

# Annual Report

Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning

2016



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# Annual report

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on Multilingualism and Language Learning  
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# 0. Introduction

In this annual report on the year 2016, 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 towards 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 functions combined 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.

## 0.1 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 (until 2013) 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 until 2012 and later on for the period 2012 – 2014. Through the years the centre obtained EU-funding for several projects, such as the LEARNMe project (2013-2015) and the LangOER project (2014-2016). Recently, in 2016 two new EU projects were added to the list, the COMBI project (co-ordinated by the Mercator Research Centre) and the TEACH\_D project (co-ordinated by ECMI in Flensburg). More information on these 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.

## 0.2 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. In these fields the Akademy delivers 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 wider 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 into 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 reflects well on 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 9.1.

In 2016 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 affiliated 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 FUEN and foresees also good and fruitful co-operation in the coming years with these networks.

## Preview

The Fryske Akademy including Mercator wants to strategically develop further 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 UCF 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 2016

### *Product groups*

In 2016 Mercator rephrased it's so called 'product groups' to fulfill the demands for what is called the framework of "boekjersubsydze" (subsidy) of the province of Fryslân. The product groups can also be found in the finances chapter.

Mercator used for 2016 the following seven product groups:

1. Library and information
2. Networks
3. Research and Regional Dossiers
4. Communication and Publications
5. Conferences
6. Acquisition and matching projects
7. EBLT

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. 2016 is still a year 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". The structure of the product groups might change again in the future, this depends very much on experiences and the constant search for best practices concerning reporting.

# 1. Library and Information

The Mercator Research Centre maintains three databases:

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

## 1.1 Bibliographical database

At 31st of December 2016 the bibliographical database includes more than 7000 records. The collection last been reorganized during 2014-2015.

In October 2014 the entire library of Mercator Research Centre has been moved to Tresoar. The collection is accessible on the ground 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](http://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 implemented a new catalogue- and managementsystem of OCLC: *Worldshare*, which makes the catalogue of Mercator Research Centre available via Worldcat ([www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)).

## 1.2 Database of Experts

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 2016, about 620 experts were registered. In 2017 the database will be updated and if possible integrated in the updated Language Fact Sheet-system of Mercator Research Centre.

## 1.3 Database of organizations

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.

## 1.4 Expert in the Spotlight

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 2016 the following experts were asked to become Expert in the Spotlight:

<i>Month</i>	<i>Expert in the Spotlight</i>
February:	Roland Verra
May:	Robert Teare
July/August:	Michael Riessler
October/November:	Taalstudio
December:	Elly Albers

The information specialist of Mercator, Elly Albers, retired in December 2016. It has been decided not to appoint a new information specialist and to focus the resources more on research. Some of her valuable work and tasks have been taken over by colleagues. These continued tasks include "Expert in the spotlight", "taalnijs" and the database of experts.

The information specialist took 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, administration of the collection of journals, and literature searches for the members of the Mercator Research Centre-team, other staff working in the field of Sociolinguistics at the Fryske Akademy and external persons.

# 2. Networks

## 2.1 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 in 2017. The Yamal-Nenets government has agreed to pay for the translation costs. More in general it needs 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, therefore have to wait until relations are normalised again. More regional dossiers on some of the indigenous languages of Russia are expected in the future.

The Regional Dossier about the Nenets-, Hanti- and Selkup languages was much appreciated by the the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, as becomes clear from the official response from its Deputy Governor of (see Appendix 9.3).

### OSCE/HCNM

Contacts have been established with representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Ukraine, Macedonia and Moldova. Most of the meetings took place in The Hague. In some cases Mercator receives invitations to join expert delegations to these regions. Contacts with OSCE/HCNM are positive, professional and quite frequent.

### European Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism

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 (which are 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.

### Co-operation with SOAS (London)

Co-operation with SOAS is functioning very well, regular contacts resulted in another successful SOAS-Mercator Expert Seminar (in December 2016). New ideas for projects are always being discussed. Presently work is being done within the framework of the OWRI project and on a project proposal in the CULT-COOP programme of the EU. SOAS and Mercator complement each other in an effective way.

## Co-operation with Language Academies throughout Europe

Mercator 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. It is foreseen that more Language Academies will join in the future.

## NPLD and FUEN

Mercator is long-standing affiliate member of the NPLD (Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity), a Europe wide network that in some cases receives co-EU funding. Mercator and the NPLD complement each other in a constructive way. The profiles of both networks differ, although both networks have Regional- and Minority Languages in their focus. The profile of the Mercator European Network is strongly formed by academic research and NPLD's profile is shaped with a background in policy. The Mercator Research Centre maintains close and good relations with the NPLD and foresees also good and fruitful co-operation in the coming years with these networks.

FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities) is the European umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities / ethnic groups in Europe. FUEN has around 90 member organisations altogether. On several occasions Mercator co-operated with the FUEN, recently with the *safepack initiative* (see <https://www.fuen.org/>)

## Co-operation with UNESCO

A consortium, including Mercator Research Centre, advises UNESCO on the transformation of its Atlas of the World's Languages in danger into a World Language Atlas. On December 9<sup>th</sup> 2016, this international consortium met with the Atlas' main editor Christopher Mosely, in the Hampshire Orange Hotel in Leeuwarden. The developments surrounding the Atlas were discussed as well as ideas for new features. All parties present stated their commitment to making the new Atlas a success.



*UNESCO meeting at the Hotel Oranje, Ljouwert*

## 2.2 Mercator in Fryslân (Focus on Fryslân)

In 2016, the Mercator Research Centre has continued its efforts to be a valuable partner 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 a series of interviews with possible cooperation partners, had already started, and continued into 2016.

Some of the concrete activities with a 'Focus on Fryslân' were:

- Throughout the year, various Mercator team members have been active in the preparation for Leeuwarden-Fryslân Cultural Capital 2018. This included continuation of the cooperation with Afûk on the creation of a MOOC on Frisian.
- In April, Mercator was present with information at the 'Ûnderwiisdei' organized by CEDIN.
- In November, Mercator organized a day-long seminar on 'The influence of migration on the position of minority languages', hosting speakers from the region and from abroad. The ambition to hold a seminar like this was formulated in the annual report 2015. The topic was chosen explicitly on the request of some of the Frisian 'sparring partners' of Mercator. More information can be found here:

<https://www.mercator-research.eu/en/news-archive/past-exploits/exploits-detail/news/detail/symposium-the-influence-of-migration-on-the-position-of-minority-languages/>

- In December, Mercator organized and hosted a two-day seminar on, as part of its seminar series in cooperation with SOAS (London). Although this activity was not organized within the context of 'Focus on Fryslân', it is clear that many Frisian organisations were invited and participated, including staff and students from the University of Groningen. A presentation with a focus on the Frisian case was held by dr. A. Riemersma en dr. R. Jonkman. More information can be found here:

<https://www.mercator-research.eu/en/news-archive/past-exploits/exploits-detail/news/detail/seminar-language-documentation-teaching-materials-and-didactics-an-opportunity-for-small-and-enda/>

## 2.3 LANGSCAPE

Mercator is member of the LANGSCAPE network since 2014. LANGSCAPE is an international research network engaging in plurilingualism, language education and language learning. LANGSCAPE responds to the tendencies of linguistic, cultural, and methodological fragmentation in foreign/second/further language research by strengthening plurilingualism and diversity, and by giving special consideration to the social impact of mobility, migration, class, and gender as expressions of linguistic/cultural empowerment and integration. The general research concept of LANGSCAPE projects beyond disciplinary and geographic boundaries.

Areas of LANGSCAPE activity:

- Research in international groups & contexts
- International plurilingual conferences
- Plurilingual publications prepared by international editorial teams
- Curriculum development in language teacher education

- Opportunities for study in plurilingual contexts at BA, MA & PhD level
- Doctoral workshops & colloquia, summer/winter schools, expert seminars
- Bilateral PhD opportunities (co-tutelle/bi-lateral supervision)
- Blended learning activities

Research activities of this network started out with a core group of 12 partners in 8 countries in 1998. LANGSCAPE is now in the process of expanding its scope and aims by setting up regional centres in approximately 11 countries. This will give equal access to all partners to conduct research and training, in particular to the new EU member states joining the project over the next years. Further, it will allow better exchange of expertise and more profitable dissemination of research results and samples of good-practice by way of sharing expert knowledge with local knowledge in education and the public sphere.

The network is currently coordinated by Prof. Lutz Küster and Prof. Stephan Breidbach from Humboldt-Universität in Berlin.

## 2.4 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 2016 the Network had 99 members, divided over 20 countries. 4 New schools registered on the website in 2016.

It has its own website at <http://www.networkofschools.eu/>, and an email bulletin is sent several times a year. Due to a change in staff the bulletin appeared only twice in 2016. More information about website and bulletin can be found in section 5: *Communication and Publications*.

Mercator is continuously trying to activate the network of schools and to make it interactive. The Network of Schools website was analysed to indicate to what extent the information offered should be updated, for example the section on teaching material. One of the current ideas is to create a Facebook group, in order to make the network more interactive and so that partners can update their own information.



# 3. Research and Regional Dossiers

## 3.1 Project co-ordination

In general project 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, exploring new projects, presentations, guest lectures and supervision of the activities carried out by Mercator.

Many of these co-ordination tasks in 2016, such as presentations, guest lectures, networking, projects and contacts are reported in the following chapters where the activities are described in more detail and in their context.

Furthermore the co-ordinator has been active with advising at different organisations or projects, such as the sociolinguistic survey Fryslân, Afuk, Cedin and EBLT.

## 3.2 Regional dossiers series

The Regional dossier 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 Mercator Research Centre website. The Mercator Research Centre is responsible for the compilation and publication of the dossiers. The total number of downloads of Regional dossiers in 2016 was 32,729.

In 2016 seven dossiers in the Regional Dossiers series were published. For a list, please see the chapter “Communication and Publications”.

Four dossiers are nearing completion:

- The Russian language edition of *Nenets, Khanty and Selkup languages in education in the Yamal Region in Russia*. Author: Dr. Roza Ivanovna Laptander.
- *The Scottish Language in the UK* (2nd edition), Author: Liz niven
- *Frisian in the Netherlands* (5th edition), Author: Dr. Alex Riemersma
- *German in South Tyrol* (2nd edition), Author: Ulrike Huber.

