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United in or torn by diversity?

Multilingualism and the European public sphere

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Abstract

So far the academic debate on the possible emergence of a European public sphere has been exhaustive however largely neglecting the implications of expressed multilingualism/linguistic diversity in the EU for formation of a public sphere. This study problematises the question of linguistic diversity within the framework of this debate. It outlines and examines the implications of linguistic diversity on the possible European public sphere both theoretically and empirically. Additionally, a sociolinguistic perspective is introduced, connecting the notion of political community to language and speech communities. It is central to understanding whether the main problems the linguistic diversity creates for the possible public sphere – constraints of transnational communication, restricted possibilities to provide inclusiveness of a public sphere and open access to it – theoretically are surmountable. Empirically this thesis is based on four case studies of European-wide NGOs – the European Environmental Bureau, the European Youth Forum, the European Women's Lobby and the *Café Babel*. The management of linguistic diversity of members in communication processes in these NGOs is studied with a purpose to learn about the impact of multilingualism on the constituent part of a possible European public sphere.

*Keywords***:** European public sphere, multilingualism, linguistic diversity, *lingua franca*, speech community, European NGOs.

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1 Introduction

1.1 The subject

The study is motivated by interrelation of two highly different phenomena of the European political system – multilingualism or linguistic diversity[1] and the concept of the European public sphere. The first is an objective, although not widely discussed, reality of the European Union (EU). Moreover, despite its complexity and day-to-day importance, "[t]he subject of languages has been a great *non-dit* of the European integration" (De Swaan 2001 p.144). The second has raised an extensive academic debate, however, the existence and even the possibility of creation of a European public sphere is often questioned. The interconnection between multilingualism and a possible European public sphere, in my opinion, is not sufficiently addressed in this debate. The linguistic diversity is either mentioned as a key impediment for a European public sphere or not regarded an obstacle at all. I believe that such conclusions are not self-evident and have to be discussed to the same extent as other crucial notions in the debate on a European public sphere, such as identity, common values, common media, etc. That is why in this thesis, while both following and examining the current academic debate on the issue, the possibility of the European public sphere will be discussed from perspective of linguistic diversity.

1.2 The purpose and the research questions

The overall purpose of the study is to problematise and discuss the notion and the possibility of a European public sphere[2], placing the discussion entirely in the linguistic diversity perspective. The overarching research question of this thesis is – what are the implications of linguistic diversity for the possible emergence of a European public sphere? This question will be discussed both from a theoretical and an empirical perspective; therefore several working questions are put forward to address different aspects of the problem.

In theoretical terms discussion is limited to: What problems linguistic diversity creates for the formation of a public sphere? Are there any unsurpassable constraints? And subsequently, is a *lingua franca*[3] a requisite for the possible creation of a European public sphere?

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[1] For the purpose of this study the terms 'multilingualism' and 'linguistic diversity' are employed as synonymous.
[2] Hereby referring to the public sphere only within the European Union, as the EU is not truly equivalent to geographical Europe.
[3] For the purpose of this study, the term '*lingua franca*' is understood as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different.

Empirically, the attempt to learn about the implications of linguistic diversity on a a European public sphere is based on civil society associations – European-wide NGOs, in terms of their capacity to stimulate transnational communication thus contributing to establishment of a transnational public sphere. The questions addressed in the empirical analysis, are aimed to establish what can be learned about the impact of multilingualism on the possible European public sphere studying the NGOs as a constituent part of it. The main questions therefore are: What are the linguistic arrangements of the European-wide NGOs? What difficulties do the NGOs encounter when managing the linguistic diversity of their members? Is there an emerging *lingua franca*?

1.3 The plan of the study

Following the introduction, the study will begin with theoretical part, first addressing the concept of public sphere and then problematising language question in the current academic debate (Chapter 2). It will continue with a concise insight in the European multilingualism and its sociolinguistic aspects, tracing links between the concepts of the language and speech community and political community. Then the possibilities for emergence of a *lingua franca* will be shortly evaluated (Chapter 3). The theoretical section will conclude with a discussion of the possibility of the public sphere merely from the linguistic diversity perspective, placing the discussion in the context of respective academic debate, displaying arguments both *pro* and *contra*, proposing some critique and comments on both standpoints, and finally outlining some possible linguistic arrangements, which would be favourable for the creation of a public sphere in a multilingual society (Chaper 4).

In the empirical part of the study (Chaper 5) the communication in the respective NGOs will be analyzed, focusing on the implications of linguistic diversity on day-to-day communication in the organisations and their activity towards general public. The empirical part will be completed with a discussion about the existence and possibilities of a *lingua franca* in researched transnational community and evaluation of possible contributions from the European-wide NGOs to the formation of a European public sphere.

1.4 Delimitations

The academic debate on the European public sphere is intense and complex; it encompasses numerous issue areas which makes it impossible to include all aspects of the discussion in this research. Therefore, this study, apart from examining the main concepts of the debate, is focusing only on the part of the debate, which is relevant to the research problem, namely, the role of linguistic diversity in the formation of a public sphere. Other questions related to the concept of public sphere, such as other preconditions for creation of a public sphere, its role and functions as well as necessity of a European public sphere as

such will be discussed only to the extent that contributes to establishing answers to the research questions of this study.

Empirical research is focused on four European-wide NGOs – the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the *Café Babel*, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and the European Youth Forum (EYF). In this study I will not make daring generalizations and speculations regarding all European-wide NGOs but rather establish what can be learned from the cases chosen for the study.

1.5 Relevance to the existing academic studies

For decades the implications of the linguistic arrangements in Europe have been studied only from the linguistic, sociolinguistic and historic perspective, while the study of European politics has been ignorant to this issue. Today, in the context of the debate on the possibility of a European public sphere, the interconnection of language diversity and the formation of a public sphere is often mentioned but never fully explored. The existing studies on a possible European public sphere do not touch substantively on the language issue[1]. A large share of the academic publications discusses common identity as a precondition for forming a common public sphere. Another part focuses on the communicative space in Europe, discussing cross-national media as an arena for discussion and opinion formation. It might seem obvious that the problem of the linguistic diversity has to be taken into consideration both when talking about identity, as language is an important part of individuals' identification with certain groups, and when talking about European media space, because the language is the main instrument of conveying any message and ensuring understanding of it. However, this discussion has not emerged to a meaningful extent. Therefore this study, linking the linguistic diversity and possible emergence of a European public sphere, aims to contribute to a generally neglected part of the debate on a European public sphere.

1.6 Methodology and sources

The term methodology in a broad sense refers to the process, principles and procedures by which we approach problems and seek answers (Bogdan and Taylor 1975 p. 1). This study is based on qualitative research, which, as stated by Denzin and Lincoln (1994 p.2) is a multimethod in focus, where researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand.

The theoretical part of the study is based on the in depth exploration and analysis of the respective academic debate. The material used in support of it consists of a number of books and articles from the leading researchers in the debate on the concept of public sphere and, particularly, the European public

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[1] There are very few exceptions, the most important of which are the works of Peter A. Kraus addressing, for the great part, the political implications of the European linguistic diversity.

sphere. The works of Jürgen Habermas are primary sources providing the theoretical framework. The works of other active participants of the debate, for instance, E.O. Eriksen, T. Risse, M. Van de Steeg, N. Fraser, H.-J. Trenz and Peter A. Kraus, have been helpful resources for this study as well. Works of F. Coulmas, J. Fishman A. de Swaan and S. Romaine were used to obtain a sociolinguistic insight of the problem.

Empirical analysis of this thesis is based on case studies. Generally, case studies focus on one or few instances of a particular phenomenon with a view to provide an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance (Denscombe 1998 p.32). For conducting this study, however, four of cases were chosen to get more representative information about the European-wide NGOs, studying the same problem in different non-governmental organizations. The phenomena studied in this research are not of a major concern for these NGOs; therefore it would be unlikely to collect extensive data analyzing only one or two cases. Cases were chosen, employing several criteria[1], such as inclusiveness, type of NGOs (social NGOs, as they address issues that have higher potential to generate a discussion in the society), but most of all – those cases that seem to offer opportunity to learn, as "potential learning is different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness" (Stake 1994 p.243).

One of the strengths of the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, a variety of types of data and a variety of research methods as a part of the investigation (Denscombe 1998 p.31). Moreover, it is recognized that it is difficult to clearly fit the research into one category and it can be beneficial to combine features of both qualitative and quantitative method (King et al. 1994 p.5). Empirical analysis in this study is mostly based on qualitative research, however, drawing to on quantitative data, if considered necessary. Qualitative methods imply the study of processes and meanings (in this study – communication in multilingual community and its problems) that are not "rigorously examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994 p.4). I am aware that certain level of subjectivity will be inevitable in this case, especially as the major instrument for collecting the empirical material are interviews and questionnaires. I also recognize that the research problem creates purely linguistic limitations on subjectivity as a truly comprehensive study would require conducting the research in many languages (ideally – at least twenty). This research was conducted mostly in English (the questionnaires were translated also in French), thus the range of respondents was restricted, including only those who master either English or French.

