was handed over to the province of Fryslân. The complete plan will include a week by week learning plan of the MOOC that the Afûk has developed.

Separate financial means were provided by the province of Fryslân for this research.

2.4 The Bildts language status in a European context

The municipality “Het Bildt” granted an assignment to the Mercator Research Centre for a study on the Bildts language status in the European context. The goal of this study was to advise the municipality of Het Bildt on Bildts language policy after its merger into a new, larger municipality. Specifically, this study explored the conditions and consequences of accession to the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The report can be downloaded here:

[http://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/publications_pdf/
Mercator_report_Seven_perspectives_on_Bildts_June2015.pdf](http://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/publications_pdf/Mercator_report_Seven_perspectives_on_Bildts_June2015.pdf)

In 2015 a scientific article with the title “Bildts as a mixed language” was written by Paulus van der Sluis, Eric Hoekstra and Hans van de Velde. In 2016 it will be published in the “International Journal of the Sociology of Language”.

2.5 Factsheets

In September 2015 Mercator restarted the *Fact Sheet* project. The aim of this project is to update and improve Mercator’s existing fact sheet system. The reason for restart and update of the system can be found in the fact that the UNESCO is planned to update its “Language Atlas for Endangered Languages”. Mercator takes part in the discussions and is partner in an international consortium to upgrade the Atlas into a “World Atlas of Languages”. Mercator’s fact sheet system and the information in the regional dossier series can be a very valuable asset for the world atlas. The fact sheet system was built over a decade ago to share Mercator’s knowledge about minority language learning in Europe online. Now, the system’s technological framework, and the information presented on the fact sheets are outdated. Therefore a new fact sheet system is being built that:

- facilitates the exchange of knowledge with other initiatives that concern themselves with minority languages;
- offers unique, up-to-date, and openly licensed information on minority languages in Europe;
- functions as a platform for Mercator’s network of experts on which to share their knowledge;
- is affordable to set up and maintain;
- reaches as many people as possible.

To find out what such a system should look like, a discussion paper was made that takes stock of current online activities concerning minority languages: what initiatives exist that currently share knowledge online? Which information do they share, and which activities have they set up? Do these initiatives cooperate with one another, and if so, how?

The discussion paper has been sent to all initiatives mentioned in the report. It contains an invitation to coordinate future efforts in the sharing of knowledge online.

In addition to this paper, Mercator has developed an online demo of the new fact sheet system: an example of how Mercator might share its knowledge in the future. This demo will be adjusted and

improved over time, based on the ideas of authors, users, and hopefully, other initiatives that wish to join efforts with Mercator.

The discussion paper: "An inventory of best practices and potential partners for exchanging information on minority languages" can be downloaded at:

http://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/publications_pdf/2016-01-21_-_an_inventory_of_best_practices.pdf

2.6 Language Vitality / Social Media

In 2013 the project Language Vitality has started focusing on research about language use on social media. In May 2013 Lysbeth Jongbloed-Faber was appointed for this project.

Separate financial means are found for this project.

Teenagers

Questionnaire

Twenty Frisian schools for secondary general and vocational education participated in the research we set out in 2013 and 2014. As a result, over 2,000 Frisian teenagers filled in an extensive questionnaire. Almost all Frisian teenagers (98%) use social media. 95% of the teenagers use WhatsApp (a cross-platform mobile messaging app), 86% use Facebook and 76% use Twitter. Of the three, WhatsApp is used most: 47% chose the answer 'only when I am asleep, I do not check WhatsApp'.

In general it can be concluded that Frisian still is rather an oral than a written language. For Frisian teenagers the Dutch language is the dominant language used in writing. On average, the more formal the medium, the less often Frisian is used. For instance, for text messages and WhatsApp approximately half of the Frisian-speaking teenagers use Frisian. On Facebook and Twitter that proportion decreases to around 30%, and in emails it is 15%. In personal messages Frisian is used more than in public or group messages. Frisian is often written phonetically. Most teenagers are aware of that but do not mind: 'People will understand what I mean anyway.'

The language one speaks with friends is the main factor determining one's language use on social media. Other factors affecting language choice are one's attitude towards Frisian, one's writing skills in Frisian, and the general attitude towards Frisian at one's school. Approximately one fifth of the Frisian-speaking teenagers never uses Frisian on social media. The main reason is that they find it difficult to write Frisian, but it also has to do with their surroundings not being Frisian and their own attitude towards Frisian.

Focus group discussions

In 2015, six focus group discussions were held with teenagers from four different schools. The teenagers all deal very differently with Frisian on social media. Some use it all the time and others hardly ever use it. Some are very consistent in their language choices while others are not: one day they will use Frisian on WhatsApp, another day Netherlands. For some Frisian teenagers their limited writing skills form a barrier to use Frisian while others do not really care about how they write it. From the focus group discussions we learned that it is not just the attitude towards Frisian that influences the language choices

of the teenagers, but also the attitude towards Dutch. If teenagers like both languages equally, they will hardly use Frisian. Language choices of parents do not seem to influence the language use of the teenagers.

Adults

In 2014, over 1,200 Frisians (aged 15 – 94 years old) participated in an online survey about language use on social media. As we asked people to participate through social and traditional media, the data are a snowball sample and are not representative. Also the Frisian-speaking adults use Frisian most on WhatsApp: 78% use Frisian often or all the time in private apps. In group messages on WhatsApp the share is a little lower (69%). On Facebook, in status updates 44% of the respondents use often or all the time Frisian, and in chat messages on Facebook the proportion is 62%. On Twitter, Frisian is used the least: one third of the participants use Frisian often or all the time.

For adults, the most important barrier to use Frisian is limited writing proficiency. This is both the outcome of statistical analysis as well as the focus group discussions. In addition, audience and attitude play a role in language choice as well. On WhatsApp, 69% of the respondents indicate that the majority of their contacts (their audience) is Frisian-speaking, on Facebook this is 52% and on Twitter 26%. This affects the extent to which Frisian is used.

Influence of famous Frisians

In 2015, we also studied the impact of Frisian tweets of famous Frisians. It appears that a Frisian tweet of a Frisian rolemodel motivates people to respond in Frisian. However, the effect is not longlasting. It can thus be compared to the effect of the Frisian Twitter day: an effective though short-term means to increase the use of Frisian on Twitter.

PhD research

From 1 November, researcher Lysbeth Jongbloed-Faber has been appointed as PhD Candidate at the Fryske Akademy and Maastricht University to study the linguistic practices on social media in Fryslân.

Presentations and other public outreach

- March 24th 2015: International Conference on Bilingualism (Valetta, Malta)
- Presentation
- June 9th 2015: DHBenelux, Digital Humanities Conference (Antwerp, Belgium)
- Presentation
- September 25th 2015: Drongo Festival, Language Researchers Night (Utrecht)
- 20 PK Presentation
- October 31st 2015: Humanities Lab Café, students Leiden University (Maastricht)
- Presentation





- November 18th 2015: Fierder mei Frysk, conference Frisian language teachers (Leeuwarden)
- Presentation
- December 3rd 2015: Presenting research outcomes to depute and press (Leeuwarden)
- Press conference

In the media

The research on the language use on social media by Frisians is regularly referred to in the media, both in Fryslân and beyond.

3. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION

The library of the Mercator Research Centre maintains three databases:

1. Bibliographical database
2. Database of Experts
3. Database of organizations

Ad.1 At 31st of December 2015 the bibliographical database includes more than 7000 records. The collection has been reorganized during 2014-2015.