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:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Status</i>
Aranese in Spain	Eva Pons	Author is working on first draft. Deadline: June 2017
Bunjevaca in Serbia	Suzana Kujundzic & Mirjana Savanov	Author is working on first draft. Deadline: February 2017
Danish in Germany	Jørgen Kühl	Author has written first draft.
Finnic languages in Sweden	Jarmo Lainio	Author is working on second draft.
Deadline: February 2017		
Frisian in the Netherlands (5th ed.)	Alex Riemersma	Author is working on first draft. Deadline: February 2017
Gaelic in the UK (2nd ed.)	Boyd Robertson	Author is working on second draft. Deadline: February 2017
German in South Tyrol (2nd ed.)	Ulrike Huber	Author has written first draft.
Hungarian in Romania	Papp. Z. Attila	Author is working on second draft. Deadline: February 2017
Italian in Switzerland	Xxx	xxx
Komi in Komi Republic	Michael Rießler	Author is working on first draft. Deadline: February 2017
Occitan in France	Pierre Escudé	Author has written first draft.
Papiamentu on the ABC Islands	XXX	XXX
Rumansh in Switzerland	Manfred Gross	Author is working on first draft.
Scot-Saami in Finland	Michael Riebler	Author is working on first draft. Deadline: February 2017
Scots in the UK (2nd edition)	Liz Niven	Author has written first draft, is now working on corrections.
Ulster-Scots in Northern Ireland	Carol Baraniuk	Author is working on first draft. Deadline: February 2017

The Regional Dossiers are much appreciated internationally. Attached are two official responses by the Director of Linguistic Policy of the Aragonese Government and the Deputy Governor of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (See appendices 9.2 and 9.3).

### 3.3 The Bildts language status in a European context

In 2015 Mercator published the report: “Seven perspectives on Bildts: The Bildts language status in a European context”. In this report the chances and expected consequences of inclusion of Bildts in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages are explored. It Bildts is a minority language spoken in the Northwestern part of the province of Fryslân in the Netherlands with some 6,000 native speakers.

In February 2016 the co-chair of the Intergroup of the European Parliament Nils Torvalds visited the Fryske Akademy, the EBLT and the municipality of Bilts in Fryslân. At that occasion Mr. Torvalds received the first print of the research report.

### 3.4 Factsheets project

#### Background

The *Fact Sheets* project was restarted in September 2015. Aim of the project is to update and improve Mercator’s existing fact sheet system, that was built over a decade ago. The reason for update of the system can be found in the fact that the UNESCO is planning to upgrade its *Language Atlas for Endangered Languages* into a *World Atlas of Languages*, and Mercator is part of an international consortium that advises UNESCO on this matter. The information from Mercator’s fact sheet system and from the *Regional Dossier* series focus on minority language education, which is also a major topic in UNESCO’s Atlas. Thus, both fact sheets and *Regional Dossiers* can be a very valuable asset for the new UNESCO’s Atlas.

#### Current status of the Fact Sheet System

At the end of 2015, a demo containing a single fact sheet about the Frisian language in the Netherlands, was presented to the Mercator team. The demo was built with the *Content Management System* (hereafter: CMS) *Dokuwiki* (<http://www.dokuwiki.org/>). An important advantage of *Dokuwiki* is that all fact sheets can have an unlimited number of collaborating authors, of which the editing rights are under Mercator’s control. This feature is important, because keeping information on dozens of minority languages up-to-date is a huge task, and Mercator hopes to invoke the expertise of minority language experts from all over Europe.

In 2016, 11 more fact sheets in various stages of completion, were added to the system. In addition, a mapping system was implemented to visualize the regions where languages are spoken, a manual was added to help new authors get started with the *Dokuwiki* CMS, and various sheets containing background information about minority language rights have been added.

## 3.5 Papiamentu in Perspectief

The province of Fryslân asked the Mercator Research Centre to make a critical analysis of a report conducted by the *Taalunie* (The Dutch language Union) about how to deal with the Dutch language on the island of Bonaire. Since 2010 Bonaire belongs to The Netherlands as a municipality with a special status. On Bonaire the main language spoken is Papiamentu (64%).

The *Taalunie* recommended for example that:

- To start with - qualitatively high, Dutch language lessons in the first year of primary education - preferably already in pre-primary education - for all educational activities. Pupils should also get more in touch with the Dutch language outside school;
- Students should be exposed to the Dutch language for over 90% of the school day;
- The different roles of Papiamentu and Dutch should be taken into account. Dutch is necessary to gain knowledge and to have perspectives for further education, and Papiamentu is important for identity formation and communication in the home society;
- The Dutch Framework of Reference regarding Language and Arithmetic could be implemented on Bonaire.

The report of the *Taalunie* and its recommendations, especially the four above, were heavily criticized by both inhabitants and politicians on the island as well as experts in the field. The Mercator Research Centre analysed the report of the *Taalunie*, looked at its background, analysed the criticism and recommendations of two expert groups, and interviewed three experts about their view on the report. Based on these and on the Mercator's experience with multiple language learning in education, Mercator has drawn conclusions and made recommendations for further research.

One of the conclusions was that the *Taalunie* looked from a Dutch perspective to the situation on Bonaire, while the linguistic situation on Bonaire differs from the situation in the major part of the Netherlands. The linguistic situation on Bonaire, namely where Papiamentu, Dutch, Spanish and English are spoken, requires a different, more multilingual approach. International experience with trilingual school types could be useful for Bonaire and its educational system.

The analysis was presented in March 2016 to a representative of Benito Dirksz.

The complete report can be found on the website of Mercator:

[https://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/documents/publications/2016-01-01\\_-\\_papiamentu\\_in\\_perspectief.pdf](https://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/documents/publications/2016-01-01_-_papiamentu_in_perspectief.pdf)

## 3.6 Migration and cultural minorities in Europe

In May 2016 the meeting with the title 'Migration and cultural minorities in Europe' took place. Cor van der Meer presented about the theme 'The Frisian language and migrants'. As a result of this meeting and presentation an article was published in "Migrations and cultural and linguistic minorities in Europe" (Centre Maurits Coppieters, Ehugune Ezkerraberri Fundazioa, Brussels / 2016)

The first part of the article is about the activities of the Mercator Research Centre. The second part is about the linguistic situation in the province of Fryslân and the third part about Migrants in Fryslân.

It can be concluded that the trilingual education model currently in use, offers valuable insights, and offers opportunities with regards to teaching migrant children. Nevertheless, the increasing diversity in the classroom does require a new approach. The strict division of languages needs to be replaced, and a more playful approach adopted. *Best practices* in this area exist in Germany, Austria and Catalonia.

Concerning linguistic diversity and policy, it is important to make use of the language that migrants already know. This helps migrants to learn a new language, appreciates the value of their mother tongue and encourages them to pass on the language to their children. There is a need to describe the language needs of migrants, because this might differ between individuals. Furthermore, the diversity of migrant populations need to be taken into account.

We need to think about new models of schooling where the whole linguistic repertoire can play a role. Models for multilingual classrooms, where also the mother tongue of migrants can have a place. This is especially important for regions where other languages are spoken besides the state language. Of course this also has implications for the teaching materials that need to be available, and for the teachers themselves that need to develop additional skills, and to function as (multilingual) role models.

## 3.7 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 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 was 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.

## Activities 2013-2015

The project was 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. 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. Proceedings of this conference were published in December 2015.

## Activities 2016

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. The White Paper was also translated into a number of working languages of the involved partners, including Hungarian sign language. After publication, it was widely shared throughout the extensive professional networks of the partners, presented at different meetings and shared on social media. The White Paper in its different forms can be found at:



*The LEARNMe White Paper was presented to MEP Nils Torvalds during his visit to Fryslân*

<http://www.mercator-network.eu/publications/>

A large part of the work in 2016 was focused on collecting and compiling all necessary information for the final report to the AECEA, the responsible agency of the European Union. As coordinating

partner, the Mercator Research Centre was responsible for this work. It also involved a detailed financial report. The report was very well received in Brussels. A small number of technical questions could be easily and satisfactorily answered. The project was rated with an 8/10, with particularly high marks (9/10) for the aspects of 'partnership' and 'project management' – the elements the Mercator Research Centre was responsible for.

## 3.8 LangOER

LangOER was a 3-year network (January 2014- December 2016) supported by action KA2 Languages of the *Lifelong Learning Programme*, European Commission. The partnership consisted of a set of key players: a global organisation for open and distance education, a consortium of 30 European Ministries of Education linked to the biggest network of European schools, a research centre on multilingualism / network of multilingual schools in minority language areas in Europe, universities with R&D activity and strong local and national reach.

### Partnership

- Fryske Akademy, The Netherlands (Project coordination)
- Web2learn, Greece (Project management)
- European Schoolnet, Belgium
- University of Gothenburg, Sweden
- Jan Dlugosz University, Poland
- Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania
- International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), 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 is 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.

#### *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*.

- *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.
- 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 2016

### *1. LangOER final conference - Open education: promoting diversity for european language*

<http://langoer.eun.org/conference-2016>

The LangOER network organised their final conference in Brussels, 26/27 September 2016, coinciding with the *European Day of languages*. The event was co-organised with the *Educational Repositories Network* – EdReNe (<http://edrene.org/>).

The LangOER-EdReNe conference aimed to bring together experts in open education and digital content repositories with educational researchers and a variety of policy makers concerned with language learning and teaching, pedagogical use of ICT, and social integration and inclusion.

It particularly addressed key issues related to the uptake of less used languages.

- How cross-border collaboration can address current challenges and provide new opportunities to extend OER/OEP in less used languages.
- How OER/OEP can be optimally transferred to language communities where there are limited financial resources and political support.
- How new policies and initiatives can address existing roadblocks for OER/OEP adoption.
- The added value of OER/OEP from a (less used) language teaching perspective.
- Current state of the art on initiatives and digital resources in Europe

More information on the conference:

- [http://langoer.eun.org/conference\\_live](http://langoer.eun.org/conference_live) (Conference Live)
- [http://langoer.eun.org/conference\\_materials](http://langoer.eun.org/conference_materials) (Conference Materials)



## 2. Support to policy makers – Consultation Mechanism

[http://langoer.eun.org/policy\\_consultation](http://langoer.eun.org/policy_consultation)

Support to policy makers - The LangOER project has been contributing to the promotion of learning and teaching of less used European languages by linking them to the global challenges of Open Education, through awareness raising and capacity building activities. Under this framework, a *consultation process* ([http://langoer.eun.org/policy\\_consultation](http://langoer.eun.org/policy_consultation)) was designed to enable policy makers to interact with experts.