The interviews conducted for this study were semi-structured open purpose conversations; the key questions were similar for all the respondents, allowing variations during actual interview[2]. Taking into consideration that "[t]he

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[1] See an elaboration on criteria of the choice of cases in the beginning of the Chapter 5 (Section 5.1.) and broader descriptions of the cases as well as main information sources in the Appendix No.1.
[2] See a sample of interview guide in the Appendix No.1

qualitative research interview is a construction site of knowledge" (Kvale 1996 p.2), the main emphasis in the interviews was put on the exploration rather than testing concrete assumptions. The main aim of the interviews was to discover the overall situation; in some cases they were succeeded by follow-up questions to clarify issues of the most interest. Seven interviews were conducted with representatives of all studied NGOs, including interviewees both from central offices and member organisations. Taking into consideration the range of member organisations it was not feasible to include interviews with representatives from all the countries in the process of this research. However, as it sometimes is the case, weaknesses of one research technique can be complemented by strengths of the other (Buckingham and Saunders 2004 p.44). That is why in addition to interviews, questionnaires were sent out to a larger number of respondents. The aim of the questionnaires employed in this study was not to provide comprehensive, standardized data on identical questions and the data was not treated statistically. It was rather used to supplement, complete and in some instances clarify the information gained in the process of interviewing. Because of that questionnaires, although had the same key questions, were slightly modified according to target respondents[1].

As follows from such methodological approach, the empirical material for the study consists of, first of all, the interviews with representatives of the respective NGOs, the answers to follow-up questions and the questionnaires, send by e-mail. Secondly, websites, newsletters and other publications of the NGOs were examined from the aspect of language diversity, i.e., in how many languages are they available, is it possible to trace the contributors to the discussions in respective publications and are there any particular tendencies of activity of certain country representatives[2].

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[1] See a sample of questionnaire in the Appendix No.1
[2] See a broader description of the empirical information sources and the process of gathering the information in the Appendix No.1

2 The concept of European public sphere

2.1 Why talk about a European public sphere?

Being "a successful story of 'Europeanisation' of the German notion 'Öffentlichkeit' and its arbitrary English translation" (Trenz 2005 p.1), the concept of public sphere recently has been receiving an increasing attention from scholars and practitioners of European politics. First and foremost this notion is addressed as a possible solution to the lack of legitimacy and the 'democratic deficit', from which the EU is held to suffer due to a weak parliament, the absence of European–wide parties and the absence of a European public sphere based on a symbolically constructed people (Eriksen 2005 p.343). Often it is the latter which is considered a key factor for the democratic deficit. Such opinion is based on an argument that there are no external powers that can ensure the legitimacy of power; it is constituted through public discussion. Dahl (1999 p.32) states that "in the current world there are not many alternatives to democracy as a source of legitimacy". It is held to be the sole legitimating principle of government in modern societies, based on an inclusive public sphere entitling everyone affected to take part in the deliberation on common affairs (Eriksen 2004 p.1). This question becomes even more significant when speaking about democracy beyond nation state, in particular in the EU, as its supranational governance extends political regulation over fields which previously were dominated by national governments. In general, the idea of a public sphere provides the sort of deliberative arrangement that fits the requirement of discourse theory, namely that a norm is deemed to be legitimate only when all affected have accepted it in a free and rational debate (Eriksen 2004 p.1). Increasing the communication flows and information exchange as well as understanding between individuals and groups, a public sphere has high problem-solving potential and provides the basis for popular approval of democratic policies. Finally, as stated by Eriksen (2004 p.1), public sphere is basic to the concept of democratic legitimacy as it revolves on the probability of including all potentially affected.

It has to be noted that a European public sphere is considered not (or not yet) existent but rather a possible cure to salient problem of the European polity, thus the discussion of both the concept of public sphere and its possibility in the EU is to a large extent normative, containing empirical references to the current political and social arrangements of the EU. In this thesis the discussion of the concept and the possibility of a European public sphere will be held in the context of the existing debate, without being inclined to put forward new dimensions in the current conceptual understanding of the public sphere, as the existing concepts

already are diverse and multishaped. Instead, the purpose is to show the essentiality of the question of language diversity in the existing discussions.

2.2 What is public sphere?

As shown above, the notion of public sphere plays a central role in the current discussions on the European integration and democracy, yet there is no definitive agreement on what constitutes a European public sphere and its existence cannot be considered a 'yes' or 'no' question.

The starting point for a large proportion of theorists' understandings of the public sphere in general and a European public sphere in particular is the work "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" by Jürgen Habermas (1962, English translation 1989) and his further discussions on the public sphere. As argued by Dahlberg (2005 p.111), Habermas "continues to provide the most systematically developed critical theory of the concept now available". First developed in the context of the European bourgeois public sphere of late 17th and 18th century, the concept now is applied to contemporary nation states and beyond them – to the EU. As regards this study, the Habermasian concept of public sphere will be employed, taking into consideration also contributions of other influential scholars, such as, E.O. Eriksen, N. Fraser, H.J. Trenz, M.Van de Steeg and others.

Habermas (1996 p.359) describes the political public sphere as a sounding board for problems that must be processed by the political system because they cannot be solved elsewhere. He states that it is a social phenomenon, just as elementary as action, actor, association, or collectivity, but it eludes the conventional sociological concepts of 'social order'. The public sphere can be best described as a network for communicating information and points of view. It is reproduced through communicative action, for which a mastery of natural language suffices and tailored to the general comprehensibility of everyday communicative practice. Importantly, the public sphere is a linguistically constituted public space which stands open, in principle, for all potential dialogue partners and special measures would be required to prevent any third party from entering such space (Ibid. p.360-361)

Other definitions are derived from the aforementioned and supplement it. Risse and Van de Steeg (2003 p.16) say that "the public sphere is a social construction constituting a community of communication". Fraser (1995 p.287) labels the public sphere as "a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk". Eriksen (2004 p.1.) states that "the public sphere is the social room that is created when individuals deliberate on common concerns". Elsewhere (2005 p.341), he adds that this social room is created when individuals discuss common concerns in front of an audience. Trenz and Eder (2004 p.9) emphasizes the role of an audience as well, adding a notion of resonance to the concept of public sphere. They argue that the public sphere includes not only those who take an active part in the debate but

always pre-supposes that the communication resonates among others who constitute a public for this communication.

What all the foregoing discussion implies for the European public sphere? Normatively, the public sphere is a community of communication, constituted and maintained through dialogue, acts of speech, through debate and discussion; it exists in a linguistically constituted public space outside both national and supranational institutions and state boundaries and is characterized by inclusiveness and universal access for all who are concerned with questions of public interest. In this study these will be the key criteria for examining the possibility of a European public sphere with regard to linguistic diversity perspective. Empirically, however, the fulfilment of these normative criteria depends on various European political, social and linguistic realities, significance and prioritization of which vary considerably in the academic debate.

What constitutes a public sphere? Habermas points out that today the public sphere is a highly complex network of various public spheres, which stretches across different levels, rooms, and scales (as cited in Eriksen 2005 p.345). There are strictly situated public spheres, where the participants meet face to face; there are written public spheres, and there are anonymous, faceless public spheres made possible by new electronic technologies (Eriksen 2004 p.5). Such definitions presuppose all-inclusive perception of what constitutes a public sphere. However, as empirically this study is focused on the European-wide NGOs, it is necessary to establish what role is assigned to civil society associations in the concept of public sphere. Habermas (1996 p.359, 367) states that the communication structures of the public sphere are anchored by the institutional core of civil society, which comprises a network of associations that institutionalizes problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres. Such associations form the organizational substratum of the general public of citizens. He also claims that those associations (ranging from churches, sport and cultural associations to groups of concerned citizens, occupational associations and parties) have a potential to animate the public debate (Habermas, 1992 p.452–454), which, in its turn, is a precondition for constituting a common public sphere. Thus, apart from being an element of the respective public sphere, European-wide civil society associations, including NGOs, at least normatively, do possess a potential for active contributing to the creation of a European public sphere.