In October 2014 the library of Mercator Research Centre has been moved to Tresoar. The collection is on the 1st floor in open setting and can be used by the public, among which are students of the master multilingualism of the University Campus Fryslân (www.ucf.frl), students of the Lectorate Multilingualism of NHL (Noordelijke Hogeschool) and others.

In November 2015 the catalogue of the Mercator Research Centre Library has been integrated in the catalogue of Tresoar <http://katalogus.tresoar.nl/> In May 2016 Tresoar will implement a new catalogue- and managementsystem of OCLC : Worldshare, the catalogue of Mercator Research Centre will be visible in Worldcat (www.worldcat.org)

Ad.2 the database of Experts creates an easy and quick access to all expertise in the field of regional and minority languages in Europe, in the field of bilingualism and multilingualism, education, language learning and language policy. It also facilitates contacts and co-operation amongst colleagues in these domains. Up to the 31st of December 2015, 616 experts were registered. In 2016 the database will be updated and if possible integrated in the updated Language Fact Sheet–system of Mercator Research Centre.

Ad.3 the database of organizations gives detailed descriptions of some 1235 institutions and associations which can provide information on European regional or minority languages. The surplus value of this English-language-based database lies in the fact that almost all the information of institutions relating to minority languages in the EU can be found on one specific place on the web. The feature Expert in the Spotlight gives the chance to interact one-in-one with our Ask the expert-section. The feature also provides interesting and insightful comments regarding the subjects mentioned above, in-depth content and exclusive Q and A's.

In 2015 the following experts were asked to become Expert in the Spotlight:

1. Mirjam Vellinga, project manager for the language promotion division at the Afûk (www.afuk.nl), Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

2. Juan Pablo Martínez Cortes, co-author of the Regional Dossier Asturian, Engineering School of the University of Zaragoza, Spain
3. Leonie Cornips, linguist at Meertens Institute and Maastricht University, The Netherlands
4. Stephan Breidbach, Professor at the English Language Education at Humboldt-Universität, Berlin, Germany
5. Julia Sallabank, Senior Lecturer in Language Support and Revitalisation at the Department of Linguistics at SOAS, University of London, London, United Kingdom.
6. Anke Tästensen, head of Deutsche Schule Osterhoist and also head of Deutsche Schule Rapstedt, a secondary German school in Denmark.

The task of the information specialist is to maintain and bring up to date the three databases mentioned above and organizing the Expert in the Spotlight feature.

She takes care of the acquisition of new titles for the library of Mercator Research Centre and the Department of Sociolinguistics and Linguistics of the Frisian Academy, answers questions of our target groups through the Q & A-service (ca. 30 Q&A's have been answered), administration of the collection of journals, literature search for the members of the Mercator Research Centre-team, the department of Sociolinguistics of the Fryske Akademy and external persons.

In 2015 the information specialist worked, together with her colleague of the Fryske Akademy, at the remediation of the collections of the libraries of Mercator Research Centre and Fryske Akademy in order to the conversion of the old automated library system into the database of Tresoar, Historical and Literary Centre, Leeuwarden and the new housing of the Fryske Akademy. The conversion of the catalogue systems of Mercator Research Centre has been realized in November 2015, the conversion of the catalogue system of Tresoar will take place in 2016.

The information specialist also writes contributions for the Mercator Newsletter (list of new acquisitions and other interesting news 10 times yearly), contributions to the website of the Network of Schools (list of literature concerning bilingualism, multilingualism and bi- and multilingual education) and to the Newsletter of the Network of Schools (4/6 times a year). A few times a week she assembles and spreads a newsletter: 'Taalnijs fan Elly' to intern- and extern-interested colleagues with facts concerning upcoming conferences in Fryslân, the Netherlands and Europe, languages, minority languages, multilingualism, education, new developments etc. This newsletter also provides the websites of the following projects in Brussels with news:

- Poliglotti4.eu
- EUNIC Union Network of Cultural Institutions

The information specialist is also involved, together with other members of the Mercator Research Centre-team, in the logistic part of the organization of international and regional conferences for Mercator Research Centre.

4. PUBLICATIONS

In this chapter we will describe the publications of Mercator in 2015. Besides we also give information about our newsletter, websites, social media and press releases.

4.1 Newsletters

Mercator Network Newsletter

The Mercator Network Newsletter is compiled by the web editor of the Mercator Research Centre and was published 10 times in 2015. It informs about the news from the five Mercator Network partners, which are:

- Mercator Media/ University of Wales in Aberystwyth;
- University Centre for Sociolinguistics and Communication (CUSC) in Barcelona;
- Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning/ Fryske Akademy in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden;
- Mercator Budapest, the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest;
- Mercator Stockholm, Stockholm University

The Mercator Network Newsletter is read by over 2.200 national and international professionals working in the field of Multilingualism and Language Learning. The Network of Schools Bulletin currently has 176 readers (June 2016).

In addition, the newsletter focuses on news about minority language communities. An events calendar of relevant international conferences and events is included in the newsletter.

Network of Schools Bulletin

The Network of Schools Bulletin is compiled by a research assistant and the web editor of the Mercator Research Centre. It appeared twice in 2015.

4.2. Websites

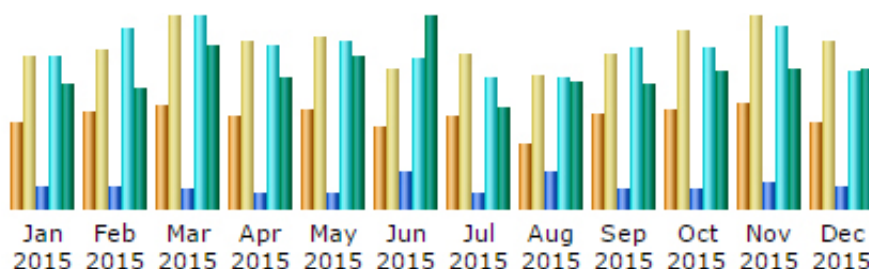
Mercator European Research Centre hosts and maintains three websites:

- www.mercator-research.eu, the main website of the Mercator Research Centre
- www.mercator-network.eu, the website of the Mercator Network and the LEARNMe Project (2012-2016)
- www.networkofschools.org, the website of the Network of Schools

www.mercator-research.eu

Via this website Mercator Research Centre communicates its identity and goals, shares its knowledge and publications, and announces events.

- The chart below shows visitor statistics for www.mercator-research.eu over 2015. Popular pages are those about the *Regional Dossiers* and about the *Endangered Languages* project. 26,764 Unique visitors were counted. This is similar to 2014 (23,645 unique visitors).



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2015	2,089	3,686	9,531	67,786	3.24 GB
Feb 2015	2,365	3,854	9,586	80,008	3.12 GB
Mar 2015	2,501	4,655	8,681	84,816	4.22 GB
Apr 2015	2,258	4,042	7,104	72,089	3.41 GB
May 2015	2,385	4,173	7,020	73,851	3.94 GB
Jun 2015	1,994	3,381	16,879	66,597	4.97 GB
Jul 2015	2,227	3,774	6,980	58,093	2.63 GB
Aug 2015	1,578	3,217	16,306	57,912	3.28 GB
Sep 2015	2,277	3,772	8,713	70,815	3.23 GB
Oct 2015	2,392	4,340	9,329	71,166	3.55 GB
Nov 2015	2,581	4,655	11,389	80,417	3.64 GB
Dec 2015	2,117	4,044	9,480	60,890	3.61 GB
Total	26,764	47,593	120,998	844,440	42.83 GB