The LangOER project policy recommendations '*Enabling Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Europe through OER*' (available on the LangOER website) were presented and discussed during open sessions and workshops, at the final conference and in a webinar, for further cycles of revision. As final activity of this process, the project invited the involved stakeholders to join the *Policy consultation group* (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/LangOERPolicyConsultation>) on Facebook, promoting a dialogue around the policy recommendations and key resources in the field, as well as at enhancing OER into policy and encourage further action.

## 3. Partner meeting Brussels- 28 September 2016

The fifth partner meeting took place on the 28th of September 2016, in Brussels, Rue de Treves, 61 (Belgium) at the premises of European Schoolnet (EUN). Topics discussed were:

- First impressions of the final conferences and follow-up actions
- Project administration and preparation of the final report
- Finalized deliverables as of 1/10/2015 onwards:
  - WP4 - Sharing Resources on Learning Resource Exchange
  - WP4 - Community building for Teachers
  - WP4 - Report on teaching training materials
  - WP7 – Final Conference
  - WP7 - Support to Policy Makers
- Upcoming activities / deliverables to be finalized
  - WP6 - Selection and publication of Research papers
  - WP7 - Digital Showcase
  - WP7 - Policy Paper
  - WP9 - Instrument for Policy Consultation
  - WP9 - Final Impact Report
- Sustainability of the LangOER project

## 4. Participation in conferences

The project participated in a number of conferences in 2016. The Mercator Research Centre participated in the conference: "Bilingualism in education" taking place in Bangor, Wales on the 12th of June 2016. A presentation was given by Marit Bijlsma titled "*OER: insights into a multilingual landscape*". Other events and conferences in 2016 where the LangOER project was discussed, presented and promoted, include:

- Open Education Global conference 2016
- The Future of Education conference 2016
- INTED conference 2016
- The Future of Learning conference 2016
- EDULEARN conference 2016
- SS21 - Sociolinguistics Symposium 21 2016
- EUROCALL conference 2016 - Presentation 1
- Workshop for low and medium ICT skilled teachers on OER 2016
- iALIC conference 2016
- AAAL conference 2016
- PL CALL Between Conference 2016
- Bilingualism in education conference 2016
- eTwinning conference workshop 2016
- EUROCALL conference 2016 - Presentation 2
- Global Challenges conference 2016
- Society, Integration, Education conference - SIE 2016
- Human Potential Development conference 2016

All documents are available for download at the LangOer website (<http://langoer.eun.org/>).

## Publications

The recommendations from the LangOER project are suggested on the basis of studies and observations made by European countries over the last three years and the finding that licensed, quality OER and OEP are relatively poorly developed in LUL communities.

Following discussions about initial recommendations at the LangOER conference from 26-27 September 2016 and the consultation webinar held on 2 November 2016, the project has revised these and now suggests the following top three level recommendations to be taken forward as part of a consultation process.

- (2016). Bijlsma, Creelman and Titlestad. "Policy Recommendations Enhancement of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity through OER". Retrievable here:

[http://langoer.eun.org/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=fe5e8104-fa58-4b5b-b517-7accf0e95271&groupId=395028](http://langoer.eun.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=fe5e8104-fa58-4b5b-b517-7accf0e95271&groupId=395028)

The policy recommendations are also available in Dutch, Lithuanian, Swedish, Greek, Polish, Latvian at the LangOer website (<http://langoer.eun.org/>).

Additional documents to the policy recommendation:

- Draft Policy Recommendations – Addendum (in English)  
[http://langoer.eun.org/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=2319c6ba-805c-485b-9bf3-5136017f0365&groupId=395028](http://langoer.eun.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=2319c6ba-805c-485b-9bf3-5136017f0365&groupId=395028)

## 3.9 Minority Languages and Education in Europe: Best Practices and Pitfalls

In the summer of 2016, the Mercator Research Centre received a request from the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education to write a research report on the best practices and greatest challenges of minority languages and education in Europe. For this report, the Mercator Research Centre has conducted an in-depth comparative analysis on the basis of thirteen case studies, each representing one regional or minority language in a specific region in Europe in order to gain insight into the situation of minority languages in education in Europe. The case languages have been: German language in South-Tyrol (Italy), Basque language in France, Basque Language in Spain, Hungarian language in Slovakia, Hungarian language in Slovenia, Hungarian language in Romania, Swedish language in Finland, Frisian language in the Netherlands, Romani and Beash language in Hungary, Welsh language in the United Kingdom, Sorbian language in Germany, Irish Gaelic language in Ireland, and Polish language in Lithuania.

Indications for best practices have been described in the paper and challenges that minority languages face in education have been highlighted. Specific attention was directed to vocational education and career perspectives. In the concluding chapter, this report then gives recommendations and suggests ways in which the EU can support minority languages in education

The methodology used for this study comprised the writing of comprehensive case studies for all of the thirteen selected languages. The information was mostly retrieved from the Mercator Research Centre's *Regional Dossiers* series, complemented by interviews with experts from different European regions. This completed the overview and resulted in more detailed information, for instance on specific language situations and career developments. Other sources such as relevant research reports and literature were assessed to collect the extra information that was needed to reach the report's objectives.

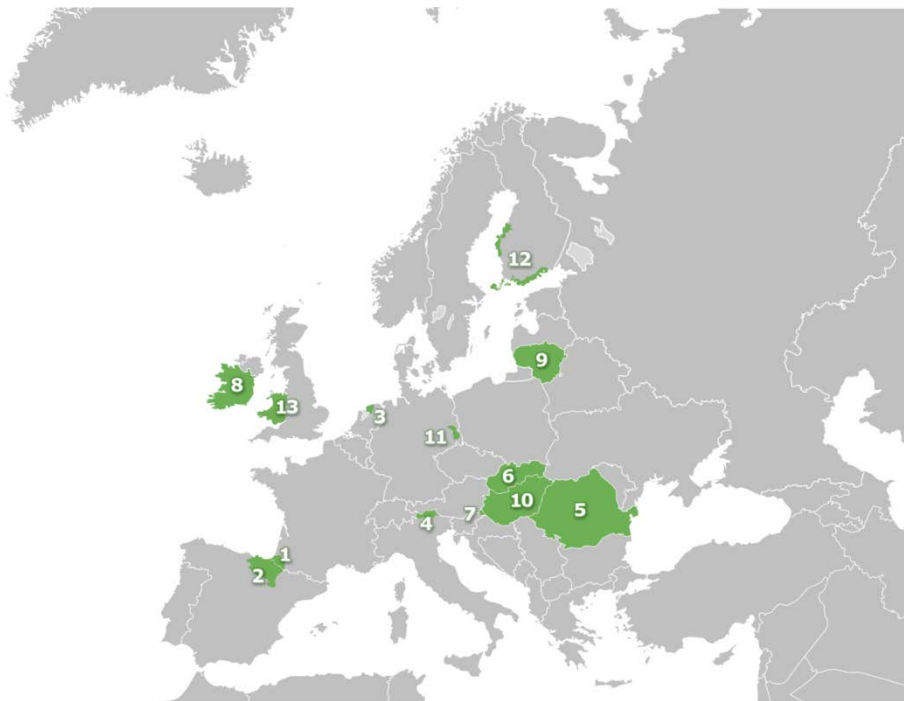
Based on a review of relevant legislation, projects and literature in combination with an in-depth comparative analysis of thirteen case studies, this report listed a variety of key findings that are essential for a thorough understanding of best practices and pitfalls concerning regional and minority languages in education. There are many minority languages in Europe, each of them coping with a different set of circumstances at nation-state level or regional level. The main aim of this project has been to give a clear overview of the situation of thirteen of these European minority languages. Particularly, with regard to the role that minority languages play in education. However, the role that the EU can play in this regard has also been taken into consideration.

Important recommendations that have been made on the basis of this analysis were aimed at the European Union and entailed the following recommendations for the European Union and its Member States:

- To maintain and promote programmes focused on the exchange of experiences and best practices concerning regional and minority languages in Europe;
- To promote European-wide research on education, language learning and instruction models in a multilingual context;
- To stimulate the development of qualitative teaching material in minority languages for all educational levels;
- To promote stable relationships between countries, especially in border regions where both languages are spoken;

- To develop an international reward system which stimulates teachers to become proficient in teaching in a multilingual classroom;
- To raise awareness for multilingualism throughout Europe;
- To stimulate Member States to ratify the legislative frameworks for proper legal language recognition;
- To implement language planning as a long-term key issue in state politics;
- To stimulate Member States to provide a continuous learning line for minority languages from pre-primary education to third-level education.

*Map of the language areas covered in the report*





## 3.10 COMBI II

The COMBI project is a 3 year network project (01/09/2016 – 31/08/2019), funded by the EACEA, Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships for adult education. The COMBI project (*Communication competences for migrants and disadvantaged background learners in bilingual work environments*), will offer a multidisciplinary approach to languages and to learning in general with a focus on migrant workers. The goal of COMBI is to develop innovative and inclusive/systemic practices and methods focused on acquiring communication competences in the languages required in the workplace. It takes into consideration the multilingual reality of European regions. The aim of this method is not in order to acquire full competences in two or more languages, but in order that the regional language is taken into consideration as far as it fulfils language requirements in the workplace.

The overall objective of the project is: To offer a versatile training material toolkit for its use in the language teaching area of any regional language of Europe.

### Project Objectives

- Improving the language skills of people currently working in the health care sector and where knowledge of the local language is of high importance and improving the quality of work
- To train trainers to be able to teach regional languages to disadvantaged learners focusing in the communication needs at their workplaces
- To train trainers to be able to teach communication skills for a bilingual work environments (e.g. continuous switching of the language, oral communication and written communication in different languages)
- Taking steps towards integration
- Increasing the employability of the unemployed.

### Main Target Group

- language teachers (teachers in public and concerted schools for adults of Basque language ...
- adult education trainers
- language and vocational training teachers

- stakeholders in the field of adult vocational training and support for disadvantaged learning).