2.3   Problematising language in the discussion of a European public sphere

As mentioned before, there are diverse opinions among scholars on what constitutes a public sphere, particularly a European public sphere – and how do we recognize it when we see one. As a result, different conceptualizations lead to diverging assessments about whether there is a transnational public sphere in Europe in an empirical sense and, if the answer is no, whether something

resembling such a sphere could actually emerge in principle (Risse 2002 p.1). In general two different, although, interconnected, orientations can be distinguished in the academic debate about what are (or should be) possible features of a European public sphere.

One of them emphasizes the necessity of a common European identity as a precondition for creating a European public sphere. For some authors, the lack of collective identity is regarded as "the most important hurdle on the way to a democratic Europe" (Scharpf, as cited in Koopmans et al. 2002 p.12). Others, for instance, Risse (2002 p.8) argues that "one should avoid simply transferring some particularly 'thick' and historically actually rather contingent notions of nation-state identities on the European level". He states that instead, in order to qualify for a transnational European public sphere, various national public spaces need to be interconnected through either direct or 'virtual' discursive interaction with fellow Europeans treated as legitimate speakers. Such assumption implies that the 'we' in whose name actors speak and to whom they relate, extends beyond national boundaries, and, thus, requires some degree of collective identification with fellow Europeans (Risse 2002 p.6-8).

Another orientation lays stress on the European media as a platform for creating a European-wide discussion. Some of authors (e.g. Grimm 1995, Schlesinger 2003) claim that prospects for the Europeanization of the communication system in are non-existent, as there is no pan-European media system. Others contend that it is possible to discuss a European public sphere, if and when people speak about the same issues at the same time using the same criteria of relevance and are mutually aware of each other's viewpoints (Risse 2003 p.7), i.e., if the Europeanization of national communication systems occur.

Generally the academic debate on the possibility of European public sphere, although using different points of departure and varied criteria, emphasizes that at least normatively there are chances for emergence of a public sphere in Europe. Only few authors, for instance Grimm (1995), would go so far to give an entirely negative prognosis. The debate is exhaustive and encompasses a vast variety of questions, but at present it is far from being exhausted. Going back to the definition of the concept of public sphere, it is obvious that all elements constituting it are connected with language. A community of communication requires certain rules and means of communication ensuring mutual understanding. It cannot be guaranteed without appropriate linguistic arrangements, especially in a highly multilingual entity such as the EU. It becomes even more important if the inclusiveness and the universal access to the public discussion have to be ensured, as currently it is unlikely to find a truly common language for the entire EU. Authors in the existing debate do not touch substantively on this issue. In some of discussions the question of multilingualism and a public sphere is omitted, elsewhere it is simply taken for granted that: 1) linguistic diversity is a non-disputable impediment of creation of the European public sphere, or 2) linguistic diversity does not create significant problems and it can be overcome, not explaining possible means. Such assumptions are not enough for gaining a profound understanding of the role of linguistic arrangements in constituting a public sphere. Language is the most visible aspect

of culture, and language planning as such has an important political dimension, for it often determines who will be the haves and havenots within a society (Caviedes 2003 p.265). Neither the relationship between communication and politics nor the role of the public sphere in modern democracies can be properly analyzed if language is regarded as a factor that is exogenous to the political process (Kraus 2003a p.310). Firstly, it is crucial if one discusses identity, collective identification and 'we' feeling because language features are the link which binds individual and social identities together, as "[l]anguage offers both means for creating this link and that of expressing it" (Tabouret–Keller 1997 p.317). Secondly, same is true about media and other communication systems, as they do not exist outside language. The explicit multilingualism of Europe does not allow neglecting its implications for the public sphere.

The next chapter of this study will provide an overview of the linguistic situation in the EU, delineating problems and prospects associated with European multilingualism. Afterwards the resultant linguistic implications for a European public sphere will be discussed in the context of the theoretical debate and some opportunities will be outlined.

3 Linguistic diversity: problems and prospects

Europe and the EU are characterized by an extremely rich and politically very complex linguistic situation. Today the EU is home to 450 million people from diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. At present, it recognises 20 official languages[1]; about 60 other indigenous and non–indigenous languages are spoken over the geographical area (*Eurobarometer* 2006 p.3). A sociolinguistic map of Europe looks like a mess of coloured patches where political boundaries are represented by thick black lines separating nearly uniform surfaces (Van Parijs 1999 p.3-4). Beyond doubt, such 'European Babel' creates major political implications, especially taking into consideration the heavy historical weight of language nationalism in the formation and consolidation of modern states on the continent (Kraus 2000 p.150).

Managing such linguistic diversity is not an easy task and the EU's language policy is a "genuine expression of a multinational constellation" (Kraus 2003a p.305). With its highly ambitious language regime, the EU emphasizes the political claim to be substantially 'more' than just another international organisation (Kraus 2000 p.152). The principle of multilingualism is firmly cemented in rhetoric and documents[2], creating an institutional path safeguarding current official linguistic diversity. So far, the EU's policy has been that "the equal treatment of all official languages should remain an absolute priority over all kinds of financial criteria" (Kraus 2003b p.675). Indeed, multilingualism only in the EU institutions is costly – the latest figure (2005) for the total annual cost of the language services is € 1 123 million (Languages and Europe 2006). Use of all-encompassing linguistic solutions like the ones employed in the EU institutions for public discourses is neither possible in terms of resources, nor in terms of feasibility thus, questionless, communication in all the EU cannot and will not be handled only by conventional means of translation and interpreting. Furthermore, there is no reason to think that management of linguistic diversity in the EU would change in foreseeable future thus linguistic arrangements will continue to have a deep impact on political realities.

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[1] The official Community languages of the European Union are Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish. Irish will become the 21st official language on January 1st, 2007. After the accession of Bulgaria and Romania the Union will operate in 23 official languages.

[2] Starting from the Council Regulation No 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community (CEEC 1958) to current Commission communications on multilingualism and language learning (CEC 2003, 2005).

3.1 Political and sociolinguistic map of Europe

A comprehensive analysis of the implications of linguistic diversity for a European public sphere should not be restricted to examining purely political phenomena, viewing societies only as political communities. Kymlicka (1999 p.120) argues that in democratic debates in multilingual democracies language is increasingly important in defining the boundaries of political communities. Thus, viewing public sphere as a community of communication in a linguistically constituted space, apart from examining the political map of Europe, one should consider also the sociolinguistic one, especially key objects on this map – language communities and speech communities.

The concept of language community denotes a community which shares a common language and bears a specific cultural possession of the masses. It is at first the consequence of an ethnic or social community; a bond that creates definite social relations (Mises 1919(1983) p.38). It is associated with ethnicity and culture and has strong ties to nations and states. The term 'speech community', in its turn, generally is referred to any social or geographical group sharing roughly the same language (Chalker and Weiner 1998). Its definition, as put forward by Patrick (2002 p.579), supposedly stems from the classic position first explicitly adopted by Leonard Bloomfield in 1926:

> 1. Definition. An act of speech is an utterance. 2. Assumption. Within certain communities successive utterances are alike or partly alike. 3. Definition. Any such community is a speech community.

A language community can also be a speech community; however those two do not necessarily coincide. Suzanne Romaine (2000 p.23) even argues that to form a speech community, people do not necessarily share the same language, but a set of norms and rules for the use of language. To belong to the same speech community they have to share enough characteristic patterns of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and manner of speaking (Salzmann 1993 p.194).

Adding a sociolinguistic dimension to the political map of Europe, one observes that the language communities largely coincide with the political communities of the states, whereas the speech communities, although still being bound to certain linguistic realities, may both subdivide the language communities within the borders of a nation state and unite them beyond those borders. To have meaningful communication, it is enough for members of respective community of communication to belong to one speech community. Therefore the fragmentation caused by language communities in the EU can be overcome by creating shared speech communities. It can be true whether one believes that a public sphere is based on direct transnational communication (requiring that all the participants can communicate in one or few languages) or indirect communication or the Europeanization of national public spheres. Members of a community of communication and possibly – a public sphere – can belong to different language communities but, in the absence of comprehensive translation and interpretation resources, they should share a speech community, or in other words, a *lingua franca* or at least two or three languages covering all the geographic area.

Naturally, the next question is the possibility of emergence of a *lingua franca* in Europe.

3.2 Constraints and possibilities for emergence of a *lingua franca*

The EU can be labelled a 'self–generating Babel' (Schlesinger 2003 p.5) because of its pronounced multilingualism and scarce chances that it will change. Apart from the institutional path of the principle of 'united in diversity' in the EU's language and culture policies, several theoretic explanations can be drawn to answer why emergence of an official *lingua franca* is unlikely in the EU. First of all, Bourdieu (1991 p.163-170) argues that an official language can be considered a linguistic capital affording its holders a symbolic power. Also Chomsky (1979 p.191) states that "questions of language are basically questions of power". It can explain why member states are unwilling to surrender this symbolic power to other languages. Secondly, limiting the number of official languages may lead to language conflicts, as they are likely to be brought about by changes in an expanding social system when there is contact between different language groups, especially if one dominant group emerges and employs language as discriminating or suppressing means (Inglehart and Woodward 1967 p.360, Nelde 1997 p.290). Thus due to both practical and theoretical reasons currently the chances of emergence of an official *lingua franca* in the EU, are non-existent.

