Memorandum on Establishing Eurolinguistics as a University Field

Language is a central cultural phenomenon which does not only serve to convey information, but which serves to create worldviews and which is also an expression of identity with respect to values, beliefs, customs and social networks. It is therefore surprising that while for some academic disciplines the European perspective is the norm, this is not the case for language studies. Rather on the contrary, chairs for linguistics have been diminished at many universities. Chances for carrying out Eurolinguistic research are often restricted to third-party funding. Already in 1999, the group ELAMA (Eurolinguistischer Arbeitskreis Mannheim) formulated a manifest of Eurolinguistic needs. Some of the goals there are adopted and adapted for this memorandum:

- Insights into the common linguistic and cultural basis of European languages will foster a sense of European togetherness. Such awareness of belonging together, from ancient to modern times, will help to strengthen a European identity, which is still lacking even among the younger generations. Eurolinguistics shall thus become a discipline counteracting nationalistic tendencies in the academic and non-academic world, supporting the European educational policy of the member states of the European Union and the Council of Europe. A sense of European identity will help to reduce extremist national movements and ethnic discrimination. At the same time, Eurolinguistics will have to make sure that it does not promote a new barrier between Europeans and non-Europeans, but rather sets the basis for global empathy. Viewing the important power of language, it is urgent to study the dynamics of linguistic and cultural divergence or convergence of European languages and their relation to historical, political, psychological, social and economic parameters.
- Eurolinguistics shall promote an understanding of the language-driven causes of conflicts between groups in Europe, thereby serving peace research – within Europe and beyond Europe.
- Eurolinguistics shall also incorporate urgent multilingual programs with respect to self-determined and (half-)forced migration.
- Eurolinguistics should be seen as an integral part of an interdisciplinary approach in humanities (also integrating basic and applied research), promoting a European-minded program in life-long education. The results shall be made known to the general public (including handicapped people).

Viewing the enormous working-time that is required for such central European research, we call and ask everyone active in educational issues to engage in the realization of the following two goals.

1. Universities should enlarge the philological spectrum and install chairs of Eurolinguistics so that Eurolinguistics, in the sense of the study of the commonalities between European languages and linguacultures, becomes an integral academic discipline with free researchers, who do not have to wait and work for third-party funds only. Alternatively, research centers for Eurolinguistics closely linked to universities (and thus academic teaching) shall be founded. In reverse, Eurolinguists shall make their knowledge accessible not only to the academic world, but also to a broader public, showing the applicability of results. Thus, didactic aspects become very important.

2. School curricula should integrate Eurolinguistic knowledge as a compulsory part of foreign-language teaching, mother-tongue teaching as well as teaching non-language subjects. The role of language in non-language subjects is as of yet highly underestimated. Eurolinguistic knowledge shall enhance a feeling of identity as well as tolerance and empathy for differences (in other words: intercultural competence, particularly intercultural communicative competence). This Eurolinguistic knowledge relates to: fonts/scripts, grammatical structures and their functions, Europe-wide words, the lexical structure of conceptual fields, the connotation of names and words (including technical terms), the use of names and words in specific genres, the use names and of words for social purposes.