## 3.11 OWRI

### Cross-language dynamics: reshaping community

(Co-ordination University of Manchester, Institute for Modern Languages Research)

Within the framework of the co-operation with SOAS in London different detailed options for co-operation and joined projects have been discussed. In 2016 some initial OWRI funds were granted. With this funding a number of meetings can be organised to develop the research model and greater application. In fact the first practical OWRI meeting started in December 2016 in Leeuwarden. It is part of a much bigger project co-ordinated by the University of Manchester. In the meantime several meetings took place, the first in Leeuwarden (December 2016). Other partners include e.g. INALCO in Paris, Humboldt University in Berlin and the American Councils for International Education (USA).

The focus of this SOAS research initiative is on the intersection between multilingualism, 'heritage' languages and higher education. The heightened mobility of people triggered by globalisation forces and recent events such as the mass exodus from Syria are having a dramatic impact on the linguistic make up of many nation-states. New forms of multilingualism and linguistic hierarchies are emerging, especially in Europe, often presenting significant challenges to these policies and their institutions, including (higher) education. The overall aim of the SOAS initiative is to explore how these new(er) developments impact on university language education and what kind of actions can and/or should occur to transform university-level language education.

This will be explored through two main interlinked projects:

- A survey of the multilingual practices and attitudes towards multilingualism of students in European universities to gain insight into how this generation experiences and reacts to the new forms of multilingualism.
- A motivation-oriented investigation of students studying the less widely taught languages. They include the 'heritage' languages with a considerable cohort of heritage speakers as students. These languages and their learners are often ignored in education. Issues to be explored include:
  - what is the (socio-)linguistic profile of such learners,
  - what are their motivations to learn the language,
  - what are their linguistic practices and repertoires,
  - what kind of learning experiences do they have and/or benefit from?

Both surveys will be wide-ranging and will be followed by an in-depth examination of the issues involving interviews and focus groups. The exploration of these issues will contribute directly to expanding and refining knowledge and understanding of multilingualism, language pedagogy and language policy/management. The intention is also to use results to transform approaches to language learning in universities and influence curriculum reform.

## 3.12 Frisian MOOC

As a side effect of the LangOER project, Afûk and Mercator got convinced that a Frisian MOOC would be very useful for new speakers in and out the Frisian Language Community. After a pre-study carried out in 2015/2016 both partners decided to apply for a subsidy at the provincial government to jointly develop a Frisian Language MOOC, based on the EduFrysk model. During this process a Frisian MOOC was developed at the University of Groningen, a basic MOOC, based on the 'futurelearn' platform. In reality the wish for a more detailed and specified MOOC was still there. Due to staff changes at the Afûk institute the project got behind schedule in 2016. Happily, new opportunities were found early 2017, which led to a change in task division between Afûk and Mercator. Not, the project is in full swing and the results will be available in 2018.

## 3.13 Research supervision of Lieuwe-Jan Hettema

In 2016, Lieuwe-Jan Hettema from the Saami University of Applied Sciences researched the regulation of public media services in the Frisian language in regards to the commitments made by the Netherlands via two instruments: the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. His research addresses the influence of media on language vitality. The regional media service for Fryslân (Omrop Fryslân) is the only service that broadcasts in Frisian on a daily basis.

The research was supervised locally by Edwin Klinkenberg en Cor van der Meer , and resulted in a thesis, which is available for download on the Mercator Research Website:

<https://www.mercator-research.eu/knowledge-base/publications/>

# 4. Communication and Publications

Mercator communicates its activities and products via

- its main website and its project websites,
- its newsletters,
- via social media.
- the press

## 4.1 Websites

Mercator European Research Centre hosts and maintains three websites:

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

### Mercator-research.eu

Via this website Mercator Research Centre communicates its identity and goals, shares its knowledge and publications, and announces events. In 2017, the main website of Mercator Research will be renewed.

Figure 1 shows the number of unique visitors during the past five years. Since 2012 there has been a steady increase. But in 2016, the increase is much sharper. The increase is biggest in the last two months of 2016, which coincides with the months that Mercator Research Centre organized two conferences.

Most website visitors in 2016 came from the United States, the Russian Federation, and Germany. Two countries of origin have a far bigger increase in visitor number than the others: visitor numbers from the Russian Federation have doubled, and visitor numbers from the United States have tripled. The increase in visitor numbers from the Russian Federation may have to do with the publication of the Regional Dossier, *Nenets, Khanty and Selkup in the Russian Federation*. Increase from the United States may have to do with the two conferences, since speakers from the United States were present at these events.

Most frequently downloaded reports and *Regional Dossiers* from the website are noted in table 4.1 and 4.2.



Table 4.1: 3 most frequently downloaded reports from Mercator-research.eu

Mercator-research: reports	downloads in 2016
<i>English language teaching in secondary education and the use of English outside school: A comparison of the Basque Country and Friesland</i> , Arocena & Popma (2014)	6834
<i>Contribution to the UNESCO encyclopedia of life support systems (EOLSS) 6.20B.10.3: Documenting endangered languages and language maintenance</i> , Brenzinger & de Graaf	6354
<i>The multilingual classroom in primary education in the Basque Country and Friesland: beliefs of teachers and their language practices</i> , Arocena & Gorter (2013)	2557

Table 4.2: 3 most frequently downloaded Regional Dossiers from Mercator-research.eu

Mercator-research: Regional Dossiers	downloads in 2016
<i>Irish in Ireland</i>	1880
<i>Frisian in the Netherlands</i> (4th edition)	1411
<i>Welsh in the UK</i> (2nd edition)	1383
All Regional Dossiers	32729

## Mercator-network.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.

Figure 1 shows number of unique visitors during the past five years. Since 2012 there has been a steady increase. Most visitors came from the Ukraine and the United States. In February 2016 the final product of the LEARNMe Project, *The White Paper*, came online. This document was downloaded most often from the website: 546 times. The LEARNMe Project finished in February 2016.

## Network-of-schools.org

The *Network of Schools* 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.

Figure 1 shows visitor statistics www.networkofschools.org from 2012 until 2016. The number of unique visitors in 2016 (6990) has increased slightly compared to 2015 (6,270). Most visitors came from the Ukraine and France. Most downloaded was a document on projects by the *Crimean News*

*School for Children and Youth*, where Crimean Tatar is also taught. This in accordance with the high number of visitors from the Ukraine.

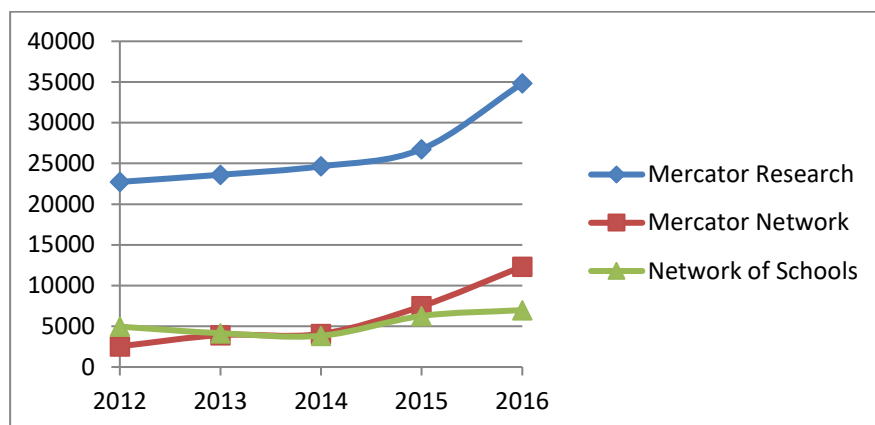


Figure 1: # of unique visitors of Mercator's three websites

## 4.2 Social Media

### Mercator Research on Facebook

Mercator Research is present on Facebook. Posts concern activities of Mercator Research. There is a steady increase in number of followers:

Table 4.3: # of Facebook likes for Mercator Research Centre on Facebook

	2014	2015	2016
# Facebook likes	540	650	828

### Twitter

The Mercator Network is on Twitter: (#MercatorNetwork). This account is maintained by one of the Mercator partners: the University of Barcelona.

## 4.3 Mercator in the press

In 2016 Mercator Research Centre appeared twice in the regional papers:

- *Akademy: topcentrum voor meertaligheid*, 1 november 2016, Leeuwarder Courant
- *'A very special day' voor het Bildts*, 20 februari 2016, Leeuwarder Courant

Both articles are added to this annual report: see appendices 9.4 and 9.5.

## 4.4 Publications

### Regional Dossiers

- *The Aragonese language in education in Spain*. Author: Dr. Juan Pablo Martínez Cortés and Santiago J. Paricio Martín.
- *The Galician language in education in Spain* (2nd Edition). Authors: Xosé-Henrique Costas & Rita Paredes.
- *The Irish language in education in the Republic of Ireland* (2nd Edition). Author: Helen Ó Murchú.
- *The Ladin language in education in Italy* (2nd Edition). Author: Roland Verra.
- *The Manx Gaelic language in education in the Isle of Man*. Authors: Fiona McArdle & Robert Teare.
- *The Nenets, Khanty and Selkup languages in education in the Yamal Region in Russia*. Author: Dr. Roza Ivanovna Laptander.
- *The Sorbian language in education in Germany* (2nd Edition). Authors: Dr. Beate Brėzan & Měto Nowak.

### Reports

- *Bildts as a mixed language*, van Sluis, Paulus; Hoekstra, Eric; Van de Velde, Hans. In: *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Vol. 2016, No. 242, 04.10.2016, p. 59-80.
- *Language use of Frisian bilingual teenagers on social media*, Jongbloed-Faber, Lysbeth; Van de Velde, Hans; van der Meer, Cor; Klinkenberg, I. Edwin, *Treballs de Sociolingüística Catalana*, núm. 26 (2016), p. 27-54
- *The Frisian Language and migrants (article)*, Cor van der Meer, in *Migrations and Cultural and Linguistic Minorities in Europe*. Centre Maurits Coppieters, Brussels 2016
- January 2016, An inventory of best practices and potential partners for exchanging information on minority languages, Buning, J.E., available for download at <http://www.mercator-network.eu/publications>
- February 2016: *The LEARNMe White Paper on Linguistic Diversity*, by the Mercator Network, available for download in 7 languages at <http://www.mercator-network.eu/publications/>.
- February 2016: *Papiamentu in Perspectief: Een kritische analyse van het rapport Nederlands op z'n BEST*, Sterk, R. & van der Meer, C., available for download at <http://www.mercator-network.eu/publications/>.
- December 2016: *Vulnerability of Frisian media services in times of change*, thesis by Lieuwe Jan Hettema, available for download at <http://www.mercator-network.eu/publications/>.
- Several reports concerning the LangOER project were published. An overview can be found in section 4.8.

