

Mareks Kovalevskis

## **Latvian – Riga versus Brussels**

### **Abstract (English)**

For more than fourteen years now, Latvian has enjoyed the status of an official EU language. This has been highly beneficial for the development of terminology, even though some purists have complained about the growing influence of English in the process. The terms created by translators at EU institutions while translating EU legislation have contributed significantly to the expansion of the Latvian national terminology system. Nevertheless, sometimes a term thus created is not easily accepted by Latvians at home. The reasons may vary: a different legal basis, the cultural and/or political background or disparities in the semantic coverage of a term in a Latvian versus EU context.

A singular feature of Latvian is its connection to the phonetic dimension: the pronunciation may matter more than otherwise expected. Thus, for instance, Latvian speakers refused to accept the original form of the common currency, the ‘Euro’. This form is now only used in legal and financial texts, while in speech and in the media the unofficial ‘eiro’ is preferred. A similar approach is normally taken by the Latvian translation service of the European Commission: we prefer to facilitate the dialogue with national authorities and linguistic experts rather than imposing this or that form. However, since certain types of translated legislation (such as EU regulations) are directly applicable in all member states, compromises have to be made in order to ensure legal certainty across the EU as a whole.

Editorial comment: Unfortunately Mr. Kovalevskis was not able to provide us with a full contribution. To give an indication of the topic of his presentation we have included his abstract instead.

### **Bibliographical information**

This text was first published in the book:

Tanneke Schoonheim/Johan Van Hoorde (eds.) (2019): Language variation. A factor of increasing complexity and a challenge for language policy within Europe. Contributions to the EFNIL Conference 2018 in Amsterdam. Budapest: Research Institute for Linguistics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences. [250 pages.]

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