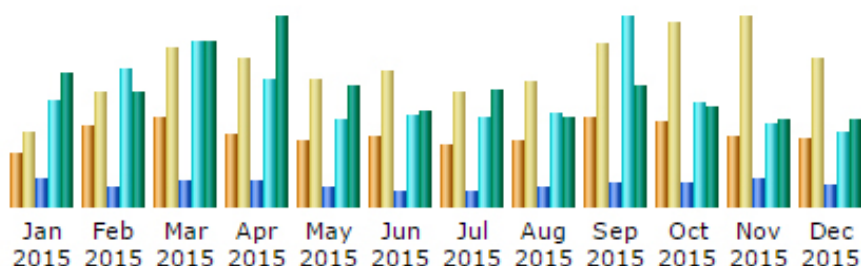
- People who find mercator-research.eu most often use search terms like 'Mercator', 'Mercator Research', or 'Minority Languages'.
- Downloaded the most were the *Regional Dossiers* (Frisian in the Netherlands: 3214 hits; Basque in Spain: 1249 hits; Irish in Ireland: 1042 hits), and a document from the *Endangered Languages* project: Contribution to the UNESCO encyclopedia of life support systems (EOLSS) (7251 hits).

www.mercator-network.eu / www.learnme.eu

The website of the *Mercator Network of Language Diversity Centres* is maintained by its lead partner Mercator Research. The website is used to share online the activities of the Mercator Network.

The chart below shows visitor statistics over 2015. Number of unique visitors was 7,468. This is more than the previous year (2014: 4,070 unique visitors). Most visitors came from China, which seems strange, since China was not involved in the Learnme project. It seems visitor numbers were a little higher after the 3rd workshop, 8-9 April, Barcelona, and the final conference 17-19 September, Budapest. Pages viewed most

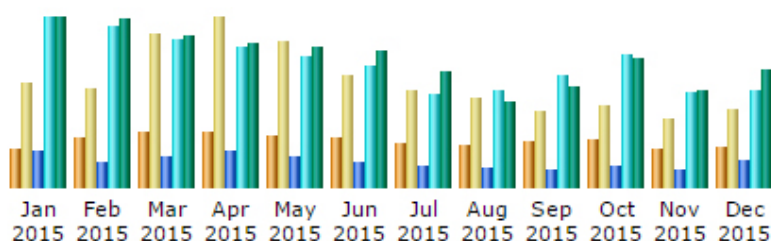
often were the home page, and the pages of the Mercator Network Members. Most downloaded were documents pertaining to the Learnme project.



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2015	454	640	2,999	11,285	419.01 MB
Feb 2015	699	989	2,097	14,566	362.40 MB
Mar 2015	756	1,366	2,689	17,516	519.73 MB
Apr 2015	614	1,264	2,841	13,595	597.66 MB
May 2015	568	1,094	2,120	9,389	384.88 MB
Jun 2015	596	1,168	1,770	9,726	301.83 MB
Jul 2015	538	981	1,609	9,482	366.18 MB
Aug 2015	565	1,070	2,103	9,940	280.88 MB
Sep 2015	761	1,392	2,671	20,167	384.76 MB
Oct 2015	725	1,572	2,570	11,080	315.73 MB
Nov 2015	604	1,619	2,927	8,770	276.34 MB
Dec 2015	588	1,262	2,315	8,056	274.49 MB
Total	7,468	14,417	28,711	143,572	4.38 GB

www.networkofschools.org

The *Network of Schools* website is maintained by *Mercator Research Centre*. The website is used to display information about the network and its members. It also aims to be a platform for educational practitioners on which they might share useful knowledge and resources about minority language education.



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2015	438	1,170	3,607	16,378	171.04 MB
Feb 2015	558	1,110	2,518	15,525	170.10 MB
Mar 2015	624	1,706	2,974	14,264	153.22 MB
Apr 2015	614	1,887	3,500	13,635	145.27 MB
May 2015	578	1,622	3,054	12,634	140.98 MB
Jun 2015	558	1,246	2,506	11,748	138.54 MB
Jul 2015	500	1,071	2,175	8,934	116.63 MB
Aug 2015	479	999	1,863	9,298	86.71 MB
Sep 2015	509	844	1,673	10,882	102.30 MB
Oct 2015	537	913	2,142	12,818	129.49 MB
Nov 2015	422	760	1,679	9,267	97.28 MB
Dec 2015	453	870	2,639	9,460	118.62 MB
Total	6,270	14,198	30,330	144,843	1.53 GB

The chart shows visitor statistics www.networkofschools.org over 2015. The number of unique visitors in 2015 (6,270) has increased compared to 2014 (3,846).

4.2 Reports

In 2015, two chapters in a book were published.

- The use of new technologies in the preservation of an endangered language: The case of Frisian. de Graaf, T., Jongbloed-Faber, L. & van der Meer, C. 2015 *Endangered Languages and New Technologies*. Jones, M. C. (ed.). Cambridge University Press, p. 141-150 10 p.
- The Use of Sound Archives for the Investigation, Teaching and Safeguarding of Endangered Languages in Russia
de Graaf, T. 2015 *From Dust to Digital; Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme*. Kominko, M. (ed.). London: Open Book Publishers, p. 617-635 18 p.

In the beginning of 2016 the article “Bildts as a mixed language” will be published in the “International Journal of the Sociology of Language”.

Furthermore, within the framework of several projects, also a lot of reports or articles have been published. Reports of the MOOC Frisian, the Bildts language and reports from the language vitality project can be found in chapter 3. You will find more information on the reports of the LangOER project and the LEARNME project in chapter 9.

4.3 Regional dossiers

As already set out in paragraph 3.2., In 2015 two dossiers in the Regional dossiers series were published: one update of an existing dossier and one new dossier:

- “German. The German language in education in Denmark” (first edition);
Author: Anke Tästensen
- “North-Frisian. The North-Frisian language in education in Germany” (third edition);
Author: Alastair Walker

Furthermore there are several other dossiers are about to being published.

See also chapter 3 for more detail.

5. NETWORK OF SCHOOLS

The Network of Schools (NOS) is a network of multilingual schools in Europe. Its aim is to facilitate contact between schools, to encourage them to share information, and to provide the members with news about developments and research in multilingualism in general and multilingual education in particular. The Network is one of Mercator's permanent projects.

In 2015 the network had 105 schools in their Network, divided over 20 countries.
The Network of Schools bulletin appeared 4 times.

Attempts were made to activate the network. It is important to renew the Network's concept in a way that it becomes more clear what the Network can offer schools and vice versa. A new website also might be preferable. In 2015 an Questionnaire was sent to the members to answer the following questions: What should the Network be offering you, What makes the NOS unique?, What kind of similar networks are the schools involved in?. Only one reaction was received.

In June 2015 contact was sought with *My Schools Network*. My Schools Network is a network where students can get in contact with students from other countries. More cooperation between My Schools Network and the Network of Schools would be a good way to activate the NOS. However, finances for the My Schools Network are still unsure.

In 2016 we will again try to think about how we can activate the Network.

6. COMMUNICATION AND PR

This part mainly concerns the staff costs of the communication staff. Among other things they write press releases, take care of the lay-out of products, contact with the press, update the website, coordinate the newsletter, help with the organisation of conferences and so on (see also publications).

6.1 Social Media

Mercator Research on Facebook

Mercator Research is present on Facebook. Posts concern the Mercator Network Newsletter, and announcements of events (co-)organized by Mercator. By the end of 2015 the Mercator Research Facebook page had approximately 650 likes: an increase compared to the end of 2014, when there were 540 likes.

6.2 Twitter

Mercator Network on Twitter

The Mercator Network is on Twitter (#MercatorNetwork) and had approximately 900 followers by the end of 2015, which is a slight increase compared to the end of 2014, when there were 750 followers. Subjects of Tweets include new Mercator publications, news about Mercator projects and news about European minority language.