However, the picture appears slightly different when considering *de facto* linguistic realities of the EU. Sociologist Abram de Swaan (2001 p.153) argues that English has become the predominant medium of international communication in the EU. Although it is the first language nowhere on the European continent, it has become the most widely spoken second language. Is there a possibility of English to become a *de facto lingua franca* of Europe? Currently one cannot speak of any genuine *lingua franca* in the EU because, as shown in recent *Eurobarometer* survey (2006 p.8), 44% of Europeans do not know any other language than their mother tongue[1]. Indeed, English is the most widely spoken foreign language: 38% of EU citizens state that they have sufficient skills in English to have a conversation (followed by French and German – both 14%)[2] (Ibid. p.12). However, such spread of language knowledge is not enough to provide for possibility of communication in one or even three languages in the entire EU.

Nonetheless it has to be noted that the dominance of English on the Europe's sociolinguistic map is growing. The overall knowledge of foreign languages in the EU is increasing and English is becoming prevalent as a second language. Compared to 2001, the share of those knowing at least one foreign language has increased from 47% in 2001 to 56% in 2005 (*Eurobarometer* 2006 p.8). English is

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[1] See Figure 1 in the Appendix No.3.
[2] See Figure 2 in the Appendix No.3.

rated as by far the most useful language to know (68%[1]) and its prevalence becomes even more apparent when children are concerned: 77% of Europeans consider English to be the language that children should learn[2]. Importantly, this tendency is true in practically every EU country (Ibid. p.30–34). Taking into consideration these tendencies and a factor, which Van Parijs calls a *probability–sensitive learning*[3] allow to assume that incentives of learning English will increase in future, which may result in amounting of English to a status of *lingua franca* of Europe for wide strata of society. Especially, as it is argued that English is becoming a "de–ethicized language" (Carsten Quell, as cited in Phillipson 1999 p.101), therefore it possesses less potential to cause language conflicts. Described tendencies, however, are not a reality of today, at least not in mass publics, so possibilities of constitution of one or few speech communities uniting all the language communities in the EU currently are highly limited.

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[1] See Figure 4 in the Appendix No.3.
[2] See Figure 5 in the Appendix No.3.
[3] The extent to which a person maintains and improves her linguistic competence in some particular language is strongly affected by the probability with which that person can expect to have to function in that language. (Van Parijs 2004 p.114)

4 European public sphere and linguistic diversity

Beyond doubt, the creation of a community of communication in a society torn by at least twenty languages encounters numerous difficulties. The range of possible challenges of multilingualism reaches from trivial impossibility of communication and enormous resources necessary for translation and interpreting to linguistically based differences in perception and identity questions. Opinions on possibility of a public sphere in such circumstances can be put on a continuum ranging from 'absolutely impossible' to 'potentially feasible'.

4.1 Discussion of the public sphere: outlining problems and constraints

As in defining the concept of public sphere and its feasibility considering political factors, variety of approaches and interpretations in evaluating possible constraints for the public sphere in multilingual entities makes it impossible to answer this question in 'yes' or 'no' terms.

The most pessimistic projections of a public sphere in the multilingual conditions depart from an idea expressed by John Stuart Mill, who argued that there is a strong connection between the prospects for democratic rule and the existence of a linguistically integrated public. In one of the canonical texts, "The Considerations on Representative Government" (1861), Mill wrote that "free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities" (Cited in Kraus 2003a p.301). In his model, language works as the cement of a shared political culture. Language pluralism is an obstacle for the flow of political communication beyond nationality borders and it inhibits the formation of a common public sphere (Kraus 2003a p.302). Such position has not lost its topicality even today and is upheld by several authors. Dieter Grimm (1995 p.293–297) views language as the biggest obstacle to the Europeanization of the political substructure, as communication is bound up with language and linguistically mediated experience and interpretation of the world. He concludes that "the absence of a European communication system, due chiefly to language diversity, has the consequence that for the foreseeable future there will be neither a European public nor a European political discourse". Kielmansegg (as cited in Van de Steeg 2002 p.500) expresses similar opinion, stating that Europe is not a community of communication, because Europe is a multilingual continent. He argues that "[t]he European peoples live in their languages as distinct 'structures of perception and understanding', and they will continue to live in them, when Europe remains Europe".

Such approach asserts that language diversity *per se* is an unsurmountable obstacle for a public sphere as it precludes communication between different language communities. Being largely based on an ideal-type of homogenous national public sphere, it neglects several significant elements that are characteristic to Europe today. First of all, there are examples of multilingual (or at least bilingual) states such as Belgium, Switzerland, Spain or Finland which might be put forward as an evidence of existence of public spheres in multilingual conditions. It would be naïve to think that exactly the same arrangements can work in bilingual society and one encompassing 20 languages, however, the learning possibilities should not be underestimated. Also the mastering of foreign languages in the EU should not be neglected; the overall knowledge of foreign languages is increasing, amounting to considerable levels of knowledge in some societal groups such as youth and students as well as people holding managerial positions[1]. As rightly argued by Kraus (2000 p.149), language diversity, being an especially salient manifestation of cultural heterogeneity, does alter the framework in which democratic politics take place in a substantial way; however, this challenge should not be automatically equated with insurmountable obstacle for building transnational democratic structures in a heterogeneous Europe.

The other side of the debate is represented by entirely affirmative views on the possibility of a public sphere in the multilingual circumstances. Risse and Van de Steeg (2003 p.14) argue that there is no reason why all should speak the same language and all use the same media in order to be able to communicate across national borders in a meaningful way. If people attach similar meanings to what they observe in Europe, they should be able to communicate across borders irrespective of language and in the absence of European–wide media. Elsewhere Van Steeg (2002 p.503) admits that clearly people with different language backgrounds have to make more of an effort to understand what is being said, and to be understood, but this will not prevent them from communicating with each other.

Beyond doubt, such situation would be very desirable for a European public sphere; however, put simply, not possessing enough language skills João from Portugal, Jānis from Latvia and Yannis from Greece will not be able to communicate without external help, even if there is an explicit will to do that. As already mentioned, translation and interpretation tools cannot be used for the entire European-wide public communication. Thus, whether arguing for or against a possibility of a community of communication it is erroneous to avoid the question of possible *lingua franca*, although it must be noted that in actual debate, and especially in the discussions outlined above, it is not a live issue. Arguing that a European public sphere is a utopia due to language constraints, one implies that there is no *lingua franca* and no possibilities that it can emerge. Arguing that people should be able to communicate 'irrespective of language' presupposes that common language exists at least for certain part of the society. There are only few authors who argue that it is necessary to have a *lingua franca* to create a European-wide community of communication, not seeing its absence as an

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[1] See Figure 3 in the Appendix No.3.

unsurpassable obstacle. Habermas (1995 p.307 – in reply to the aforementioned Grimm's arguments) contends that "Europe has been integrating economically, socially and administratively for some time and in addition can base itself on a common cultural background and the shared historical experience of having happily overcome nationalism". Thus he states that even the requirement of a common language ought not to be an insurmountable obstacle with the existing level of formal schooling. Van Parijs (2004 p.122), in his turn, argues that one should not rush into asserting that only one language is needed. He proposes that to avoid the drawbacks and dangers of the dominance of a single language, there should be two or three *lingua francas* side by side.

In general, although the debate on the language diversity and a public sphere does not involve large-scale discussions on precise interrelationship between linguistic diversity and a public sphere, certain problems are marked out, and, if one does not take a Millian perspective as applicable to today's Europe *á tout prix*, it allows examining the chances for a public sphere in multilingual Europe.

4.2 Compatibility

Is the reality of European multilingualism compatible with the possible emergence of a European public sphere? As shown in the discussion above, the question of a public sphere in Europe without currently existing common language(s), i.e., speech community(-ies), covering all geographic area, does not have one answer. Multilingualism creates a set of problems, which, depending on a chosen perspective, have varied potential to influence the creation of a European public sphere. Firstly, linguistic diversity creates communication constraints. A community of communication presupposes availability of linguistic instruments and means of communication, whether it is media or any other forums. Conveying messages and understanding them is a key determinant for a successful course of discussion and opinion formation. Secondly, the concept of public sphere presupposes all-inclusive and open communication in a linguistically constituted public space, thus the linguistic arrangements of such space should, normatively, allow contributing to the discussion in any language present in the community or at least everyone should be able to contribute to the discussion in *one* of the languages he/she masters. The EU-wide communicative action would entail the use of at least twenty different languages. Therefore in the absence of all-encompassing translation, possibilities for reaching general comprehensibility and inclusiveness even for majority of potential participants are very low.

