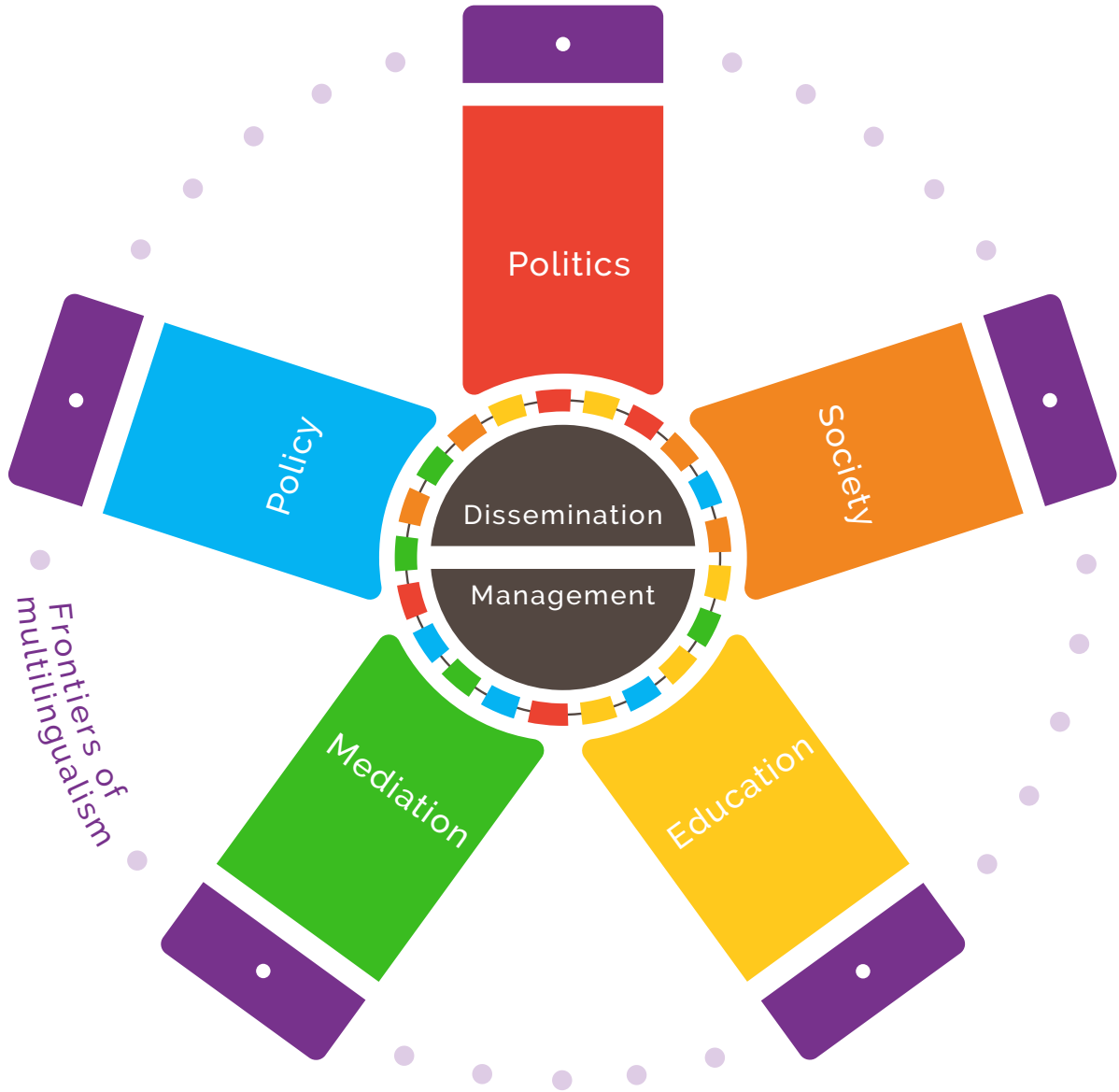


MIME

MOBILITY AND INCLUSION
IN MULTILINGUAL EUROPE



MIME

MOBILITY AND INCLUSION IN MULTILINGUAL EUROPE

1 – A major challenge for Europe and beyond

European citizens, institutions, governments and businesses are facing major challenges linked to linguistic diversity. This diversity is manifest not only in the Union's 23 official languages (soon to be 24 on 1st July 2013), but also in its many regional or minority languages, as well as a growing presence of languages brought in by migrants from other parts of the world. International mobility, not least within the EU itself, along with technological advances and a wider context of globalisation, combine to make these challenges even more complex, and calling for innovative policy responses that will ensure efficient and fair communication and allow Europe to develop its potential to the full while preserving its linguistic diversity. The issues are reflected in the European Commission's call SSH.2103.5.2-1, "The multilingual challenge for the European citizen".