6.3 Press releases and Mercator in the press

Press Releases

In 2015 the Fryske Akademy sent out three press releases that involved Mercator research Centre:

- December 2, 2015: 'Provincie moet schrijfvaardigheid in het Fries stimuleren' ('Province should stimulate Frisian writing skills').
- June 22, 2015: 'Samenwerking Fryske Akademy en Universiteit van Nanjing' ('Collaboration between Fryske Akademy and University of Nanjing').
- June 29, 2015: 'Presentatie Mercator-rapport over Bildtse taal' ('Presentation Mercator report about the Bildt language').

6.4 Mercator in the Press

In 2015 Mercator appeared several times in the press:

- March 20, 2015, Leeuwarder Courant: 'Friese taal verbindt culturele hoofdsteden nu al' ('Frisian language already ties cultural capitals').
- April 29, 2015, Leeuwarder Courant: 'Online cursus Fries in de maak' ('Online Frisian course in the making').
- June 23, 2015, Leeuwarder Courant: 'Fryske Akademy werkt samen met China' ('Fryske Akademy teams up with China').
- July 3, 2015, website Omrop Fryslan: 'Onderzoeker ziet het Bildts als taal en niet als dialect' ('Researcher considers it Bildts a language and not a dialect').
- July 3, 2015, Leeuwarder Courant: 'Bildts kan als taal worden erkend' ('Possible to acknowledge Bildts as a language').
- July 8, 2015, Bildtse Post: 'Met erkenning kan niemand nog om het Bildts heen' ('Once acknowledge, Bildts can no longer be ignored').
- November 25, 2015, interview for the Serbian radio by Cor van der Meer.
- December 4, 2015, 'Wol wolle, mar net kinne' ('Willing, but unable').

7. SECRETARIAT AND ORGANISATION OF CONFERENCES

Mercator is always very active in organizing or participating in several (international) conferences.

Beside conferences we also have a lot of persons, institutions or delegations over from several countries in our institute. Furthermore Mercator gives also guest lecturers on universities. Below you will find an overview of conferences, guest lecturers and visits in 2015.

The secretariat of the Mercator Research Centre is responsible for organizing conferences and visits at the Fryske Akademy, scheduling and organizing meetings, taking minutes, answering or forwarding mails, taking care of the archiving, and supporting the staff members.

6 January 2015

Guest lecture at the University of Utrecht (students of linguistics and media) about regional and minority languages in Fryslân and Language Management.

11 February 2015

Visit of Ishbel McFarlane, Fryske Akademy

Theme: theatre and lesser used languages

Ishbel McFarlane is a theatre maker from Scotland and is researching a play about Scots language.

Here some information in her own words about the research and her visit to Fryslân:

"I am interested in practical models of best practice for support of minority languages both in schools, and wider society. Though the show focusses on Scots, I would like to explore the issues shared by minoritised languages globally. I would love to speak with you about these things, and maybe get your advice on good resources to use. I might have time to visit some other places nearby the University, if you have advice on good examples of use of the Frisian language nearby, for example."

16 and 17 February 2015, Fryske Akademy

Visit of Mrs. Laura Spence (Stone Circle Consulting), Fintan Mullan (Stone Circle Consulting, Northern Ireland) and Bill Smith (chair Ministerial Advisory Group Ulster-Scots Academy).

Theme: to discuss minority languages provision and teaching in general. They are conducting some research in Northern Ireland, looking specifically at 'Ulster-Scots'.

26 March 2015

Visit National Council of the Bunjevac national minority, Fryske Akademy

Mrs. Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić (president), Mr. Dragan Kostadinovic and Mr. Apolon Savanov.

In May Mr. Dragan Kostadinovic visited the Fryske Akademy again.



Visit National Council of the Bunjevac national minority



Visit National Council of the Bunjevac national minority (Hungarian delegation)

11 May 2015

Lecture prof. J. Lo Bianco (University of Melbourne), Fryske Akademy

Title: “New Developments from SE Asia in Minority Language rights: Peacebuilding, and Extra National Pressure”

The abstract he has written: “In this talk I will describe a 5 year project I have been working on through UNICEF and UNESCO, partly funded by grants from the Dutch foreign affairs ministry, on language, education and peace building in SE Asian conflict zones. All of the areas I will discuss are highly multilingual with large numbers of minority languages which have historically been neglected or oppressed. I will discuss the social and linguistic setting, and the conflicts involved. The talk will point to directions from peace building and from ‘extra national pressure’, coming from above (the Association of SE Asian Nations, roughly comparable to the EU or the Council of Europe) and from the side, meaning through international development assistance. Multilingual rights are still not fully established in international law but progressively the world is inching closer to seeing indigenous and ethnic ‘subnational’ languages as a human right.”



29 May 2015

Cor van der Meer gave a presentation at the ICML conference in Belgrade. Title “OER Insights into a multilingual landscape”,

26 June 2015

Co-organisation Mercator with the Institute of World languages @ SOAS (Univ of London) in London
Theme: “Re-visiting the Pedagogy of the Languages of Minority Communities” Marit Bijlsma gave a presentation on: “Open Educational Resources in a Multilingual and European Context”.

14 September 2015

Visit Akademia Papiamentu Bonaire and SPLIKA, Tresoar
Theme: Frisian-Caribbean evening discussing minority languages.

8 – 10 oktober 2015

Organisation partner meeting and expert seminar on OER/OEP in the context of the LangOER project ,
Oranje Hotel Leeuwarden
Seminar theme and title: “Open Education in Minority Languages: Chances and Perspectives”

24 November 2015

Key note speech of Cor van der Meer at the international expert seminar “Endangered languages and Digitalization of Education Material for Minority Languages”. Subotica, Serbia. Cor van der Meer gave an interview for the Serbian radio.

2 December 2015

Cor van der Meer gave a guest lecture at the University of Utrecht about regional and minority languages in Fryslân, language policy, Regional- and Minority languages and European (language) frameworks, charters and regulations .

8. PROJECT ACQUISITION

Mercator traditionally is involved in several European Networks and projects. Mercator its name and expertise is well known in Europe. In 2015 Mercator was part in two projects supported by the Life Long Learning Programme of the European Commission.

Furthermore, a lot of project acquisition has been done by our project officer.

8.1 LEARNMe Language and Education Addressed through Research and Networking by Mercator

In 2013, the network project Language and Education Addressed through Research and Networking by Mercator (LEARNMe) started. This project has been funded by the Life Long Learning programme of the European Commission and was intended to run for three years (2013-2015). Delays caused by a change in partnership early 2015 have caused the project to be extended by two months into 2016.

The LEARNMe project has been carried out by the partners of the Mercator Network, bringing together institutes from Fryslân (NL), Catalonia (ES), Wales (UK), Sweden and Hungary. The Mercator Research Centre is the managing partner. While all five partners share a general focus on issues related to linguistic diversity and minority languages, each also has its own fields of expertise. Examples are minority language education, linguistic planning policy and legislation, linguistic diversity in media, and signed languages. Furthermore, the geographical spread of the consortium has ensured that views and cases from all corners of the European Union have been represented.

The objectives of LEARNMe were ambitious. Put most concisely, the Network has aimed to point out problems and challenges relating to Linguistic Diversity; to provide guidelines and recommendations for stakeholders that will enable them to deal with these challenges; to use minority languages as a show case and involve not only researchers, but also policy makers and educational practitioners; and – in a more general sense – to combat prejudice and promote the inclusion and normalization of minority languages in education and other domains of society.

