

# On the inclusion of institutions for minority languages in EFNIL: Issues and problems

## István Kenesei

### *Preliminaries*

Roy Cross's suggestion at the last EFNIL General Assembly

Sources: IK's considerations offered to Exec. Committee, plus Gerhard Stickel's comments.

Abbreviations: (Institution/s for) Minority/regional/national languages → MinLang

(Institution/s for) Official/national/nationwide/majority language → OffLang

### 1. *What languages to consider – political aspect*

1.1. MinLang that are not OffLang anywhere, eg. Catalan, Welsh, Frisian, Saami, Kashubian

1.1.1. MinLang that are OffLang in autonomous region, e.g. Catalan, Welsh

1.2. MinLang as OffLang in other country/ies

1.2.1. MinLang that are OffLang in home country, eg. Swedish in Finland, German in Belgium

1.2.2. MinLang that are not OffLang in home country, eg.

Hungarian in Romania, German in Hungary, Turkish in Germany

### 2. *What languages to consider – organizational aspect*

2.1. MinLang (as language) has institution representing it in EFNIL

Exx. Hungarian in Romania, German in Hungary

2.2. MinLang has no institution representing it in EFNIL

Exx.: Catalan or Basque in Spain, Breton in France, Welsh in UK, Romani

### 3. *What languages to consider – 'linguistic' aspect*

3.1. Autochthonous/indigenous MinLang *versus* MinLang of immigrant communities

Exx.: Catalan, Saami *versus* Turkish, Arabic – Note problem of time scale

3.2. Regional MinLang (confined to a single area) *versus* cross-border MinLang

Exx. Scottish Gaelic, Romansh *versus* Frisian, Serbian, Romani

3.3. Number of speakers: Catalan (4m) to Livonian (40?)

→ vitality (family>church>school>local/regional govt)

3.4. MinLang of special status: Sign languages of the Deaf

### 4. *Current legal status of MinLang in EFNIL*

Excerpts from Constitution:

4.1. "EFNIL consists of central or national institutions for research, documentation and policy relating to the officially recognised standard languages within the states of the European Union."

4.2. "Comparable language institutions of European states which are not members of the EU can be accepted by the General Assembly as Associate Members."

### 5. *EFNIL's possible actions*

5.1. MinLang declined – no action needed

5.2. MinLang approved – via change of Constitution by two thirds vote

5.2.1. ?Prior consent by member institution of OffLang from home country

(e.g. Spain: Catalan & Basque)

Problem: What if no OffLang institution is member?

5.2.2. ?Status assigned: associate? observer? – Fees regulated accordingly?

5.2.3. ?What if national quota is exhausted

5.2.4. ?Institutions for what languages to invite/accept

5.2.5.1. ?Regional MinLang unrepresented in EFNIL, see 1.1, 2.2., 3.

5.2.5.2. ?Any MinLang that has an institution in home country representing it