Are these problems surmountable? Leaving aside an argument that a language is 'a distinct structure of perception and understanding' and thus transnational communication is impossible, as well as unlikely solution of all-encompassing translation because of its high transaction costs and infeasibility, certain possibilities that have a potential to present a solution to the observed problems can be outlined. Previously introduced concepts of language and speech communities contribute to understanding of this problem. As I stated before, it might be possible to overcome current fragmentation of language communities in

the EU by creating/emergence of a *lingua franca* encompassing numerous European language communities in one (or very few) shared speech community and ensuring the possibility of transnational debate from a linguistic perspective. However, despite the growing prevalence of English in the EU and increasing levels of linguistic skills it is not likely that English (and any other language even less than that) would become a genuine *lingua franca* in foreseeable future. Same applies to the idea of two or three common languages, as it is unlikely that absolutely everyone in countries, where the respective languages are not native, would know at least one of them.

Nonetheless, non-existence of a genuine *lingua franca* does not constitute an insurmountable problem for a possible European-wide public sphere, provided that there are other ways of ensuring inclusive communication and mutual understanding. In hypothetical circumstances where a large part of the society masters one or more foreign languages but there are still fractions of people who speak only native language, there should be enough 'translators' and 'interpreters' ensuring the spread of a debate on issues of public concern also to those parts of national societies which are not ready to be participants or at least an audience for transnational debate because of their language skills. Here I am not suggesting creating an army of translators in a verbatim sense, rather in the public sphere there should be forces (media, civil society associations, elites, etc.), which possess enough resources and cover the transactional costs of translating discourses to provide a possibility of inclusive participation. Those forces then would be a part of at least two speech communities – the transnational and national one – and would ensure the indirect 'irrespective the language' communication (see Figure 1 for the illustration of this process). In this case language would not serve as an insurmountable obstacle for communication provided that there is a *lingua franca* for a certain part of the society.

Similar argument is upheld also by Koopmans et al. (2002 p.3) who argue that the transnational integration of national political discourses does not necessarily have to involve national mass publics. They argue that it may suffice if a transnational, European public sphere emerges on the level of political, economic, and cultural elites, who carry national discourses into the European level and, vice versa, may introduce European perspectives into national public spheres.

Figure 1. A model of a mediated transnational public sphere in a multilingual society.

1 – VARIOUS LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES;
2 – SHARED SPEECH COMMUNITY;
3 – 'TRANSLATORS' AND 'INTERPRETERS';
4 – TRANSNATIONAL DISCUSSION AND OPINION FORMATION;
5 – 'TRANSLATION' OF THE TRANSNATIONAL DISCOURSE AND TRANSMITTING LOCAL OPINIONS TO TRANSNATIONAL LEVEL.
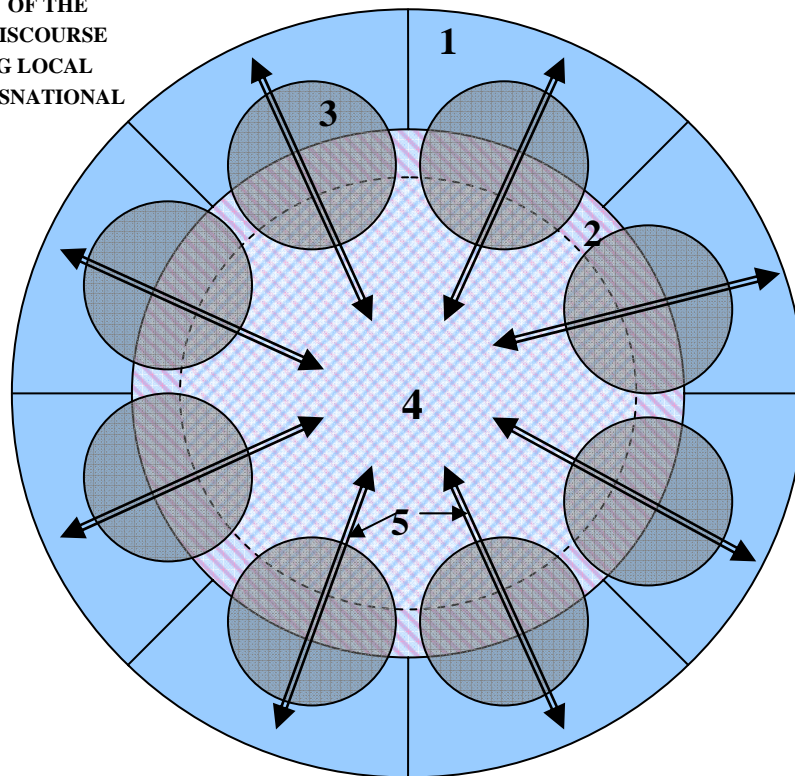
Summing up, the linguistic diversity does entail significant challenges for the emergence of a public sphere, especially if a European-wide public sphere is considered, as EU's multilingualism is hardly comparable to any other democratic multilingual polities. Nevertheless it should not be taken for granted that those challenges cannot be addressed and solved in the process of building transnational public sphere in the EU.

The empirical part of this study will examine the linguistic arrangements of four European-wide NGOs with a purpose to learn empirically about the implications of linguistic diversity for one part of a possible public sphere. Besides, the theoretical assumptions drawn here will be tested, first, trying to establish whether there is a possibility of emergence of a *lingua franca* in the respective strata, and second, to ascertain whether the European–wide NGOs, can serve as 'translators' of the discourse for the purpose of increasing a probability of a transnational discussion and consequently – a public sphere in the EU.

5 Linguistic diversity and the European-wide NGOs

In the academic debate most of the empirical studies are directed towards the mass media as a forum for a public sphere addressing general publics (Van de Steeg 2002, Trenz 2004, Risse and Van de Steeg 2003, etc.). This thesis has a different empirical focus, examining European-wide NGOs. The choice is based on assumptions that, apart from media, the public sphere is inhabited by social organisations, not just autonomous private individuals (Calhoun 1992 p. 29), and even looking from media perspective – media professionals, although contributing to shaping the public sphere, "have to draw on the raw material of communicative actions and events that are produced and staged by non-media actors such as politicians, interest groups and NGOs" (Koopmans et al. 2003 p. 13). Moreover, functioning of European-wide NGOs as discussion and opinion formation forums requires direct management of linguistic diversity, as their members come from different language communities. Thus exploring the communication process inside those NGOs can contribute to understanding of possibilities of communication in wider publics.

5.1 The four cases[1]

Before beginning the research I was aware that language is not a salient issue on the agenda of most European-wide NGOs. Four cases – the EEB, the EWL, the EYF and the *Café Babel* – were chosen to ensure extensive data for analysis in this study. The criteria of choice were, first of all, inclusiveness: a European-wide NGO with members in at least majority of the EU member states. Secondly, the type of NGO: presuming that NGOs addressing social and political issues have more possibilities to generate a discussion in general publics. Moreover, their focus on European policy issues was taken into consideration as well. Thirdly, the linguistic arrangements of an NGO: cases representing different linguistic solutions were chosen. However, it cannot be argued that the choice represents genuine extremes of possible cases, as the main emphasis in the selection process was to choose a case that not only complies with the criteria above, but also offers more opportunities to learn.

The EEB, the EYF and the EWL are large umbrella organisations comprised of national NGOs of the relevant field from nearly all EU member states; the *Café Babel* is a network of teams created as branches in 13 countries. Being qualitatively different, the *Café Babel* was chosen for this study as it was

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[1] See the Appendix No.1 for a broader information about the NGOs, their composition and the motivation why they were chosen for this study.

considered to be valuable because of its unique linguistic arrangements. The decision to focus on the umbrella organisations was to a large extent based not only on their dimension and inclusiveness but also on a fact that they often provide a connecting link not only between European-wide (i.e. central) level and their actual members but also a wider range of NGOs and general publics in the EU member states.