Working method of the project

The project has been built on a series of events and publications. During the course of the three years, three so-called Workshops have been organized, in Aberystwyth (2013), in Stockholm (2014), and in Barcelona (2015). Each of the workshops had a specific focus within the wider context of linguistic diversity and minority languages: respectively, these were 'research', 'education', and 'legislation and policy'. For the workshops, a number of experts were invited to speak on subjects relating to these focal themes. The events also provided room for discussion among the experts and other attendants. After each of the workshops, the organizing partner wrote a Position Paper, summarizing and analysing the

presentations and discussions that occurred during the Workshop. All three Position Papers have been made available to the public, and will be in the near future. As a closing event, a two-day international conference was organized in Budapest, building on the findings from the position papers and taking the discussion to another level. This event was also used to share the writing process of the White Paper with the public.

The project's main results are formulated in the LEARNMe White Paper on Linguistic Diversity, published in January 2016. For reasons of accessibility, two versions of this document have been prepared: a complete version and an abridged version. Both versions of the White Paper contain – aside from an introduction to the project and an analysis of the outcomes of comparable projects – a number of considerations and recommendations regarding the meanings and uses of the concept Linguistic Diversity. The full version contains a more in-depth analysis of the concept, as well as concrete examples and best practices that have been discussed during the LEARNMe events.

LEARNMe in 2015

The last (full) year of the project, 2015 saw a number of important LEARNMe events and publications.

On 8-9 April, the third Workshop of the LEARNMe project took place in Barcelona, under the title "Recent developments regarding the legal protection of minoritized languages: different European perspectives". The workshop was organized by the Centre Universitari de Sociolingüística i Comunicació (CUSC) of the University of Barcelona. Aim of the sessions was to share a number of legal and political developments regarding a variety of European languages, and to explore the sociolinguistic consequences of these developments. On both days, the range of topics discussed as well as the speakers' backgrounds was very diverse. The Barcelona workshop was preceded by a Partner Meeting of the network. Both this meeting and the workshop itself were attended by Cor van der Meer and Jorrit Huizinga on behalf of the Mercator Research Centre.

In the summer, the Third LEARNMe Position Paper was published, based on the presentations and discussions during the Workshop in Barcelona. It can be found on the project website www.learnme.eu

On 18-19 September, the final conference of the project took place in Budapest, organized by the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The two-day programme was built around the broad concept of linguistic diversity. Specific focuses were bottom-up approaches to research and on education, learning and access to knowledge for members of linguistic minorities in Central-Europe and elsewhere. Speakers at the conference came from a wide range of backgrounds. High-level policymakers such as European Commissioner **Tibor Navracsics** and Hungarian MEP **Ádám Kósa** were joined by renowned experts and educational practitioners from Hungary and many other European countries. An important novelty was the strong inclusion of sign language in the conference. The combination proved to be enriching and inspiring to both experts of spoken and sign languages. The conference was also used as a public venue for the discussion of the LEARNMe White Paper. The conference was preceded by a Partner Meeting of the network. Both this meeting and the conference itself were attended by Cor van der Meer and Jorrit Huizinga on behalf of the Mercator Research Centre.



LEARNMe final conference

Apart from this, the project partners have been working on the preparation of the concluding document of the project, the LEARNMe White Paper on Linguistic Diversity. Due to organisational issues, this document was not finished during 2015, but will be available and actively disseminated from January 2016. Due to financial circumstances the Catalan partner CIEMEN needed to withdraw from the project. A new partner was found in Barcelona: Centre Universitari de Sociolingüística I Comunicació (CUSC) of the University of Barcelona. This however caused some delay in the project and therefore, the project was extended with two months in 2016.

The LEARNMe project website can be found on www.learnme.eu

8.2 LangOER: Enhancing teaching and learning of less used languages

Background and partners

In January 2014 the project “LangOER” started, which is a 3-year network (January 2014- December 2016) supported by Key action 2 of the Lifelong Learning Programme by the European Commission. LangOER aims to enhance the teaching and learning of less used languages through the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Educational Practices (OEP).

This project is coordinated by the Fryske Akademy, through the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning. The project management is in hands of the company Web2Learn (Greece). An overview of the other partners involved in the project are:

- European Schoolnet (Belgium)
- University of Goteborg (Sweden)
- Jan Duglosz University (Poland)

- Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania)
- International Council for Open and Distance Learning (Norway)
- Linnaeus University (Sweden)
- Rezekne Higher Education Institution (Latvia)

Project aim

LangOER aims to contribute to the promotion of learning and teaching of less used European languages by linking them to the global challenges of Open Education. This will be achieved by awareness raising and capacity building activities (including exchange of good practice, training, expert consultations, discussions and dissemination activities) for the two main target groups, policy makers and educators in less used languages in Europe.

The project aims to “strengthen the role of languages in improving employability and competitiveness”, which is one of the backbones of the multilingualism policy.

At policy level

- Raise awareness of OER, demonstrate best practice and valorise multilingual and interactive resources on a European level
- Give the floor to less used and Regional/Minority languages allowing their needs to be heard on the international scene where OER experts meet and reflect.
- Reach and support policy makers seeking to overcome barriers for OER uptake through consultation mechanisms.
- Fuel activity of well-established and successful pan-European instruments, such as the big OER metadata repository Language Resources Exchange and the policy making channel Observatory, both run by the European Schoolnet (P3). Sharing LangOER materials through the former and creating a public, shareable Thematic Dossier on the latter will expand and multiply the impact of LangOER project results.

At teaching/learning level

- Foster creation and uptake of OER through awareness raising activities, delivery of training materials, provision of training on OER/OEP to at least 200 European educators and above all by making OEP a reality through implementation in real teaching contexts.
- Boost the multilingual and interactive dimension of OER (to combat the primarily monolingual and static current picture of OER) through a teacher-as-developer guided practice.
- Embrace educators and stakeholders of Regional and Minority Languages in remotely located areas to gain knowledge, develop skills and exchange good practice.
- Address language learning as a learning subject requiring specific attention due to two particular characteristics (speaking skills and teacher feedback) that may not be fully tackled by OER.

At project level

- Offer an up-to-date picture of languages in which OER exist, through an in-depth desktop research in 17 European countries.
- Map OER initiatives emphasizing the linguistic and cultural variety in Europe.
- Foster informal learning and community learning practice through moderated, sustained discussions through a social networking platform.
- Adopt a cross-sectoral and cross-linguistic approach to OER/OEP to combat fragmentation of efforts and to enhance the transferability of the approach and the materials to new pedagogical contexts/language contexts.

Activities and events of the project in 2015

- Consortium Meetings in 2015
- Two consortium meetings took place in 2015. These consortium meetings have as main goal to share knowledge amongst (all) the partners and on the progress of the project. One of the meetings has been organized by Mercator.
 - 22-24 January (Thessaloniki, Web2Learn)
 - 8-9 October (Leeuwarden, Mercator)

Publications

- Policy Brief: “Open Educational Resources, in your own language, in your own way”. Cite as: Udnaes, M., Titlestad, G., Johannessen, Ø. (2014). Policy Brief - Open Educational Resources in your Own Language, in your Way. LangOER consortium
- Mercator has participated in a brainstorm session in Oslo to set the focus and format of the policy brief and the study. Mercator was also responsible for peer reviewing and the editing of the brief. Mercator has translated the policy brief in [Dutch](#) and [Frisian](#).
 - Dutch: “Beleidsnota: Open leermiddelen (OER), in de eigen taal, op de eigen manier” (7 January 2015).
 - Frisian: “Beliedsnota: Iepen learmiddels (OER), Yn 'e eigen taal, op'e eigen wize” (7 January 2015).
- Webinar Series: How can OER enrich your teaching practice?
Mercator has organized a series of webinars on the use of Open Educational Resources and Practices for Less used Languages, entitled “*How can OER enrich your teaching practice?*” In the period of March – June 2015. In cooperation with the *Centrum Cyfrowe Projekt*, a Polish version of the webinar was organized due to the high interest of Polish teachers on this topic. In total, over 150 people joined the webinar, from different countries in – and outside Europe. Overview of the webinars and the experts involved:
 - Marit Bijlsma (Fryske Akademy / Mercator Research Centre) – Opening Up Education and an Introduction to OER
 - Ebba Ossiannilsson (Lund University) – Benefits and Challenges in Using OER
 - Robert Schuwer (Fontys University of Applied Sciences and chair Special Interest Group Open Education)

- Maarten Zeinstra (Kennisland and Creative Commons Netherlands) – CC licensing and OER myths
- Elena Schulman (European Schoolnet) – Travell Well Resources and the Learning Resource Exchange.