## In progress:

- *Research for CULT committee – Minority languages and education: best practices and pitfalls*, research for the European Parliament (note, it is published in February 2017, see: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/585915/IPOL\\_STU%282017%29585915\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/585915/IPOL_STU%282017%29585915_EN.pdf))

## Publications by Tseard de Graaf

- *Dutch, Frisian and Low German: The State Language of the Netherlands and its Relationship with two Germanic Minority Languages*. In: Hara Kiyoshi and Heinrich Patrick (eds). *Standard Norms in Written Languages –Historical and Comparative Studies between East and West-*. Report MEXT Funded Research Project, Tokyo: Joshibi University of Art and Design, pp. 138-169.
- *Description of the Border Areas of Russia with Japan and their Inhabitants in Witsen's North and East Tartary*. In: *Festschrift to honour Prof. Alfred F.Majewicz on his 65th birthday*. Poznan. pp.113-123.
- *The Use of Sound Archives for the Investigation, Teaching and Safeguarding of Endangered Languages in Russia*. In: *From Dust to Digital. Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme*. Cambridge U.K.: Open Book Publishers. p.617-635.(with Victor Denisov)
- *Use and Possible Improvement of UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. In: *From Semantics to Dialectometry. Festschrift in honor of John Nerbonne*. Berlin: Language Science Press. Pp.109-119.
- Фонд культуры народов Сибири: Стратегии и обучающие программы для поддержки исчезающих языков народов Сибири [The Foundation for Siberian Cultures:Strategies and Learning Tools for Sustaining indigenous Languages in Siberia]. In *Festschrift for Alexander P. Volodin*. St.Petersburg. 15 pp.(with Erich Kasten)
- The Ainu in Japan / Els Ainus al Japó. Note on the website 'Càtedra UNESCO de Diversitat Lingüística i Cultural' <http://catedra-unesco.espais.iec.cat/en/category/opinion-reflections-information/>, January 2016.

## 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 2016. It informs about the news from the five Mercator Network partners. In addition, the newsletter focuses on news about minority language communities. An event calendar of relevant international conferences and events is also included. For # of recipients, see Table 4.4.

### *The Network of Schools Bulletin*

The Network of Schools Bulletin is compiled by a research assistant and the web editor of the Mercator, and informs about the latest developments in the fields of minority languages, education,

and multilingualism. In addition it reports on interesting projects and experiments that take place at different multilingual schools across Europe. The bulletin appeared twice in 2016. For # of recipients, see Table 4.4.

*Table 4.4: # of recipients of the Mercator Network Newsletter and the Network of Schools bulletin: The number of recipients increased slightly for both newsletters.*

	<i># recipients in 2015:</i>	<i># recipients in 2016:</i>
Mercator Network Newsletter, December edition	2083	2112
Network of Schools Bulletin, March edition	159	164

# 5. Conferences

## 5.1 The secretariat

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

## 5.2 Events in 2016

Mercator Research Centre regularly organizes, visits and presents at (international) conferences, seminars, and workshops. In addition, Mercator frequently receives guests and delegations from abroad, and gives guest lectures at educational institutions.

Below you will find an overview of conferences, in 2016.

<i>From</i>	<i>to</i>	
19-2-2016		Visit from the President of the Intergroup for Multilingualism, Nils Torvalds, Mercator presents the <i>LEARNMe White Paper on linguistic diversity</i>
21-2-2016		In the light of the International Day of the Mother Language, EBLT, with support from Mercator, organized a presentation and film viewing. Mercator presented on the Hitzargiak project in San Sebastian.
24-3-2016		Students from the University of Utrecht visit Mercator, de Fryske Akademy and Leeuwarden
20-4-2016	21-4-2016	Mercator at the the OSCE/HCNM meeting in the Hague
3-5-2016		Mercator presents its report <i>Papiamentu in Perspectief</i> to a representative of Benito Dirksz from Bonaire
11-5-2016		Visit of Réaltán Ní Leannáin in the framework of the project “oare wurden”
26-5-2016		Mercator at the NPLD meeting in Bilbao. Mercator elected on the NPLD steering committee
23-6-2016	24-6-2016	Mercator presents at the Hitzargiak meeting, in the light of Capital of Culture 2016
15-6-2016		Mercator at the MIME Stakeholder forum

24-6-2016		Delegation from Malta visits de Fryske Akademy
1-9-2016	3-9-2016	Mercator presents at the 10th International Conference on Multilingualism and Third Language Acquisition, Vienna
21-9-2016		Yedda Palemeq from Taiwan visits Mercator
25-9-2016	26-9-2016	Co-organisation of the final LangOER conference, Brussels
26-10-2016	28-10-2016	Mercator at the NPLD meeting in Brussels
11-11-2016		Mercator organizes the symposium: The effects of migration on the position of minority languages. For more information, see below.
18-11-2016		Marja Kingma from the British Library visits Mercator
25-11-2016	26-11-2016	Foundation for Endangered Languages / Mercator conference held in Murmansk
9-12-2016	10-12-2016	Mercator, SOAS and CIDLES organize the seminar <i>Language documentation, teaching materials and didactics</i> in Leeuwarden. For more information, see below.
9-12-2016		Mercator at the UNESCO meeting concerning a new <i>World Atlas of Languages</i>
22-12-2016		Mercator gives a lecture on multilingualism at the University of Utrecht



## 5.3 Symposium: The effects of migration on the position of minority languages

On November 11, the Mercator Research Centre organized a symposium on the effects of migration on the position of minority languages. Experts spoke on diverse topics, ranging from general overviews of the problems surrounding contacts between different minorities to very specific best practices. The line-up consisted of:

- Roberta Medda-Windischer (European Academy of Bolzano), who talked about the main challenges and perspectives related to Migration in sub-state territories with historical-linguistic minorities.
- Joana Duarte (University of Groningen) & Alex Riemersma (NHL/Stenden), talking about their recent research on multilingual schools in Fryslân, highlighting the most important challenges and opportunities, both for Frisian and migrant languages.
- Gabriela Meier (University of Exeter), who explained the 'multilingual turn' in education and research: a new, more open and inclusive, way of looking at languages and how they are learned, which can also be very valuable when working with migrant children.
- Judith Purkarthofer (University of Oslo), who spoke about the practices of a school in Carinthia (Austria), where there is a large Slovene-speaking minority. The school considers different languages not as barriers but as bridges, linking different countries and minorities, but also the groups that form the school community.
- David Little (Trinity College Dublin), who showcased the example of a school in Dublin, where about 80% of the pupils have linguistic backgrounds other than English or Irish. In this school, pupils are actively encouraged to employ their over 40 home languages in school assignments, even when the teachers do not speak all these languages.

After the series of presentations, speakers and public divided into three different groups to discuss the topics of the day. The discussions were very lively, and recurring themes of discussion were the (linguistic) integration of immigrants, and the need for schools to become more flexible and inclusive with regards to language use. The symposium was attended by about 50 researchers, students, education specialists and others.





## 5.4 Seminar 'Language documentation, teaching materials and didactics: an opportunity for small and endangered languages?'

Friday 9 and Saturday 10 December, the Mercator Research Centre hosted a successful seminar on the topic of 'Language documentation, teaching materials and didactics: an opportunity for small and endangered languages?' Co-organizers were the SOAS World Languages Institute (UK) and CIDLeS (Portugal). Diverse issues related to documentation, revitalisation and teaching material development were discussed on the basis of a wide range of cases: among these were the Guernésiais of Guernsey Island, Mirandese and Minderico in Portugal, languages of the north-eastern Congo, and native American languages in and around the state of Maine, USA. Many speakers recognized the need for a modern take on language documentation, including multiple modalities and documenting 'authentic', everyday language use. It was also noted that such authenticity can be very helpful for the production of modern teaching materials. The seminar was attended by about 60 people, including experts from all over Europe and the US, as well as a group of students from the Minorities & Multilingualism programme at the University of Groningen.

# 6. Acquisition and matching projects

## 6.1 MOOC II

In the course of 2017, the Mercator Research Centre will start with the further development of a *Massive Open Online Course* (MOOC) for the Frisian Language, together with the Afûk (Institute of Frisian Language and Culture). The MOOC will be launched in 2018, during Leeuwarden European Capital of Culture 2018.

### Submitted project proposals

<i>Project Title</i>	<i>Funding Programme</i>	<i>Status</i>
Critical Skills for Life and Work: Developing the Professional Intercultural Communicative Competence of highly-skilled refugees (CSLW) – (Partner role)	Erasmus +	Not awarded
Revitalizing less used languages through Open Educational Practice (ELOEP) - (Partner role)	Erasmus +	Not awarded
Communication competences for migrants and disadvantaged background learners in bilingual work environments (COMBI) - (Coordinator Role)	Erasmus+	Awarded
Teaching in Diversity – (Teach D) - (Partner Role)	Erasmus +	Awarded
Fryske MOOC (Coordinator role)	Provinsje Fryslân	Awarded
OWRI- Cross Language Dynamics (Satellite Project) – (Partner Role)	The Arts and Humanities Research Council of England	Awarded
Research on the Development of Trilingual School Education - (Partner Role)	University of Stockholm	Awarded
European Network on Mixed Language Families - (Partner Role)	COST	Waiting for results

# 7. EBLT

## 7.1 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 Europe, 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. With respect to two of these four languages, the Netherlands has had obligations to the international community, since 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 jointly organise different activities.

In the year 2015, EBLT was quite active at both a national and an international level. At a national level, our efforts were directed at lobbying on behalf of the Frisian radio broadcaster *Omrop Fryslân* that is under pressure, together with all regional broadcasters, due to 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 a report was 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 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.

### EBLT agenda in 2016

1. 18-19-20 February 2016: MEP Nils Torvalds visited Fryslân in a visit organised by the EBLT. He was there in his function as (Co-)President of the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities. Torvalds visited the launch of the Fryske Google Translate on February 18. On the 19th he met with the Fryske Akademy, Mercator, Tresoar, European Capital of Culture Leeuwarden/Ljouwert 2018 (CC2018), after which he visited the trilingual primary school “t

Fonnemint" in St. Annaparochie and continued his stay in the Bildt area and was a guest, together with regional minister of Culture Sietske Poepjes and (Frisian) Member of the Dutch Parliament Lutz Jacobi, at the Presentation of the Bildts application for the European Charter for Regional and Minority languages. At the end of the afternoon mister Torvalds visited the court, meeting with President Daan Keur and lawyer Tjalling van der Goot. On February the 20th mister Torvalds visited the event the EBLT organized on the International Day of the Mother Language.