5.2 Managing linguistic diversity: policies and problems

Each of the studied NGOs has to deal with linguistic diversity that goes beyond twenty EU official languages. The *Café Babel* is an exception, as it does not have members in all the EU member states; however, its reach also goes beyond the official EU languages, as one of the magazine versions is in Catalan. Doubtless, the management of such multilingualism requires special arrangements, depending on the language skills and resources available to the organisation. They are limited in all the cases – the absolute majority of questionnaire respondents agreed that the NGOs do not possess enough resources to provide communication in all official languages of the EU[1]. It is the first constraint put on the NGOs by linguistic diversity of their members. It implies a necessity to find a linguistic solution to ensure meaningful communication between members of the NGOs without high-priced and cumbersome translation and interpretation. In this section I will examine the solutions for communication in the multilingual environment in each NGO, analysing the language use in the official and day-to-day internal and external communication. Analysis of the internal communication is essential to find out how the linguistic diversity is dealt with in the opinion and policy formation within the organisations whereas the linguistic arrangements for communicating those opinions outside the organisation are significant to establish the chance for providing accessibility of the NGO and promoting a discussion in the general publics.

5.2.1 Internal communication

In all the cases explored in this study the number of languages used in the *official documents and communication* is limited to two: English and French. The official languages of the EYF and the EWL are provided for in their statutes. The EEB statutes do not define use of languages, nonetheless they exist both in French and English and their status as official languages was confirmed also in the interview with Gemma Parkes[2]. The Articles of Association of *Babel International*[3], are

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[1] See Figure 4 in the Appendix No.2.
[2] See full interview references on page 44.
[3] *Babel International* is the association publishing the European magazine cafebabel.com, the name *Café Babel* is more frequently used to address this association.

published only in French; it could indicate the existence of a single official language, but, as it was stated by a representative of the *Café Babel* "since we are opened towards the East, English has become working language for 'official' documents" (Q19[1], my translation). Although the official language provisions are similar, the use of those languages in the official communication, however, entails certain differences. The EEB differs from other cases, being almost monolingual, as almost all documents are drafted only in English. As stated in the aforementioned interview, the capacity of the EEB does not allow providing two language versions for all the documents. The same is true also about official events and meetings where French interpretation is provided only occasionally. Moreover, there is an ongoing discussion about derogating from the official policy of using French interpretation in the annual conferences as "during the last conference nobody used French interpretation" (Q15).

The *Café Babel* is a distinct case as well, where, although majority of documents are drafted in English, because "if it is necessary that document is understood by everyone, it is directly drafted in English" (Q19, my translation), a part of official documentation, such as outlines for writers and translators of the magazine articles are available in seven languages thus indicating the orientation towards inclusiveness of the communication regarding the management of the content of the magazine. The choice of language for internal meetings in the *Café Babel* can be described with what Van Parijs (2003, p.3-5) labels as 'maximin law of communication' – choosing the language which is known to some extent by most of participants of the communication, meaning that English is chosen if there is someone in the meeting who does not master French.

The EWL and the EYF are characterized by consistent use of both English and French in the official documents, with very few exceptions, for instance, the EWL Road Maps are available in German and Lithuanian. Also official meetings of both NGOs are held in two languages, however, in the EYF only statutory meetings are held in both English and French, the rest are conducted only in English.

Unofficial internal communication is largely determined by language skills of employees and members of the NGOs – it is obvious and widely admitted in the interviews and the questionnaires that a representative of the central office of organisation or any member office, if possible, would use the native language of the addressee[2]. Generally, however, the language use in the informal communication follows patterns determined for official communication. Quite common tendency is use of French in the informal communication in the central offices as all of them are situated in Brussels (EEB, EWL, EYF) and Paris (*Café Babel*), however English is absolutely predominant in communication with members outside French-speaking countries.

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[1] The questionnaires were anonymous, thus only the information on the NGO and the country is available. See full questionnaire references on page 45.
[2] General arrangements of communication may influence even such obvious communication pattern. For instance, Thamar Zijlstra, the member of Amsterdam team of the *Café Babel,* told in the interview: "May be it is a habit too. Once I sent an e-mail to Brussels and a Flemish person answered in English although it is probably easier for both of us to communicate in Dutch."

Summing up, although the cases initially were chosen as representing different linguistic solutions, the internal communication in all the examined cases is restricted to generally two languages with a tendency towards using mainly English. Especially it is true considering last years, as in all examined cases it was repeatedly emphasized that accession of members from the new EU member states contributed to the increase of the dominance of English within the NGOs. It is true even in the case of the EWL, which generally is characterised by relatively even use of English and French for internal communication.

5.2.2 External communication

The linguistic arrangements are not the only determinant for the external reach of the communication from the organisation and its contribution to the public debate and opinion-formation. However, its success, especially in terms of inclusiveness and openness, largely depends on the language chosen for communication with general publics, because messages will only reach the target audience if the NGO and the audience belong to the same speech community.

Beyond doubt, from all the explored cases a solution that allows addressing the widest publics and thus indicating a high capacity of creating an inclusive transnational debate is adopted by the *Café Babel*. Its online magazine is maintained in six major EU official languages and in Catalan. However, there is an indication that even in this case direct transnational discussion requires a shared language. It is obvious from the discussion forum of the *cafebabel.com* where the direct reactions on the discussed issues can be posted. English is the leading language of the forum, French comes as a distant second and there are few appearances of other languages. Besides, "users [of the online forum] are often invited to write in English to be understood by everybody" (Q14), thus indicating the predominance of English or even its position as a *lingua franca* in the multilingual magazine. The *Café Babel* "currently has no publications other than the online magazine" (Q14), however, the information materials about/for local events such as debates or seminars are "usually written in the language of the country hosting the event" (Q14). The linguistic advantage in this case is the fact that usually the debates are held in the language of the organizing team, with the translation into English. Such arrangement provides for a possibility to include participants who do not possess enough language skills to take part in a debate not in their native language.

Other analyzed cases do not provide significant linguistic diversity neither in their websites, nor in the publications. As already noted, the EEB is characterized by nearly exclusive use of English. The website of the organisation exists only in English; other publications – annual reports, newsletters – are also available only in English. As stated in the interview with Gemma Parkes, "there is never any question in what language will be used in it [the newsletter], it is always English". Only several publications are provided in more languages, for instance, the EU Environmental Policy Handbook is translated into French and currently the German translation is being prepared as well (interview: Parkes). One more type

of documents appearing in languages other than English are Memoranda to Presidencies of the Council. As a rule, these documents are prepared by national EEB members together with the central office and appear in English and in the language of the Presidency.

As in the case of internal communication, the EYF and the EWL represent the 'midway' solution, as both NGOs maintain English and French version of websites[1], as well as publish regular newsletters and press releases in both languages. Other publications occasionally are available in few other languages. For the EYF, the language choice to a large extent depends on the issue area – if the publication covers any regional issues, additional language versions for the respective region can be provided (interview: Sanchez). In case of the EWL, some major publications are provided also in German and Spanish. In the interview Juliette Kamper, EWL, admitted that depending on their resources, local coordinations translate the publications in their native languages, sometimes – with the assistance of the EWL.

In sum, except for the *Café Babel*, no remarkable differences between internal and external communication in examined cases can be outlined – the official languages are also leading in the communication with general publics and the volume of documents provided in other languages is insignificant. A substantial finding, however, is that the managing of the communication in more than the official languages is left to national members of all NGOs. Beyond doubt, such approach ensures use of more than two (or even seven) languages for communicating with potential partners and to general public, however, it is not unproblematic. The next section will examine challenges and problems brought to the NGOs by linguistic diversity of their members and not fully addressed by the language policies outlined above.

5.2.3 Challenges and problems

The analytic distinction between the internal and the external communication utilised in the previous section is useful also in depicting the range of problems created by linguistic diversity. As observed before, the internal communication is largely characterized by existence of a single *lingua franca* or two common languages. Thus possible implications of linguistic diversity for the internal communication of the NGOs are first, communication problems in case certain members' lack of language knowledge and, second, restricted possibilities of non-native speakers of the official languages to contribute to activities where more advanced level of language proficiency is required, for instance, publications. Regarding the external communication, however, major problems arise considering the accessibility and openness of the debates in the NGOs for those parts of publics which do not possess a sufficient level of knowledge of the working languages of the respective NGO.

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[1] In the case of the EYF the predominance of English, however, is obvious from the online forum where almost all discussions are held in English, only few are in French and German.

In general, regarding the internal communication of the NGOs the linguistic arrangements do not create considerable constraints. Almost all the respondents and interviewees indicated that they have not experienced major problems of communication deriving from language diversity of other members of the respective organisations. As stated in one of the questionnaires, within the *Café Babel* "there is always a language to adapt to the context" (Q19, my translation) and "every *Café Babel* member I have ever met can speak English" (Q14). Also respondents from the EWL and the EEB did not point out any difficulties in day to-day communication[1]. More constraints are observed when considering participation of members from different countries in the activities of the NGOs that require higher language proficiency, for instance, contributing to publications, as the translation and interpretation resources are highly limited. In the EYL and the EWL translation resources are available for English and French, in the *Café Babel* translation in all seven languages is provided for the magazine publications, the rest of the documents are either in English and/or French or their translation is provided by local teams (Q14). The EEB, in its turn, does not provide any translation of the publications. It is obvious that contributing to publications of the NGOs in all cases require advanced knowledge of respective languages, therefore it was widely admitted that non-native speakers of those languages are constrained to a certain extent. However, the assumption that NGO members from the countries where the working languages are native are more active was not approved neither in the interviews and questionnaires, nor examining publications of the NGOs.