2 – A strongly interdisciplinary project

The MIME project proposes to address the issues raised in the call in a strongly interdisciplinary perspective, with participants from linguistics and from disciplines spanning the full range of the social sciences. Concepts and methods from sociolinguistics, translation studies, education sciences, political science, political philosophy, sociology, geography, economics, policy evaluation, finance, psychology, and law are combined in the integrative framework designed to ensure practice-oriented cooperation between disciplinary perspectives.

3 - Connecting the micro and macro levels in a policy-oriented approach

Several of the project partners have been involved in successful FP6 research, and key advances achieved there will guide the MIME project. Languages are viewed as complex, fluid realities in a context of high mobility of people, goods and services, and knowledge, which influences the way in which skills and identities are used and constantly re-shaped. The project integrates these micro-level insights into a macro-level, policy-oriented approach to multilingual Europe. The emphasis will be placed on the management of trade-offs between potentially conflicting goals.

4 - The trade-off as a dynamic policy tool

The notion of trade-off, which is central throughout policy analysis, rests on the notion that society pursues many objectives, and that these objectives may be partly converging, but also partly diverging ones. The core question, therefore, is how best to reconcile them. Managing these trade-offs can occur through public policies regarding language and multilingualism, as well as through the intelligent use of social dynamics in civil society. The fundamental trade-off addressed in the MIME project is between (i) rising individual and societal expectations in terms of mobility and performance and (ii) a renewed need for strong, inclusive social ties. The handling of this trade-off further requires clarifying how it impacts, and is impacted by, social cohesion and the development of complex, multi-level expressions of identity linked to language and multilingualism. One key insight of the MIME project design is that rather than taking this type of trade-off as a given, it must be seen as dynamic, and can be modified in order to simultaneously facilitate both "mobility" and "inclusion"; our central aim, therefore, is to identify the policies and strategies through which the tension between these two terms, both in material and symbolic terms, can be resolved. Accordingly, project deliverables include scientific reports, *vademecums* for the selection and design of policy measures, practical tools for the assessment of language skills, as well as direct and e-learning training modules.

5 - A major emphasis on training and exchange with stakeholders

Research work can be given a sharper focus through sustained exchange with other actors such as professional associations and local/regional authorities. For this purpose, the project includes a standing *Stakeholder Forum*, which will allow for the back-and-forth exchange of information and ideas. The *Stakeholder Forum* is one of the activities designed to ensure regular contact between researchers and others,

the dissemination of findings, and the collaborative production of a solid analytical and knowledge base for policy orientations. In fact, Workpackage “DATE” (dissemination, awareness, training and exchange) is entirely devoted to these purposes.

6 - A broad and innovative design

Given the very wide range of questions raised in Call SSH-2013, the MIME project brings together a large number of partners whose expertise covers all of the eight “dimensions” listed in SSH.2013.5.2-1, “The multilingual challenge for the European citizen”. Work packages 1 through 5 respectively focus on Politics, Society, Education, Communication, and Policy. Work package 7 (mentioned above) is devoted to dissemination, awareness, training and exchange, and Work package 8 to management, involving as partner a company that has already successfully accompanied many RTD projects. In addition, in order to explore new horizons in multilingualism research, the MIME project includes a work package of pilot studies on *Frontiers of multilingualism* addressing innovative questions, such as the linguistic dimensions of consumer protection in an economically integrated Europe, or the ways in which the links between multilingualism and creativity can help understand and prevent financial crises.

7 – A team of confirmed scholars from across Europe

The MIME consortium is made up not only of leading academics in language and multilingualism, but also of scientific authorities who have all, in their respective disciplines other than the language sciences, been working on language and multilingualism from the perspective of economics, law, the humanities or political philosophy, to name but a few. This allows for solid theoretical and empirical work, as well as for highly targeted policy orientations. Some young researchers, including young team leaders, will be involved in the gender-balanced MIME consortium, in order for the project to contribute to the training of one of the most advanced, innovative network of specialists of “multilingualism-in-society” in the world. This strongly structured diversity of approaches is complemented by a cross-European coverage, with a consortium including researchers presenting an extremely wide range of expertise on language diversity and multilingualism. Project partners come from 16 different countries: Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

8 - Contact

Coordinator:

Prof. Dr. François GRIN, University of Geneva, francois.grin@unige.ch

First deputy coordinator:

Dr. László MARÁCZ, University of Amsterdam, L.K.Maracz@uva.nl

Second deputy coordinator:

Prof. Dr. Nike POKORN, University of Ljubljana, nike.pokorn@ff.uni-lj.si

Project management:

Dr. Kirsten LEUFGEN, SciProM, Lausanne, kirsten.leufgen@sciprom.ch

Manager of interdisciplinarity task force:

Prof. Dr. Peter KRAUS, Universität Augsburg, peter.kraus@phil.uni-augsburg.de