2. 20-21 February 2016: The EBLT organized a presentation and film viewing in the light of the International Day of the Mother Language (21st of February). The day started with presentations by Donostia-San Sebastian European Capital of Culture 2016 (DSS2016, Eneko Garate Itturalde), Mercator (Cor van der Meer), CC2018 Lân fan Taal (Siart Smit) with attendance of and response by MEPs Jan Huitema and Nils Torvalds, CC2018 (Oeds Westerhof and Jelle Burggraaff) and the Province of Fryslân (Sietske Poepjes). After which the film ('Amama') screening, only with Frisian subtitles took place. At the end of the day, the board of the EBLT had dinner with the delegation from DSS2016, CC2018, MEPs Nils Torvalds and Jan Huitema and regional Minister of Language and Culture Sietske Poepjes in order to evaluate and discuss future cooperation. On the 21st of February there were two additional screenings of 'Amama', one with Frisian and one with English subtitles.
3. 1-3 March 2016: The Committee of Experts from the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages visited Fryslân and the EBLT attended one of the meetings.
4. 10 March 2016: Two EBLT board members visited the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities in Strasbourg.
5. 15 March 2016: Wybren Jorritsma (CC2018, Lân fan Taal) addressed the March meeting of the general assembly of the EBLT about the language project the Province of Fryslân is organizing in the light of Leeuwarden/Ljouwert CC2018.
6. 31 March 2016: The EBLT was represented at the EU Network for the North of the Netherlands.
7. 1-2 April 2016: A delegation from the Basque country (Kontseilua) visited Fryslân in the light of their project 'Protocol to Ensure Language Rights'.
8. 3 April 2016: A delegation from Bonaire, focused on the position of Papiamentu, visited Fryslân, the EBLT organized this visit. The delegation visited the Fryske Akademy (where a new research report on the position of Papiamentu was presented) and the municipal government of Littenseradiel.
9. 23 April 2016: The EBLT board met with Siart Smit (project manager Lân fan Taal, CC2018) about cooperation for CC2018.
10. 8 June 2016: Two board members delivered a presentation about the EBLT at a meeting with the representatives of the Frisian political parties that are responsible for the Frisian language.
11. 28 June 2016: The EBLT has sent a letter with recommendations on the position of minority languages in the Netherlands to Dutch political parties, in preparation of the National elections in 2017.
12. 31 August 2016: The EBLT attended the 'Steatmerk' at the Province of Fryslân.

13. September 2016: Arie Slob (director Ijsselacademie/HCO) and Philomène Bloemhoff, (project manager Streektael Ijsselacademie) addressed the September meeting of the General assembly of EBLT about regional languages.
14. 28 September 2016: The EBLT, together with MEP Annie Schreijer-Pierik, organized a conference on the position of Low Saxon languages.
15. 30 September 2016: In the light of the European Day of Languages, EBLT organized a film screening of 'Amama' with Low Saxon subtitles.
16. 30 September – 1 October 2016: Attendance and organizing party of the Frisian delegation Drongo festival.
17. 24 October 2016: Sent a letter to RTV Noord, Dutch Minister Plasterk (interior affairs) and State Secretary Dekker for Education, Culture, and Science, the Committee of Experts for the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages, the Secretariat of the Charter for the protection of Minorities.
18. 15 December 2016: Two reactions, one focused on Frisian, Bildts, Papiamentu and one more in-depth focused on Lower Saxon, were given by the EBLT board on the newly released report of the Council of Europe on minority languages in the Netherlands.
19. 17-18 December 2016: The EBLT has signed the Protocol to Ensure Language Rights, an initiative from Kontseilua, a Basque EBLT-like organisation, which played a prominent role in the Donostia-San Sebastian Cultural Capital of Europe 2016.

In addition: 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 regular 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 existed 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.

# 8. Appendices

## 8.1 Mission Statement of Mercator European Research Centre



# Fisy Mercator

## Kennissintrum 2020



# Mercator 2020

## European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning

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### Introduction

The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning (Mercator for short) is part of the Fryske Akademy, the scientific research institute for the Frisian language, culture and history. Mercator was established in 1987 and has been a highly-valued organisation in the field of multilingualism and language learning for over 25 years.

The mission of Mercator is the acquisition and inventory, research and study, dissemination and application of knowledge in the field of language learning at school, at home and through cultural participation. The starting point lies in its unique selling point; the field of regional and minority languages in Europe. Yet, immigrant languages and smaller state languages are also topic of study.

This document has been initiated to reorientate Mercator's position as a pivot between Fryslân and other multilingual regions in Europe. To provide input, data have been collected by means of an online questionnaire and a range of interviews with key partners. This inventory has shown again that the Mercator Research Centre is highly valued internationally as a trustworthy knowledge source and a platform for meeting other experts in the field of multilingualism.

This document lays down the desired position in the year 2020 and the planned activities for the preceding years. Besides, the opportunities that Leeuwarden/Ljouwert Capital of Culture 2018 offers are discussed. The role of Mercator in Fryslân in 2020 as it is described below is supported by many Frisian partners such as Afûk, Cedin and SFBO<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank Mr J. Bangma (Cedin), Ms M. Vellinga (Afûk), and Ms S. de Boer (SFBO) for their valuable input.



## The Mercator objectives for 2020

Mercator has set the following objectives for 2020:

- 1 Mercator as cutting-edge research institute**  
Keywords: excellent scientific research, international recognition, networking, dissemination, keeping talent in Fryslân
- 2 Mercator as expert in the valorisation of scientific knowledge**  
Keywords: information, documentation, dissemination, sharing good practices, organisation of conferences and expert seminars
- 3 Mercator as professional partner for policymakers**  
Keywords: pro-active discussion partner, tailor-made advice, added value, recommendations
- 4 Mercator as interface between Europe and Fryslân: bringing Europe to Fryslân and Fryslân to Europe**  
Keywords: leader, initiator, networking, spider-in-the-web, founder of alliances

Throughout Europe the attention for multilingualism, multilingual education, minority and endangered languages is increasing. Awareness of the importance of safeguarding linguistic diversity continues to grow. Multilingualism and regional and minority languages are increasingly found on the political agendas, requiring information with a scientific basis.

Mercator is very well-known in Europe and is respected internationally for its unifying qualities and expertise in research and valorisation. Besides the consolidation of its position in Europe, Mercator aims for a more prominent position in Fryslân as well by extending its activities and visibility in Fryslân: Mercator will pro-actively cater for the needs of Frisian partners and practitioners, in particular in the educational domain.

## Mercator as cutting-edge research institute

### *Cutting-edge research institute*

Mercator already is an internationally recognised research institute for multilingualism, regional and minority languages, and language learning. Mercator wants to strengthen its position as a leading research institute by employing more scientific research staff. Mercator will keep the lookout for themes that are crucial for regional and minority languages, such as social media and open educational resources. Also, new technologies need to be identified and evaluated and good practices in language learning and multilingual education should be shared. Next to that, Mercator will actively cooperate with other high-level research institutes. Main methods of communication with target groups are websides, newsletters and social media.

### *Fryslân and Europe*

Mercator aims to strengthen scientific research in Fryslân. The establishment of the Master Multilingualism and the University Campus Fryslân (UCF) are a large opportunity for Mercator. Master students are attracted for internships and writing their master's theses. The University Campus Fryslân is a strong supporter of Mercator and is valuable for hiring more PhD students. Mercator in Fryslân is a perfect nursery for talent; its presence makes it possible to attract and keep talent and highly qualified labour in Fryslân. To consolidate its position in Fryslân, Mercator will increase the dissemination of research outcomes into Frisian society and actively encourage Frisian authorities (departments of provincial government and municipalities), international experts, educational experts, businesses and other institutes to voice and discuss their research questions.

Mercator will increase its visibility by organising guest lectures, giving presentations, sharing good practices, and intensified co-operation with Frisian partners. So far, Mercator has been successful in Europe and Fryslân in this field. The ambition is to intensify its collaboration with existing partners in Fryslân and to find new partners where possible, including educational practice.

## Mercator as expert in the valorisation of scientific knowledge

### *Valorisation of scientific knowledge*

Mercator believes in the added-value of the valorisation of scientific knowledge. It has already built up extensive expertise in providing educational experts and teachers with scientific knowledge. Mercator also wants to build up expertise in fields that have as yet remained underexplored. For example: the experience that Mercator has in regional and minority language can also support research and practices in the field of immigrant and sign languages. Some initial steps have already been taken, for example with the project on literacy activities for Antillean mothers and their toddlers. In the coming years Mercator will seek cooperation with institutes that work with immigrant and sign languages and support them in their research and development of language learning materials. Typical activities which support valorisation are the series of Regional Dossiers, the newsletters and organisation of expert meetings and conferences. Furthermore, Mercator will disseminate more “best practices and lessons learned”, both in Europe and in Fryslân to contribute to the utilisation of scientific knowledge in practice.

### *Tailor-made*

Multilingualism and language learning have been on the political agenda for quite some time now, and are slowly getting more attention from the business community as well. New technologies and the international freedom of movement for workers raises very specific questions. Mercator wants to provide tailor-made scientific research, applicable knowledge and information in the field of multilingualism and language learning.

## Mercator as professional partner for policymakers

### *Professional partner*

Mercator already plays an important role in international policy discussions, for example as member of the European Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism. However, Mercator wants to further strengthen its position as an international spokesperson for regional and minority languages. Partners with which Mercator seeks further cooperation in the coming years are, among others, the NLPD (Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity), Fuen (Federal Union of European Nationalities), the Council of Europe (CoE), and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Besides the international and provincial level, Mercator will strengthen its position on national and local policy levels through an active approach, e.g. by providing recommendations, advice and research outcomes. Mercator is well equipped to do comparative research in the area of the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, to give advice, to follow and study developments in education and continuity in (language) learning.