Polish language version:

- Alek Tarkowski- Open Model of Education
- Kamil Śliwowski – Creative Commons Licensing
- Karolina Grodecka- How to: search for OER in effective way
- Karolina Grodecka – Adapt and publish OER. Legal and practical perspectives
- Anna Stokowska – Evaluation: pros and cons of OER usage

Also a competition was organized for the participants, the best contributor to the webinar series could win an award worth of € 1000,00 to be spend on technical equipment. The winner is: Eleftheria Karagiorgou, teacher at the 7th High School of Trikala in Greece.

- Teacher Training in Fryslân: Raising Awareness on OER and OEP use: Frisian MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) sessions

The Mercator research centre aimed at raising awareness amongst teachers on benefits of Open Educational Resources (OER) and the concept of Open Educational practice (OEP) as an alternative or complementary to the more traditional learning materials.

The assignment given to the teacher participants, was to develop together a concept for a “Massive Open Online Course” for the Frisian language. A presentation was given by the University of Groningen, which had launched a MOOC for the Dutch language, to inspire the teachers.

In total, 3 sessions have been organized:

- 29th of April 2015
- 13th of May 2015
- 3rd of June 2015

The end result was a trial version of a Frisian MOOC. More information can be found here:

[http://blogs.eun.org/langoer/2015/06/24/
teacher-training-in-the-netherlands-raising-awareness-on-oer-and-oep-use/](http://blogs.eun.org/langoer/2015/06/24/teacher-training-in-the-netherlands-raising-awareness-on-oer-and-oep-use/)



Teacher training in Fryslân

- Presentations
 - 29th of May 2015: “OER Insights into a multilingual landscape”, by Cor van der Meer. Presented at the ICML Conference in Belgrade: *Minority Languages in Education and Language Learning : Challenges and New Perspectives*. Organized by the International Association of Multilingualism.
 - 25th of June 2015: “Open Educational Resources in a Multilingual and European Context” , by Marit Bijlsma Presented at the seminar *Re-visiting the pedagogy of the languages of minority communities*. Organized by the University of London and the Mercator Research Centre.
- Seminar: “Open Education in Minority Languages: Chances and Perspectives”
- Mercator organized an international seminar “Open Education in Minority Languages: Chances and Perspectives” on the 7-8 of October 2015 in Leeuwarden (NL). Around 40 people from different European countries attended the seminar. The central theme was to “get a grasp” on how minority languages can make use of the fast developing field of Open Education. Several presentations were given by experts in the field.
 - Hanna Vasilevich (European Centre of Minority Issues, Germany)
 - Paul Rogers (Department of Education Manx Unit, UK)
 - Wim de Boer (Afûk Institute of the Frisian Language and Culture, Netherlands)
 - Sofia Papadimitriou (Greek Ministry of Education, Greece)

- Christer Gundersen (Nordic Digital Learning Arena, Norway)
- Katerina Zourou and Giulia Torresin (Web2Learn, Greece)
- Deborah Baff (University of Wales, UK)
- Robert Schuwer (Fontys University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)
- Maria Luisa Pignoli (University of Calabria, Italy).

All seminar highlights and presentations are gathered on the seminar's Padlet page:

<http://nl.padlet.com/alacre/langoer1015>

More information on the LangOER project can be found here:

Website: <http://langoer.eun.org/home>

Blog: <http://langoer.eun.org/news>

Acquisition of projects

Several project applications have been developed by the Mercator Research Centre in 2015, also for the European competitive funds. Unfortunately, due to the high competition of European funds in 2015 Mercator did not succeed in receiving funding of European Instruments.

Nevertheless, the preparation of the European project applications has been fruitful for the Mercator Research Centre as new partnerships have been build and new lines of research have been developed. This basis will be used to re-submit new European project applications for the year to follow.

Overview of European project applications:

- Communication competences for migrants and disadvantaged background learners in bilingual work environments (COMBI)
- The rationale for this project is to develop innovative and inclusive practices, focused on acquiring communication competences in the languages required in the workplace, taking in consideration the language reality in European regions with a strong presence of more than one language. It's addressed to people with disadvantaged backgrounds. The aim of this method is not that they acquire full competences in two or more language, but that the regional language is taken into consideration as far as it's needed to fulfil language requirements on the workplace.
- Partners in the project:
 - Coordinator: Elhuyar Aholkularitza (Spain)
 - Cardiff University (United Kingdom)
 - Axxell Utbildning AB (Finland)
 - Centro Per Lo Sviluppo Creative Danilo Dolci (Italy)
 - Mercator Research Centre / Fryske Akademy (Netherlands)
 - Banaizbagara Kultur Elkartea (Spain)
- (Re-submission in 2016 under the coordination of the Mercator Research Centre for the Erasmus+ programme)
- Endangered Languages Revitalization through Open Educational Practice (ELOEP)
- The project examines the ways in which education can be developed and delivered to increase European excellence and competitiveness, by opening up educational resources to the widest

possible community of learners. The substantial political and social investment in OER has so far mostly focused on the supply side, but there is now a growing realization that in order to increase the uptake of OER the focus also needs to encompass Open Educational Practices (OEP). Fostering engagement in OEP is essential if education is to move from the current, static OER landscape to one in which OEP play a major role in a vibrant and sustainable learning ecosystem. Partners in the project:

- Coordinator: Mercator Research Centre / Fryske Akademy (Netherlands)
- Web2Learn (Greece)
- University of London (United Kingdom)
- The Open University (United Kingdom)
- Centre for Open Education and Language Learning (United States)
- University of Sydney (Australia)
- (Re-submission in 2016 for the Erasmus+ programme)

9. EBLT

9.1 About EBLT

The Europeesk Buro foar Lytse Talen (EBLT), since its foundation in 1984, provides promotion and protection of Frisian and Low Saxon in the Netherlands and in the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europa, and their institutions. For this, legal and political support is sought on European, national and provincial level. Furthermore, the EBLT is a member of the Network for the Promotion of Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) and also promotes cooperation with minorities in other places in Europe. Board member Froukje de Jong-Krap is a standby-member of the Steering Committee of NPLD.

The EBLT consists of representatives of 23 organisations, who strive for the position of Frisian, Low Saxon, Bildts and Papiamentu. Two of these four languages are languages to which the Netherlands has obligations to the international community, after the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe came into effect.

Since 2009, the EBLT and the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning (Mercator Research Centre) of the Fryske Akademy established a cooperation agreement. The Mercator Research Centre is responsible for e.g. the secretariat and the website of EBLT. In addition, the partners organise different activities in cooperation.