The common belief, apparent in the interview and questionnaire answers, is that the communication in non-native language, although creates some problems of expression, does not preclude involvement in the work of the NGOs. It was explicitly expressed by a *Café Babel* member: "Those participants and contributors whose languages isn't included in the seven languages present on cafebabel.com do obviously face a hurdle, as they have to write in a language other than their native one, if they want to participate. Most people, however, are fairly confident in a second language, and it is likely that this language is featured on cafebabel.com." (Q28) Furthermore, as regards the *Café Babel*, the Amsterdam, Budapest, Prague and Sofia teams are named among the most active ones, although there is no respective language version of the magazine. In case of the EEB, several respondents stated that native English speakers have more advantages for participation because of linguistic arrangements of the organisation, however at the same time it was stated that "members from the UK are not very active" (Q25), thus also in this case there is no direct connection between linguistic advantages and participation. Analyzing the EEB newsletter, however, contributions from the UK and Ireland were relatively more than from other countries[2] but it has to be taken into consideration that the analysed period

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[1] Only one EYF respondent mentioned an example of certain Bulgarian members of the EYF who "tend to step back from discussions" (Q9) because of insufficient English language knowledge.

[2] In 5 issues out of 10 analyzed, while the contributions from other countries were 1-2 from each in all. Here, nevertheless, it has to be noted that large share of contributions to the newsletters are from other international environmental organisations, thus tracing nationalities of contributors is difficult.

included both the Presidency of the UK and Ireland in the Council. Thus, according to the policy of the EEB, memoranda and assessments were published, and the newsletters contained contributions referring to them.

Generally, analysing the correlation between activity of members inside the organisation and their linguistic affiliation and skills, no strong trends were observed that would allow stating that the linguistic division *within* the organisation is a key determinant for inclusiveness. Largely it can be explained that the very beginning of participation in an international NGO is to a high extent based on linguistic skills of a potential participant. Several respondents emphasized that language skills are a key requirement towards possible members of the transnational NGOs. Judit Wirth, the EWL Board Member from Hungary, admitted that language proficiency is "the first requirement for participation" of a Hungarian NGO in the work of the EWL. Not only official requirements are determinative here. As Patricia Sanchez, EYF, stated: "Usually, young people are more active in international work if they are able to communicate themselves freely in other language [..]." It implies is that the real 'test' for the possibilities to participate in transnational communication, is a question what are the rules of being included in a transnational communication network. In a community where language variety exceeds twenty languages it is impossible not to exclude certain groups who do not possess enough language skills from the direct participation in the activities of the NGO if it has only one or few working languages. In the questionnaires and interviews majority of respondents stated that they do not think that participation in the NGO is precluded for some groups because of linguistic arrangements in the organisation (19 out of 31 respondents). But analysing this data one has to be aware of a methodological difficulty, as representatives of the NGOs would not always admit that certain groups can be denied participation in the organisation. Or else, limitations created by linguistic skills are not enough considered. In the interviews the representatives of the NGOs stated theoretically that if they were contacted in any other language except the official ones, they would find a way to answer. Nevertheless, they also admitted that resources usually would not allow extensive communication in any other languages (interviews: Parkes, Sanchez, Kamper). Moreover, as recognized by the representatives of the *Café Babel*, "participation without minimum knowledge of English would be impossible" (Q19, my translation) and "[..] for those who do not speak any of the 7 languages, participation is very restricted" (Q1). An explicit example can be mentioned: "[The participation of] [c]ountries not represented in our network such as Portugal [is restricted], the last time I wanted someone from there to work with us, I had to tell her to write the article in Spanish, English or French, she wrote it in Spanish (not her mother tongue) and I had to rewrite the whole article again. This, I guess, hold her back of collaborating with us regularly." (Q23)

Thus in the explored cases inclusiveness and openness towards possible participants limited due to language arrangements of the NGOs can be considered a major challenge NGOs face in this respect. Even the *Café Babel* with its unique linguistic arrangements cannot address this problem in its entirety. Same applies to the possibilities of the NGOs to convey their message directly to general

publics, as their target audience is limited to parts of general publics possessing enough language skills to understand the message and react on it, contributing to the discussion.

Challenges faced by the NGOs in the examined cases largely coincide with the theoretical implications of linguistic diversity for the public sphere outlined in previous chapters. Considering internal communication within the NGOs those implications are not apparent, as the transnational network is created of individuals possessing at least minimum knowledge of the working languages, thus sharing one speech community. Communication constraints limiting possibilities for reaching general comprehensibility, inclusiveness and openness of the debate from a language perspective are major problems when considering chances of participation of those who do not belong to the respective speech community, as well as parts of general publics who do not have access to the information provided by the NGOs because of language constraints. Two possible solutions to these problems were outlined in the theoretical discussion. As it was already ascertained, currently the first, namely, the formation of shared speech community(-ies) characterised by one or few *lingua franca(-s)* uniting *all* the language communities is unlikely to happen, thus preventing all inclusive community of communication. As Habermas (1996, p.364) points out, "[t]here can be no public sphere without a public", therefore at least currently the solution other than a genuine *lingua franca* has to be found in order provide for the possibility of involvement of general publics. The second opportunity, i.e., the emergence of 'translators', belonging to two speech communities and providing 'translation' of transnational discourse into national level and vice versa, can be examined in the context of the explored cases, however, before that the question of a *lingua franca* among possible 'translators' has to be discussed.

5.3 A *lingua franca* of the European NGOs?

The empirical data about the linguistic arrangements of four cases of this study largely approves the position of English as a *lingua franca* in the European-wide NGOs. Outside the official communication and the publications of the NGOs, where language diversity reaches up to seven languages (as in the case of the *Café Babel*), English can be labelled an established *lingua franca* in three explored cases – the *Café Babel*, the EEB and the EYF. All the respondents and the interviewees from these NGOs admitted that English can be used addressing any member of the organisation and it is a *lingua franca* of the NGO. Even in the case of the EWL, where it can be observed and was widely affirmed that there is no one *lingua franca*, "English has gradually become the 'leading' language of unofficial communication [..] (for example, e-mail contacts in the mailing list of the Board of Administration, 'coffee break' and 'meal talk' etc.)" (Q18). Thus it can be assumed that English is an emerging *lingua franca* in this case.

The position of English has been reinforced by the EU enlargement – the increase of number of NGO members from Eastern Europe enhanced its predominance. Generally, in case of European-wide NGOs, the assumption 'the

more languages the more English' proves to be true[1]. In case of the EWL, it was stated in one of the questionnaires: "All the members who do not speak English are from old EU member states (those from French-speaking countries, as well as Spain and Italy). All the members from new member states speak English [..] so when they entered EWL they contributed to increase the dominance of English within the organisation" (Q18). This assertion was also approved by both interviewees from the EWL. It was verified also in the rest of cases. Moreover, one of questionnaire respondents from the *Café Babel* stated that "English is a *lingua franca* of the East" (Q27). Importantly, English is also the leading language in contacts of the studied NGOs with other European and international NGOs.

Summing up, in all four cases speech communities characterized by the predominance of English can be observed. Even in the case of the EWL where no genuine *lingua franca* can be found, it is worth mentioning the role of the NGO as a specific epistemic community, which enables transnational communication even where there are certain difficulties of finding a one common language. In the interview Juliette Kamper revealed that in the EWL "there can be cases when some French speaking people don't understand English but then communication is still possible because of gender terminology which is a *lingua franca* itself".

An established or emerging *lingua franca* in European-wide NGOs provides for a speech community enabling vast and inclusive (in terms of countries) transnational debate from a linguistic point of view and provides that national members of the examined NGOs belong to shared transnational speech community.

5.4 A mediated transnational community of communication?

The European-wide NGOs studied in this thesis are umbrella organisations uniting either independent national NGOs or national branches of one NGO and their members belong to both transnational speech community and national language communities and participate directly in the transnational discussion within the respective NGO. Hypothetically, such organisations may serve as 'translators' ensuring the spread of a debate on issues of public concern also to those parts of national societies which are prevented (because of linguistic reasons) from being participants or at least an audience for the transnational debate.