In its own region Fryslân, too, Mercator has proven to be a valuable partner. Although different levels of government have already found Mercator as an expert partner, more policymakers and stakeholders in Fryslân should find their way to Mercator's knowledge and expertise. Mercator will be more pro-active in Fryslân and intensify and extend cooperation with existing and new Frisian partners. Frisian partners will be encouraged to use Mercator's European network to learn from others and exchange expertise and experiences. Furthermore, outcomes of scientific research will be translated to the daily practice, answering to the need of the Frisian organisations.

## **Mercator as link between Europe and Fryslân: bringing Europe to Fryslân and Fryslân to Europe**

### *Networking*

Mercator is an experienced founder and member of international networks in areas such as education, multilingualism, and minority languages. Mercator has a good reputation in uniting international experts and organisations in productive networks. For European governments Mercator is a central player and platform that takes the lead in bringing expertise together. Mercator will create new alliances in Europe and beyond. Being an organisation with roots in science and with an international scope, Mercator serves as a window to the world of science and provides information on other multilingual regions in Europe.

### *Bringing Europe to Fryslân and Fryslân to Europe*

Mercator wants to connect regional and minority languages and organisations and institutes in Europe, as well as in Fryslân. Mercator has unlimited access to Fryslân as a living bilingual laboratory and continuously shares “best practices and lessons learned” and transfers knowledge from Fryslân to Europe.

As a European platform Mercator succeeds in drawing international experts to Fryslân and transferring knowledge between scientists and practitioners, and between Fryslân and Europe. This also has an economical benefit for Fryslân: the frequently organised conferences and seminars have drawn many international experts, researchers and policy makers to Fryslân. Such conferences have a long-lasting effect. Many return to Ljouwert/Leeuwarden to exchange ideas and experiences with Frisian policymakers and researchers. Mercator has put Fryslân and the Frisian language on the map of multilingual Europe.

Through the years Mercator successfully finished many European projects, funded by the European Union, the Council of Europe and co-funded by other European national or regional organisations. Also at the moment a number of projects are running. In the coming years new applications will be written, always within the framework of multilingualism, minority languages and language learning. Many new programmes of the EU started in 2014, especially the “Horizon 2020” and the “Erasmus+” programme seem to be most applicable for Mercator.

Mercator has already formalised the co-operation with several international organisations such as SOAS, University of London, and also with bilingual regions such as the Basque country in Spain. Outside the European Union, exploratory steps have been taken with institutes in Canada, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and China.

### *Initiator in Fryslân*

Frisian networks will be strengthened and expanded. Partners in Fryslân require valorisation of scientific research: scientific research needs to be translated into advice for the daily practice. These practitioners like to connect with their European counterparts and learn from best practices from other multilingual regions. Mercator has the knowledge, network, and experience to support them with that and will pro-actively act upon that.

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*In practice*

The Mercator Research Centre is well established in Europe and a valued partner in international projects and networks. The expertise and knowledge that Mercator has acquired throughout the years constitute a unique opportunity for Frisian organisations, municipalities, and for Frisian society. Between now and 2020, Mercator will actively work to strengthen its position and expand its activities in Fryslân. Through its excellent international network the centre is capable of translating the latest international research results into recommendations for the multilingual practice.

Due to its international scope Mercator is seen in Fryslân as a rather objective player and can therefore act as a platform for Frisian organisations that work in the field of multilingualism, education or the promotion of the Frisian language. Mercator intends to be a facilitator for those organisations; by working together and making optimum use of each other's strengths, all will benefit. An example of a fruitful cooperation is the current project on language use on social media by Frisian teenagers, in which Mercator cooperates with Afûk. Afûk will use the results of this study to further optimise their Praat mar Frysk-campaign.

Activities 2014-2020, these activities will be further elaborated in the respective work plan(s) of the Mercator Research Centre.

- Mercator will initiate specific tasks towards the Frisian community. At start a fixed and easy accessible information contact desk will be created to be used by a wide range of organisations in Fryslân dealing with issues in the area of for example; language policy, education, pedagogy and multilingualism in general.
- Mercator will keep contact with organisations working in this area and will actively visit them separately (at least once a year) to discuss the needs for information, co-operation and the added value of the Mercator centre for their work.
- A consortium or platform of Frisian organisations will be initiated. Targeted members of this consortium are all organisations who are dealing with language issues in Fryslân including municipalities. This means there will be a wide range of organisations and backgrounds ranging from research institutes to day care centres, from the police to hospitals and high vocational training institutes.
- At least once a year a symposium or seminar will be organised for the consortium of Frisian organisations. Not only issues gathered at the information desk and on the spot visits will feed the agenda, but also interesting international developments, best practices and policy on multilingualism and minority languages of the EU. International experts will be invited to present by Mercator if applicable. Other important goals of these meetings are: to keep each other up-to-date about activities, developing new projects together, and using each other's competences and expertise for optimal results.
- In 2017 or 2018 an international conference will be organised. The content and theme of the conference will be defined by the issues raised by the Frisian consortium aimed at discussion, finding solutions and best practices. At the conference best practices from several European bilingual communities will be presented. The conference will mark and emphasize the new tasks of Mercator as a platform for Frisian organisations.

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- Results of the Boppeslach research will be used and included in new initiatives such as the IKC's (Integrale Kindcentrum) in Fryslân. This is part of the ongoing valorisation task to publish and disseminate results of research and recommendations following the outcomes.
  - In Europe efforts will be made to create awareness among the concepts of continuous learning and concepts of education and didactics in general. Technical developments make the rethinking of basic concepts necessary. The province of Fryslân and Mercator foresee a leading role on this issue through international discussions and aim for future project(s) and a conference on this theme.
  - Mercator is a key player in the development of a national competence centre for multilingualism. Initial plans have been discussed at the UCF meeting with the foreseen partners. Mercator with its background in minority languages and linguistic diversity collaborates with other partners such as; the UCF, University Groningen, bachelor and master studies, and the lectorate on multilingualism in Leeuwarden. The time is right to undertake concrete steps, not only because of increased attention for multilingualism in other Dutch regions, but also with a view towards Leeuwarden as Cultural Capital 2018. Fryslân is the only bilingual region in the Netherlands and should seize this opportunity now. This competence centre will provide an opportunity to attract national and European funding.
  - In 2014 and coming years further research into language use on social media by inhabitants of Fryslân will be carried out, in cooperation with Afûk. The focus of this study is not only on teenagers, but also on other age groups. Furthermore, qualitative aspects will be included in this study. A future EU project application and comparative research is foreseen and are a substantial part of the plans.
  - In 2015 Mercator is organizing an expert seminar on OER (Online Educational Resources) as part of an international project on new technical developments in the field of education called "LangOER". This seminar will be organised in Leeuwarden in co-operation with AFUK. The seminar is targeted at educational experts, practitioners and policy makers.
  - Within the framework of Leeuwarden Cultural Capital 2018, Mercator intends to undertake various activities. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Mercator and Leeuwarden European Capital of Culture 2018

The fact that Leeuwarden won the bid to become the European Capital of Culture in 2018 is a great opportunity to initiate new ideas, research, projects and cooperation within Fryslân and with Fryslân in an international perspective. Mercator sees Leeuwarden Capital of Culture 2018 as a flywheel for increasing sustainable knowledge about multilingualism in Frisian society. In this way, the Capital of Culture and Mercator can support each other in achieving their ambitions.

A few ideas of how Mercator can contribute to the success of Leeuwarden European Capital of Culture 2018:

- Organise activities in the field of multilingualism as a connecting activity between the Capitals of Culture. Starting in San Sebastián – Donostia, European Capital of Culture in 2016, to be continued in Leeuwarden, and passing on the baton to the European Capital of Culture 2020.
- Create connections between the two capitals of culture in 2018, Valetta (Malta) and Leeuwarden. A Regional Dossier on the role of the Maltese language in education has been published recently by Mercator, this dossier, written by experts on Malta, can serve as a starting point for further contacts, research, meetings or events.
- Support the activities for the establishment of the language museum Lân fan Taal. The language museum plans an exposition on languages of the world. Mercator can become the leading partner for this element of the language museum.
- Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and other platforms can support Mercator in becoming more visible, but also in conducting scientific research by means of social media. Mercator seeks support and co-operation with Leeuwarden Capital of Culture 2018 to increase its expertise in this field.
- In response to requests from foreign institutions, Mercator would like to research European practices on minority languages' support structures, rights and policies. Leeuwarden Capital of Culture 2018 can provide an excellent boost for these activities.
- Mercator also has the ambition to expand its expertise to immigrant and sign languages in cooperation with other organisations. That is another issue for which Leeuwarden Capital of Culture 2018 can be a good starting point.



## Preconditions & finances

In a research institute with a strong emphasis on empirical, comparative studies and valorisation activities, experienced staff is the most important asset. In the coming years Mercator will expand its permanent base of researchers. Currently, most staff members have temporary contracts, which is a threat to the sustainability of the Mercator Research Centre in the long run.

Mercator is part of the Fryske Akademy. The embedding of Mercator in the scientific environment of the Fryske Akademy and the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) is a crucial precondition.

The Mercator Research Centre is funded by the province of Fryslân since 2007 for a yearly amount of €200.000,-. From 2008 till 2013 the municipality of Leeuwarden also funded the centre by the same amount, which made a total of €400.000,- 'basic' funding from Friesland in those years. Mercator always aims to find extra sources of funding through projects and co-operation. Therefore, part of the funds is being used for matching of other projects. Since 2007 Mercator co-operates closely with the Ministry of Education of the Basque country. The Basque government is funding Mercator for the current years by another €100.000,- yearly. Mercator and the Basque government have an initial agreement till 2018. Another base for extra funding are (EU) projects, over the last years Mercator has led and participated in many projects and aims to do so in the future. At the moment the two main EU projects are LEARNMe and LangOER with a financial funds of almost €70.000,- yearly. In 2014, for example, the total funding from the province of Fryslân is 200.000,- and the total from external financial sources count up till €170.000,- which means that Mercator almost doubles the initial provincial funding through external sources.

To perform the activities in Fryslân (mainly listed in "Mercator as link between Europe and Fryslân"), Mercator will request for a yearly additional funding of €96.000,- (see the table below), the equivalent of 1,5 FTE on level 9. For activities on the national level 1.0 FTE is required. Including the basic funding the total counts then € 360.000,- of yearly funding for the Mercator Research Centre.