In the year 2015 EBLT was quite active at both national and international level. At national level our efforts were directed at lobbying on behalf of the Frisian broadcaster Omrop Fryslân who is threatened, together with all regional broadcasters, with severe cutbacks. Furthermore, the EBLT followed, observed and advised member organisation SONT in their efforts for recognition for Low Saxon in part II+ of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (after a failed attempt to be recognised in part III).

The Bildts language was recognised by UNESCO in 2014, a process that started with a lobby of EBLT in 2013 when EBLT visited the municipality of Het Bildt and spoke with several council members. In 2015 there has been a report published on the Bildts language by Paulus van der Sluis. Municipality Het Bildt is striving for recognition for the Bildts language in part II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and has been working on their application for their recognition. This is also the goal for Papiamentu. The EBLT follows, observes and supports these goals.

On an international level, EBLT has been in touch with Members of the European Parliament and has made arrangements for the organisation of a work visit of the President of the Intergroup for Multilingualism, Nils Torvalds, in the beginning of 2016. In March 2015 the EBLT presented a position paper to Marieke Sanders- ten Holte – member of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter and two members of the Dutch parliament Lutz Jacobi and Magda Berndsen. The reason of the position paper was a year of

delay caused by the Dutch State to hand in the state report about the implementation of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages in the Netherlands.



Presentation of the position paper

9.2 EBLT agenda in 2015

1. 20 January 2015: Marit Bijlsma of the Mercator Research Centre addressed the January meeting of the general assembly of EBLT about European funding.
2. 21 February 2015: The EBLT presented together with Slieker Film and Mercator Research Centre the Welsh/English movie *Y Syrcas* in the movie theatre of Slieker Film in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden for the occasion of International Mother Tongue Day. The movie was provided with English subtitles. *Y Syrcas* was showed a second time at February 24th. The movie got promoted by Omrop Fryslân and other channels. The Mother Tongue Day activity was a huge success. The first time tickets for the movie were sold out (41 persons present), the second time they were nearly sold out (33 persons present).
3. 6 March 2015: Press conference and presentation of our Position Paper. The Netherlands is one year due to its deadline to report to the Council of Europe concerning the ECRML. Therefore, the EBLT wrote its own report about the status of Frisian and Low Saxon in the Netherlands. This position paper is available at: <http://www.eblt.nl/eblt-bot-yn-noed-oer-nederlanske-minderheidstalen/>
4. The position paper was presented to Marieke Sanders (CoE), Magda Berndsen and Lutz Jacobi (president and vice-president of the commission for Interior Affairs, and Annigje Toering (Steatekomitee Frysk). Further, it was sent to the secretariat of ECRML, FPNM, and the

Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages of the European Parliament (amongst others).

5. 6 March 2015: Response letter to Province of Gelderland concerning their cutbacks for ECAL. This letter is a response to their letter received in January.
6. 1 April 2015: Letter to the informateur and the formateur of the Provincial Executives and the political parties with recommendations for the coalition agreement.
7. 22 April 2015: Attendance EPP Group Hearing on the protection of traditional minorities in Brussels.
8. 8 May 2015: Meeting with Jan Huitema EP-member and member of Intergroup for Traditional National Minorities, National Communities and Languages, and VVD-colleagues of the Provincial Board and of the Dutch House of Representatives.
9. 20 May 2015: Letter to minister of Interior and Kingdom Relations regarding our position paper and the deadline of March 1st for the government of The Netherlands to provide the Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe with a report on their accomplishments concerning the agreements in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. In this letter the minister is asked to indicate when the report will be finished.
10. 27 May 2015: Anne Graswinckel of Tryater addressed the spring meeting of the general assembly of EBLT about the activities of Tryater. Furthermore, Alex Riemersma discussed the NPLD-road map with all members.
11. 4-7 June 2015: Attendance congress of Ynterfryske Rie at the island of Sylt (Germany).
12. 10-12 June 2015: Attendance General Assembly NPLD in Helsinki.
13. 30 June 2015: Letter to the members of the newly installed Steatekomitee fan Fryslân about our concerns for the regional broadcaster Omrop Fryslân that is threatened by cutbacks and a merger with the two other regional (Dutch-Low Saxon) broadcasters.
14. 2 July 2015: Attendance presentation research report on the Bildts Language.
15. 11 September 2015: Attendance symposium in the honour of the 25th anniversary of member organisation SPLIKA.
16. 13-15 September 2015: A delegation from the organisation SPLIKA and Akademia Papiamentu visited a multilingual school, in addition to other organisations involved with the Frisian language.
17. 21-26 September 2015: Involved in organisation of Frisian Google Translate Week.
18. 23 September 2015: Presentation of petition for the preservation of Frisian Broadcaster Omrop Fryslân.
19. 25-26 September 2015: Attendance and organizing party of Frisian delegation Drongo Festival.
20. 5 October 2015: Letter to all representatives of the Dutch Lower House to call for an independent position for Frisian Broadcaster Omrop Fryslân.
21. 8 October 2015: Attendance of public meeting of the Dutch Lower Chamber on (amongst others) Omrop Fryslân and the planned cutbacks.
22. 26 October 2015: Meeting with Sietske Poepjes, Frisian regional Minister for Language, Education, Culture and Infrastructure on Frisian Broadcaster Omrop fryslân and the planned cutbacks.
23. 2 November 2015: Meeting with Hanno Brandt, Director of the Fryske Akademy.

24. 6 November 2015: Meeting with the general assembly in the Low Saxon Region with a visit to the Grunnenger Cultuurcentrum in Scheemda and the fall meeting at the Huus van de Taol in Beilen.
25. 24 November 2015: Meeting with Sietske Poepjes, Frisian regional Minister for Language, Education, Culture and Infrastructure to introduce the EBLT.
26. 2 December 2015: Regional Minister Benito Dirks from Bonaire visits Frisian school and regional organisations.

Attendances at several meetings, e.g. EU-Netwerk Noord-Nederland, Dingtiid, Tresoar, NHL, RuG, SPLIKA, etc. Contact, and several conversations, with both the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD), regarding future co-operation.

Invitations by the Mercator Research Centre were sent to members of EBLT for several of their conferences. Furthermore, the EBLT has regularly contact with EP-member Jan Huitema who is also a representative of the Intergroup

The general assembly of EBLT met three times in 2015: in Leeuwarden (winter meeting), in Leeuwarden (spring meeting), and in Beilen (fall meeting).

In January 2015 the Board of EBLT consisted of Froukje de Jong-Krap (interim-president), Ina Kuipers (treasurer), and Henk Bloemhoff, Fokke Jagersma, and Tryntsje van der Veer as general board members. Onno Falkena was advisor of the board. Jelske Dijkstra was the secretary of EBLT until September 2015, after which Rixt van Dongera took over as secretary. Cor van der Meer of the Mercator research Centre/FA mostly participates in meetings in an advisory role.

10. APPENDIX I

Goal and mission of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning

10.1 Mission Statement

Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning

The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning (formerly Mercator Education) was originally founded in 1987 and reshaped in 2001. The centre is part of the Fryske Akademy, **the scientific research and educational centre for Fryslân and its people, its language and its culture.**

The Mercator Research Centre is an independent and recognised reference centre for policy makers and professional workers in the field of multilingual education and language learning. The Mercator Research Centre brings Europe to Fryslân and Fryslân to Europe. It is funded by the Province of Fryslân (Friesland) and the Municipality of Leeuwarden.

Mercator mission statement

- To contribute to multilingual education in a multilingual Europe through research and by collecting, distributing and applying scientific knowledge.

