The European Language Equality Project

Prof. Andy Way, project coordinator
ADAPT Centre, School of Computing, DCU, Dublin

Presented by Jan Hajič, Charles University, Prague, META-NET Chair
Czech-Slovak ELG NCC Workshop, online, Mon 18th October, 2021
**Consortium:** 52 partners from all over Europe

**Coordinator:** ADAPT Centre (DCU)

**Objective:** development of a strategic research, innovation and deployment agenda and a roadmap to achieve digital language equality in Europe by 2030

**Runtime:** 18 months – ELE and ELG will both end in June 2022

**Start Date:** 1st January 2021
EP Resolution “Language equality in the digital age”
P8_TA(2018)0332 – partially based on the STOA study

Voting (11 Sept. 2018): 592 yes – 45 no

Selected Recommendations addressed by ELE:

25. Establish a large-scale, long-term coordinated funding programme for research, development and innovation in the field of language technologies, at European, national and regional levels, tailored specifically to Europe’s needs and demands

29. Create a European LT platform for sharing of services

27. Europe has to secure its leadership in language-centric AI
European Language Equality: Roots

CRACKER
EU-funded project CRACKER (Horizon2020) pushing towards an improvement of MT research in terms of efficiency and effectiveness (2015 – 2017)

Cracking the Language Barrier Federation
Founded in 2015, the federation has been assembling European research and innovation projects as well as all related community organisations working on multilingual technologies

META-FORUM 2015
Conference “Technologies for the Multilingual Digital Single Market” (Riga – April 27, 2015)

Strategic Agenda for the Multilingual Digital Single Market (Version 0.1)
Launch of the Strategic Agenda for the Multilingual Digital Single Market titled “Technologies for Overcoming Language Barriers towards a truly integrated European Online Market” (April 2015)

Riga Summit on the Multilingual Digital Single Market
Summit “Shape the future of the multilingual digital single market” (April 23-25, 2015)

“Language equality in the digital age: Towards a Human Language Project”
Launch of the study on “Language equality in the digital age: Towards a Human Language Project”, commissioned by the EU Parliament (March 2017)

META-FORUM 2017
Conference “Towards a Human Language Project” (Brussels – November 13/14, 2017)

Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (V1.0)
Launch of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda titled “Language Technologies for Multilingual Europe – Towards a Human Language Project” (December 2017)

2010
T4ME
EU-funded project (Seventh Framework Programme) working on technologies for the Multilingual European Information Society

META-NET
Established in 2010. META-NET is a network of Excellence consisting of 40 research centres from 36 countries, building the technological foundations of a multilingual European Information Society

META-FORUM 2010
“Challenges for Multilingual Europe” (November 17/18, 2010)

2011
T4ME
EU-funded project (Seventh Framework Programme) working on technologies for the Multilingual European Information Society

META-NET
Established in 2010. META-NET is a network of Excellence consisting of 40 research centres from 36 countries, building the technological foundations of a multilingual European Information Society

META-FORUM 2011
Conference “Solutions for Multilingual Europe” (Budapest – June 27/28, 2011)

2012
META-NORD
EU-funded (ICT-PSF) Project to establish an open linguistic infrastructure in the Baltic and Nordic countries (2011 – 2013)

META-NET
EU-funded project (ICT Policy Support Programme) to enhance the European Linguistic Infrastructure (2011 – 2013)

META-NET
EU-funded project (ICT Policy Support Programme) functioning as a part of META-NET to standardize language resources and tools (2011 – 2013)

META-FORUM 2012
Conference “A Strategy for Multilingual Europe” (Brussels – June 20/21, 2012)

META-NET White Papers
Release of 32 volumes on 31 languages, revealing that there is a serious threat of digital extinction for at least 21 European languages (December 2012)

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Release of 32 volumes on 31 languages, revealing that there is a serious threat of digital extinction for at least 21 European languages (December 2012)

2014
“State of the Art of Machine Translation – Current Changes and Future Opportunities” Workshop on “State of the Art of Machine Translation”, commissioned by the EU Parliament (December 2013)

META-SHARE
Initiated in 2013, META-SHARE has functioned as an open and secure network of repositories for sharing and exchanging language data, tools and services

Strategic Research Agenda for Multilingual Europe 2020
Launch of the Strategic Research Agenda for Multilingual Europe 2020 (January 2013)

META-FORUM 2013
Conference “Connecting Europe for New Horizons” (Berlin – September 19/20, 2013)

2015
META-FORUM 2015
Conference “A Strategy for Multilingual Europe” (Brussels – June 20/21, 2012)

META-NET White Papers
Release of 32 volumes on 31 languages, revealing that there is a serious threat of digital extinction for at least 21 European languages (December 2012)

2016
META-FORUM 2016
Conference “Beyond Multilingual Europe” (Lisbon – July 6/7, 2016)

META-FORUM 2016
Conference “Connections for New Horizons” (Berlin – September 19/20, 2013)

2017
META-FORUM 2017
Conference “Towards a Human Language Project” (Brussels – November 13/14, 2017)

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Conference “Towards a Human Language Project” (Brussels – November 13/14, 2017)

2018
META-FORUM 2018
Conference “Beyond Multilingual Europe” (Lisbon – July 6/7, 2016)

META-FORUM 2018
Conference “Connections for New Horizons” (Berlin – September 19/20, 2013)

2019-2021
ELG Final Proposal Submission
Final submission on Feb. 20, 2018

ELG Final Proposal Submission
Final submission on Feb. 20, 2018

ELG consortium

European Language Grid
Draw up sustainable evidence-based **strategic research agenda** and **roadmap** setting out actions, processes, tools and actors to achieve full **digital language equality** of all languages (official or otherwise) used within the EU through the effective use of **Language Technology**.