Basic funding for Mercator's general (international) activities	€ 200.000,-
Research assistant (1.0 FTE level 9) Focus Fryslân	€ 64.000,-
Research assistant (0.5 FTE level 9) Focus Fryslân	€ 32.000,-
Research assistant (1.0 FTE level 9) Focus National	€ 64.000,-
Total	€ 360.000,-

## Mercator in 2020

In 2020, Mercator will be one of the most valued international sources for multilingualism and language learning in Europe. Also in Fryslân Mercator has become a central player. Mercator has realised to bond Frisian organisations together and the alliances that have been forged over the years have strengthened the Frisian organisations. Mercator played an important role in the successful cultural capital 2018 project and is a prominent member of the (UCF) alliance to be recognised as national competence centre on multilingualism in the Netherlands. International developments, research and Mercator's international network are used to support Frisian institutions in dealing pro-actively with changes in Frisian society. Through the activities of Mercator Ljouwert/Leeuwarden and the Province of Fryslân became the Capital of Multilingualism in Europe.

## 8.2 Reaction of the Director of Linguistic Policy of the Aragonese Government

**Dirección General de Política Lingüística**

Zaragoza, 14 de octubre de 2016

Mr. Cor Van Der Meer  
Fryske Akademy  
Doelestraat  
8911 DX Leeuwarden

Dear Mr. Cor Van Der Meer:

As the director of Linguistic Policy of the Aragonese Government I personally want to extend my thanks to you for the publication of the Aragonese language report co-authored by Iris Campos, Juan Pablo Martínez and Santiago Paricio. I had the opportunity of reading it when it was finished and published, and I deeply admired the work and professionalism of both, authors and Mercator Research Centre.

From the General Direction of Linguistic Policy of the Aragonese government, we really appreciate your disposition, cooperation and help to minority and minorized languages. We sincerely think that your effort is contributing to the progress and development of European languages in danger, including Aragonese, and therefore your work deserves all our attention. Thus, we are willing to disseminate the report through our institutional website.

I hope we will collaborate in the future editions of the Aragonese Mercator report.

Yours cordially,

**EL DIRECTOR GENERAL DE POLÍTICA LINGÜÍSTICA**



Fdo.: José Ignacio López Susín

### 8.3 Reaction of the Deputy Governor of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug



ДЕПАРТАМЕНТ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ И ВНЕШНЕЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИХ СВЯЗЕЙ  
ЯМАЛО-НЕНЕЦКОГО АВТОНОМНОГО ОКРУГА

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AND FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS  
OF THE YAMAL-NENETS AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT

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28.12. 2016 г. № 601-17-03/48  
На № \_\_\_\_\_ от \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Cor van der Meer  
Project Manager  
Mercator Research Centre  
on Multilingualism and Language Learning

Dear Dr. Cor van der Meer,

**Mercator Regional dossier on the Nenets, Khanty and Selkup language**

First of all, let me take this opportunity and thank the Mercator Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning and the Fryske Akademy for the permanent interest in cooperation with the Yamal-Nenets autonomous okrug and promotion of the projects on the languages of the indigenous peoples of the North.

We are sincerely grateful for the work you and your colleagues made to issue a Mercator Regional dossier on the Nenets, Khanty and Selkup language. I am sure it will be one of the worth research sources for further preservation and promotion of the indigenous languages.

The Yamal-Nenets Department for International and External Economic Relations greatly appreciate your readiness to share a Mercator Regional dossier electronic template to print and replicate it in the Russian language in the frame of International Arctic Educational Forum to be held in Salekhard on February 28 – March 01, 2017. In this respect could you, please, advise us on the possible dates and formats the mentioned document can be received?

I believe that the experience of the joint work gained will serve as the stable foundation for further development of bilateral cooperation.

Aleksandr V. Mazharov  
Deputy Governor of the Yamal-Nenets autonomous okrug,  
Director of the Yamal-Nenets Department  
for International and External Economic Relations

8.4 Akademy: topcentrum voor meertaligheid,  
1 november 2016, Leeuwarder Courant



Prinses Laurentien, geflankeerd door burgemeester Ferd Crone, bij de opening van de nieuwbouw van de Fryske Akademy. FOTO CATRINUS VAN DER VEEN

De Fryske Akademy moet een internationaal topcentrum meertaligheid worden. Daarbij past het om het academisch jaar met een processie te openen. Zorg bestaat over de komst van de University Fryslân.

Dat blijkt uit de nieuwe visie van de nieuwe Maatskiplike Advysried van de Fryske Akademy. Die raad heeft die opgesteld over het maatschappelijke doel van het wetenschappelijk onderzoeksinstituut. De zes leden van de raad doen daarin vier aanbevelingen.

De groep wil dat de Akademy zich ontwikkelt tot het beste deskundigheidscentrum op het gebied van meertaligheid in Europa. In samenwerking met Mercator, het instituut voor meertaligheid dat onder de Akademy valt, moet het mogelijk zijn een internationaal topcentrum te worden. Ook in eigen provincie kan de talenkennis belangrijk zijn. Als voorbeeld wordt de taalproblematiek rond vluchtelingen genoemd.

## Publiciteitsoffensief

De Advysried pleit voor een groot publiciteitsoffensief om duidelijk te maken wat de Akademy doet en kan betekenen. Te denken valt aan huis-aan-huis mailings, persberichten en contact met basisscholen en voortgezet onderwijs om nieuw talent en draagvlak te zoeken. Een grootse ceremoniële opening van het academisch jaar met 'pommeranten' en een processie kan ook bijdragen aan de bekendheid.

Succesvolle Friezen die buiten de provincie wonen, moeten bij het werk van de Akademy betrokken worden. Te denken valt aan geslaagde of bekende kunstenaars en wetenschappers. De studierichting antropologie zou aan de Akademy toegevoegd moeten

worden. De uitzonderlijke positie van Friesland leent zich volgens de Ried uitermate voor antropologisch onderzoek.

### **University Fryslân en Akademy moeten elkaar aanvullen**

Gewaarschuwd wordt er voor de University Fryslân. Dit onderdeel van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen moet volgens de raadsleden samenwerken met de Akademy en er een aanvulling op zijn. Dit om te voorkomen dat disciplines van de Fryske Akademy worden overgenomen of uitgehold worden.

Actie op deze punten is volgens de opstellers nodig om ervoor te zorgen „dat de Fryske Akademy bliuwend beskôge wurdt as ‘fan ús’ “. Met ús bedoelen de schrijvers „lju mei niget oan wittenskip en ûndersyk. Lju, jong en âld.”

### **Visie**

Uiteraard begrijpt de Advysried dat er wetenschappelijk gescoord moet worden en dat het wetenschappelijk onderzoek op een zo hoog mogelijk niveau moet liggen. Door het streven daarnaar is de rol van de Akademy voor ‘sneupers’ en amateurwetenschappers afgenomen. Dat betreuren de leden. Zij vinden dat er vormen gevonden moeten worden om deze doelgroep weer bij de Akademy te betrekken.

De Akademy moet een rol spelen in het versterken van de Friese identiteit door de positie van het Fries, van Friesland en van het ‘Frysk-wêzen’ te versterken. Dat heeft gevolgen voor het personeelsbeleid. Personeelsleden moeten zich betrokken voelen bij Friesland. „Hja hoege net mei pompeblêden te rinnen of har op te jaan by de keats- of fierljepklup, mar der moat *commitment* wêze mei it fakgebiet en it stúdzjeûnderwerp.”

De visie is opgesteld door voorzitter Geart Benedictus uit Joure en de leden Maaïke Andringa uit Groningen, Folkert de Jong uit Drachten, Steven Sterk uit Tjalleberd, Jan de Vries uit Koudum en Jan Veldhuis uit Opeinde.



8.5 *A very special day' voor het Bildts*, 20 februari  
2016, Leeuwarder Courant



Nils Torvalds, voorzitter van de commissie Minorities van het Europees Parlement, kijkt toe bij het voorlezen in het Bildts door pakes en beppes op basisschool 't Fonnemint in Sint Annaparochie. FOTO CATRINUS VAN DER VEEN

## 'A very special day' voor het Bildts

MARIA DEL GROSSO

**OUDEBILDTSIJL** Met steun van de fusiegemeenten Menameradiel, Littenseradiel en Franekeradeel is de aanvraag voor erkenning van het Bildts onder het Europees Handvest gisteren de deur uitgegaan.

De samenvoeging van het Bildt met de drie andere gemeenten tot Waadhoeke in 2018 vormt de aanleiding om de erkenning in gang te zetten. De gemeente het Bildt zorgt nu nog voor bescherming en ondersteuning van de taal die door zesduizend van de elfduizend inwoners wordt gebruikt. In de nieuwe gemeente vormt de taal een minderheid.

Daarom richtte het Bildt al eerder de stichting Bildts Aigene op, die de Bildtse cultuur moet gaan beschermen. De stichting was gisteren ook een van de ondertekenaars van de aanvraag, evenals de provincie Fryslân en het EBLT (Europeesk Buro foar Lytse Talen).

*'Het recht van de moedertaal moet je iemand niet afnemen'*

Vorig jaar werd na onderzoek door de Fryske Akademy bekend dat het Bildts een zelfstandige taal is en voorgedragen kan worden. De aanvraag wordt gedaan voor deel 2 van het Europees Handvest voor regionale talen of talen van minderheden. Het Fries heeft een hogere bescherming en valt onder deel 3.

Kamerlid Lutz Jacobi nam gisteren in de Aerden Plaats de papieren in ontvangst in haar functie van vice-voorzitter van de commissie Binnenlandse Zaken. Zij overhandigt de documenten persoonlijk aan minister Ronald Plasterk en voorspelde

dat het proces nog een hele strijd zal worden.

Onze eigen minister heeft de beslissende stem, legde wethouder Boukje Tol van het Bildt uit. Die moet beslissen of het Bildts wordt toegevoegd aan de lijst van beschermde talen. De Raad van Europa doet dan nog eigen onderzoek. Tol noemde het, „a very special day” omdat een kleine taalgemeenschap als het Bildt deze stap gezet heeft.

Nils Torvalds, voorzitter van de commissie Minorities van het Europees Parlement, op werkbezoek in Friesland, noemde de erkenning heel belangrijk. Hij wees erop dat veel conflicten in de wereld ontstaan doordat rechten van mensen worden weggedrukt of geschonden. Het recht van de moedertaal moet je iemand niet afnemen, stelde hij. Torvalds had 's ochtends op basisschool 't Fonnemint in Sint Annaparochie gekeken hoe het eraan toegaat bij de Bildtse les.