Mercator continuously strives to:

- Provide a platform for the academic community as well as practitioners and policymakers/politicians.
- Conduct research on multilingualism and its aspects for both individuals and society.
- Offer a network of research institutes and universities in the field of multilingualism and function as a platform for the exchange of good practices.
- Focus on multilingualism in education, including language transmission in a social context.
- Increase awareness of the benefits of multilingualism and the added value of regional and minority languages through scientific results.

The values of Mercator

- Supportive of collaboration and working in partnerships
- Professional and working to a high standard
- Continuously learning
- Ambitious and provides a challenging environment for personal growth

The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning (Mercator Research Centre in short) aims at the acquisition, circulation and application of knowledge. The Mercator Research Centre gathers and mobilises expertise in the field of language learning at school, at home and through cultural participation in favour of linguistic diversity of Europe. The Mercator Research Centre is an

independent and recognised reference centre for policy makers and professional workers in the field of multilingual education and language learning. The Mercator Research Centre brings Europe to Fryslân and Fryslân to Europe.

Full version in Dutch

Missie van het Mercator Europees Kenniscentrum voor Meertaligheid en Taalleren

Meertaligheid als norm en waarde

In zijn aankondiging van de nieuwe strategie voor “Meertaligheid in de EU” (november 2005) verklaarde Eurocommissaris Jan Figel, dat taalverscheidenheid de kern vormt van de Europese identiteit. De Europese Commissie hecht belang aan het bevorderen van talen en taalverscheidenheid in de Unie. Dit is formeel vastgelegd in art. 22 van het Handvest van fundamentele rechten van de Europese burgers (2000): “De Unie respecteert de culturele, godsdienstige en taalkundige verscheidenheid.”

De nieuwe Europees commissaris voor Meertaligheid, Leonard Orban, verklaarde bij zijn aantreden: “We moeten ons taalkundig erfgood in de lidstaten koesteren en bevorderen, maar het is ook belangrijk dat we elkaar, onze burens en partners elders in de EU verstaan. – Het stimuleren van meertaligheid is een uitstekende manier om de Europese burgers dichter bij elkaar te brengen.”

Taalverscheidenheid van staten en regio’s veronderstelt meertalige burgers. Het beleid van de EU en van de Raad van Europa is erop gericht, dat de Europese burgers elkaar willen en kunnen verstaan. Van Europese burgers wordt gaandeweg verwacht, dat zij naast de moedertaal (of moedertalen) ten minste twee andere Europese talen leren, kort samengevat: (2) M + 2. De beheersing van meerdere talen is ook van belang voor de interculturele dialoog.

Dit algemene uitgangspunt vraagt beleidsinspanningen op het gebied van de taalplanning. In de taalplanning wordt onderscheid gemaakt tussen corpusplanning, statusplanning en planning van het taalleren. Het Mercator Europees Kenniscentrum voor Meertaligheid en Taalleren beweegt zich in de afdeling ‘planning van het taalleren’.

De programma’s van EU en van de Raad van Europa zetten in op de voorwaarden voor en de kwaliteit van het taalleren, bijvoorbeeld Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013).

Positie en herkenbaarheid in Europa en in de regio

Het Mercator Kenniscentrum is uitstekend toegerust om expertise en competenties die op het niveau van de lidstaten en de regio’s ontwikkeld zijn, te mobiliseren en bij elkaar te brengen. Door de specialistische expertise op het gebied van taalverscheidenheid en taalleren draagt het kenniscentrum bij aan het implementeren van de Europese beleidsprogramma’s op het terrein van taalverscheidenheid en taalleren.

- Het Mercator Kenniscentrum groeit uit tot een onafhankelijke en erkende instelling waar zowel de beleidsmakers als de professionele werkers in het veld met vertrouwen gebruik van kunnen maken.
- Het Mercator Kenniscentrum groeit uit tot een Europees toonaangevend kenniscentrum op het gebied van meertaligheid en taalleren, waarbij zowel aandacht is voor het leren op school als

voor de taaloverdracht buiten het onderwijs (thuis, op het werk, in de vrije tijd, door cultuurparticipatie). Het kenniscentrum bevordert de expertise en brengt de experts op dit terrein bij elkaar en draagt hiermee bij aan het Europese streven dat alle Europese burgers meer talen spreken en leren.

- Het Mercator Kenniscentrum draagt in de regio bij aan de versterking van de positie van 'Leeuwarden Kennisstad'. Het kenniscentrum is herkenbaar in en voor de stad Leeuwarden, hoofdstad van de tweetalige provincie Fryslân.
- Het Mercator kenniscentrum bevordert de deskundigheid van alle professionele werkers in de regio op het gebied van taalleren en meertaligheid.

Focus

De focus is de meertaligheid van het individu in de sociale en culturele context, zowel thuis als op school, in de werksituatie en in de sociale omgeving (verenigingen, maatschappelijke organisaties en (zorg-)instellingen) en de culturele sfeer (toneel, muziek, film). Het onderzoek is gericht op het leren en onderwijzen van talen als moedertaal, als tweede taal en als vreemde taal. De taalverscheidenheid van Europa komt in de eerste plaats tot uitdrukking in de aandacht voor de autochtone regionale en minderheidstalen in Europa. Naast het leren op school is er ook aandacht voor taalbeleving en taaloverdracht in de culturele context. Meertalige taaluitingen zoals muziek, lezen en literatuur, voordracht en toneel zijn belangrijke elementen van de beleving en ontwikkeling van taalverscheidenheid van de gemeenschap en van het individu. De **taakstelling** bestaat uit drie elementen:

- Kennisverwerving

Het Mercator Kenniscentrum legt zich toe op nieuw onderzoek betreffende meertaligheid, veelal in samenwerking met hogescholen en universiteiten in Fryslân en Nederland en met partnerinstituten in de EU.

Het Mercator Kenniscentrum continueert de taak van **kennisbeheer** door middel van een digitaal info- en documentatiecentrum op het gebied van regionale en minderheidstalen.

- Kenniscirculatie

Het Mercator Kenniscentrum is een transferpunt van kennis door disseminatie van de kennis d.m.v.:

- de Regionale Dossiers, de Mercator Newsletter, Q&A en de eigen website (www.mercator-research.eu);
- bijdrage leveren aan het verwerven van kennis door studenten (bachelor, master) en professionele werkers in opvoeding en onderwijs d.m.v. scriptie, stage en projecten;
- actualiseren van kennis van docenten, opleiders, onderwijsbegeleiders d.m.v. seminars, workshops en congressen (regionaal, nationaal en internationaal).
- Kennistoepassing

De expertise van het Mercator Kenniscentrum wordt door de professionele werkers in het veld toegepast in projecten op het gebied van voorschoolse vorming, vernieuwing in taalonderwijs, pedagogische concepten in meertalig onderwijs, taalverwerving en integraal taalbeleid. Verder advisering over



meertalig onderwijs aan scholen en lerarenopleidingen en aan schoolbesturen, locale en regionale overheden.

Uit de samenhang van deze drie elementen – en de uitkomsten in termen van praktisch bruikbare instrumenten en adviezen – blijkt de waarde van het Mercator Kenniscentrum in de kennisinfrastructuur m.b.t. meertaligheid en taalleren, namelijk in het geheel van instituties die als primaire doelstelling hebben het verwerven, het beheren en de distributie van kennis.

Europese positie

Met deze taken is het Mercator Kenniscentrum een onafhankelijk en erkend focuscentrum voor beleidsmakers, onderzoekers en opleiders op het gebied van taalverscheidenheid en het leren van talen. Hiermee levert het Mercator Kenniscentrum ook een bijdrage aan de sociale cohesie en sociale duurzaamheid van meertalige gebieden in Europa.