1. **Agenda**
   - From current state of Language Technology to Digital Language Equality

2. **Roadmap**
   - Provide path for implementing the agenda by 2030

3. **Dissemination**: events, consultations, social media etc.
ELE is not about implementation or research. Rather, it is a preparation project to develop a convincing agenda and roadmap, endorsed by as many relevant stakeholders as possible, representing the whole field.

- Development of the strategic agenda and roadmap
- Input from all relevant stakeholders
- Close collaboration between ELE & ELG
- Integration of (almost) all ELG NCCs and the ELG Language Technology Council (LTC)
- Make use of ELG platform for various tasks in ELE
- Update META-NET White Papers (30+)
- Organise events, consultations, surveys
- Large, all-encompassing consortium: 52 partners from industry, research and many different pan-European networks, initiatives and associations
Progress To Date

https://european-language-equality.eu/

About European Language Equality

Twenty-four official languages and more than 60 regional and minority languages constitute the fabric of the EU’s linguistic landscape. However, language barriers still hamper communication and the free flow of information across the EU. Multilingualism is a key cultural cornerstone of Europe and signifies what it means to be and to feel European. Many studies and resolutions, as noted in the recent EP resolution “Language equality in the digital age”, have found a striking imbalance in terms of support through language technologies and issue a call to action.

This project answers this call and lays the foundations for a strategic agenda and roadmap for making digital language equality a reality in Europe by 2030.

The primary goal of ELE is to prepare the European Language Equality Programme, in the form of a strategic research, innovation and implementation agenda and a roadmap for achieving full digital language equality in Europe by 2030. This programme will be prepared jointly with the whole European Language Technology, Computational Linguistics and language-centric AI community, as well as with representatives of relevant initiatives and associations, language communities and RML groups.

The consortium includes all relevant scientific and industrial stakeholders from all Member States and Associated Countries and engages them in the process. The whole community is included in the project through external consultation sessions. The project plan is fully optimised towards this key goal of preparing the strategic agenda and roadmap and of involving the whole European LT community.

Ensuring appropriate technology support for all European languages will create jobs, growth and opportunities in the digital single market. Equally crucial, overcoming language barriers in the digital environment is essential for an inclusive society and for providing unity in diversity for many years to come. The ELE project provides a roadmap and framework to achieve this.
Progress To Date: Surveys (Developers, Consumers)

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE EQUALITY

About this questionnaire

This questionnaire is delivered by the European Language Equality (ELE) project, a pilot action that addresses an appeal by the European Parliament resolution "Language equality in the digital age". The primary goal of ELE is to prepare a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda and Roadmap, in order to tackle the striking imbalance between European languages in terms of the support they receive through language technologies.

To this end, ELE is reaching out to the European stakeholders involved in Digital Language Equality through a series of consultation rounds. This questionnaire is specifically addressed to researchers and industry practitioners in the field of Language Technology (LT), Natural Language Processing (NLP), Speech Technologies and Language-centric AI.

The questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes to fill in. You are expected to evaluate the current situation with respect to the level of LT support for European languages, to indicate challenges and to share your needs and expectations for the future.

Your contributions will be carefully taken into account when preparing the ELE strategic agenda and roadmap.

This is a joint pan-European effort that will impact the field of LT in Europe for the next 10-15 years, including the funding situation. Join us and be a part of it!

Personal data protection

Personal data, i.e. name and email address, will be used for contact purposes only during the ELE project, i.e. to invite respondents to follow-up interviews or to the ELE conference or other project events. No personal data of the respondents will be made available to any third party, beyond the ELE consortium. The names and emails of the respondents will not be reported in any project public document. The respondents’ views and opinions, as expressed through this questionnaire, may be reported anonymously in the project’s deliverables or in other public documents, e.g. scientific publications, dissemination material etc., without any reference to the individual’s personally identifiable information.
Progress To Date: LR Collection (Oct 15th)
• The ELE project, by mid-2022, ...
  • ... will develop a Strategic Research, Innovation and Implementation Agenda and a Roadmap for achieving full Digital Language Equality in Europe by 2030
    • as a consortium of 52 partners covering all European countries and all major initiatives
  • ... organize consultation events, roundtables, stakeholder meetings
  • ... collaborate with its sister project ELG, ELG NCCs, META-NET members
    • organize a joint META-FORUM 2022 in June 2022
  • ... impacting future research in all aspects of Language Technology

• Closest event: META-FORUM 2021, Nov. 15-17 (online)
  • ... more information about projects, language technology, etc.
http://www.european-language-equality.eu