Empirical data indicates that national members of four explored NGOs to a certain extent perform such function. Very explicit approval of it was expressed by Juliette Kamper: "[..] strength of our organisation [the EWL] are local coordinations – all communication there is held in national languages and then they deal with international level. So language is usually not a problem". She also affirmed that in the case of the EWL, national NGOs who, depending on the available resources, translate the publications of the EWL into national languages.

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[1] As approved by the questionnaire respondents - see Figure 5 in the Appendix 2.

Similar functions of the member NGOs are observed also in other explored cases, for instance, the policy of the EEB is that in case of events (capacity building, for example) which take place in other countries of the EU, "EEB endeavours to provide interpretation into and from the local language, as well as written material" (interview: Parkes). The *Café Babel* provides several examples too. For instance, the *Café Therapy* debates are usually held in the language of the team organising it, thus enabling participation of wider publics. Also the contributions to the magazine in other than seven official languages are possible in some cases because there are teams who have their own translators allowing them to write contributions in their native language. For instance, in the Prague team "articles are written in Czech to provide that more people can participate" (interview: Kršjaková).

United in one speech community providing for a meaningful transnational discussion from linguistic point of view, the researched cases show the potential of the European-wide NGOs and their members to contribute to the creation of a mediated transnational community of communication and, consequently, a public sphere. However, there are certain limitations to it.

First and foremost, the resources of the NGOs are limited. For instance, although the EWL was named as the example of national NGOs being a translators of transnational discourse, the EWL board member from Hungarian NGO admitted that actual translation of documents is done only on voluntary basis, thus there is no possibility to provide regular document exchange in Hungarian. Beyond doubt, it constrains the 'translation' process to a certain extent – both in terms of actual translation of documents and publications of the European NGO and in terms of providing constant information flows between national and transnational level. These resources and consequently – possibilities of NGOs considerably vary from one organisation to another, therefore a more substantial study than it is possible to include in the scope of this thesis would be necessary to fully evaluate the potential of member NGOs of European-wide organisations to contribute to a genuinely inclusive transnational discussion.

6 Conclusions

At the time when economically and politically Europe becomes more and more integrated, linguistic diversity creates essential obstacles for the formation of a European public sphere where the legitimacy and authority of the European governance could be established through a public discussion. Currently the European public sphere exists only in the extensive academic debate addressing it as a possible cure for the democratic deficit and the lack of legitimacy of the EU supranational governance. The finding that the question of linguistic diversity is not a salient issue in this debate was a departure point for conducting this study with an aim to explore, both theoretically and empirically, the implications of the linguistic diversity for the possible European public sphere. As the current academic debate addressing questions of European public sphere is extensive and multishaped, this study did not aim to go beyond the existing discussion but rather to problematise a neglected question within its framework. Not endeavouring to provide comprehensive solutions and definitive answers, the main theoretical focus of the study was to pinpoint the problems created by multilingualism and their impact on possibilities of creating a public sphere. Empirically this thesis was focused on communication processes within European-wide NGOs as forums of direct interaction and communication in multilingual environment rather than indirect, such as media, which are already widely examined in the debate.

The Habermasian concept of public sphere denotes a community of communication constituted and maintained through dialogue, debate and discussion, characterized by inclusiveness and accessibility. Such community implies the necessity of means of communication which are *non-existent without language*. Importantly, they should not preclude inclusiveness of the public sphere and its accessibility. Linguistic diversity imposes significant constraints on possibilities to find such means. Besides, no matter what preconditions of the public sphere are taken as a point of departure – the common identity, the 'we' feeling, the pan-European media or other communicative spaces – the implications of linguistic diversity is a key question for a discussion about a European public sphere.

Currently EU-wide communication entails the use of at least twenty languages. Normatively, for such transnational communication to amount to a European public sphere, the linguistic arrangements of the public space should allow contributing to the discussion in any language present in the community (or at least everyone should be able express his/her opinion in one of the languages he/she masters) and provide mutual understanding. In the absence (and infeasibility) of all-encompassing translation and interpretation facilities, these are major constraints, currently precluding the existence of inclusive community of communication in the EU. However, they should not be automatically equated

with insurmountable obstacles for emergence of a public sphere a heterogeneous Europe.

Employing sociolinguistic perspective of the European linguistic diversity contributes to understanding the possibilities of emergence of community of communication in multilingual Europe. Cleavages of different language communities precluding inclusive transnational communication can be overcome by formation of a shared speech community, as the latter presupposes sharing 'roughly the same language' – enough for reaching understanding. It presupposes that an emergence of a *lingua franca* encompassing numerous European language communities in one (or very few) shared speech community(-ies) could ensure the possibility of a transnational debate from a linguistic perspective. Examining the possibilities of a *lingua franca* in Europe today, I concluded that English possesses a potential of becoming a *lingua franca* in very wide strata of society, however, the chances that it will amount to a genuine *lingua franca* of Europe in foreseeable future are low. Nonetheless, there are circumstances when the existence of a genuine *lingua franca* is not an absolute requisite for the emergence of a European public sphere. Hypothetically, if a large part of a society possesses foreign language skills but there are still fractions of people who speak only native language, in order to constitute an inclusive and open public sphere it is necessary to have 'translators' and 'interpreters' to ensure the spread of a debate on issues of public concern also to those parts of national societies which are not ready to be participants or at least an audience for the transnational debate. Such normative solution implies the existence of a *lingua franca* just for certain parts of publics in *all* Europe, which, taking into consideration the potential spread of, for instance, English knowledge, is not improbable.

The theoretical discussion of the implications of linguistic diversity for the European public sphere in this study was complemented by empirical analysis of four European-wide NGOs – the EEB, the EYF, the EWL and the *Café Babel* – with an aim to establish what can be learned about the impact of multilingualism on the constituent part of a possible public sphere. Generally, challenges faced by NGOs in examined cases largely coincide with the outlined theoretical implications of linguistic diversity. Especially it proves to be true regarding the external communication and inclusiveness of the NGOs for possible members, which do not belong to the same speech community. The main conclusions about the management of linguistic diversity in the NGOs can be summarised referring to the opinions of questionnaire respondents: firstly, the NGOs do not possess enough resources to provide communication in all official languages of the EU[1], secondly, currently language diversity and knowledge of languages is the key impediment for ensuring a genuine European-wide public discussion[2], and, thirdly, a meaningful transnational communication in multilingual environment can only be provided if there is one or few languages mastered by everyone[3]. The necessity for a shared speech community is largely reflected by the linguistic arrangements of the NGOs. Although all the NGOs have two official languages –

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[1] See Figure 4 in the Appendix 2.
[2] See Figure 3 in the Appendix 2.
[3] See Figure 1 in the Appendix 2.

French and English (except the *Café Babel* which has seven languages for its online magazine), English predominates in all the studied cases and is becoming increasingly a *lingua franca* after the EU enlargement[1]. Such linguistic constellation does not create major constraints of internal communication, as there is a *lingua franca*[2] enabling the functioning of a community of communication, approving the assumption that a shared speech community is an instrument to overcome the diversity of language communities. However, limited number of languages utilised in the communication creates significant difficulties for inclusiveness and openness towards possible participants of the NGOs who do not possess necessary language skills. Same applies to the possibilities of transnational NGOs to convey their message directly to general publics and involve it in the discussion. There is a dilemma between human and material resources at the disposal of the NGOs and provision of inclusiveness and open access to participation and information provided from European-wide NGOs, as the representatives of the NGOs admit that there is willingness to provide more linguistic diversity in the communication with general publics, however, it is limited due to available resources (interview: Parkes, Kamper, Sanchez). It is partly compensated by the fact that the studied cases are umbrella organisations for the national NGOs or teams of individuals, operating in the member states, so the national members occasionally do serve as 'translators' of European-wide issues of the respective field into national public spheres, approving that potentially such solution is not improbable for providing inclusiveness of European-wide public sphere. However, scarce resources are an essential problem also considering to this function of national NGOs.

Currently the space for the emergence of a European public sphere remains more torn by than united in diversity, as both normatively and in reality the existence of numerous language communities do prevent the emergence of a genuine transnational European public sphere among general publics. Nonetheless, the implications of linguistic diversity for a possible European public sphere are not to be viewed only in black or white dimension. Unless the European public sphere is viewed as an idealized, homogeneous single-nation public sphere, multilingualism neither absolutely precludes nor fully allows the emergence of it. The empirical cases examined in this study indicate that meaningful transnational communication does require a *lingua franca* and European-wide NGOs do already share one. The emergence of all-inclusive speech community is not a question of nearest future but it does not imply that transnational discussion, on which the public sphere can be based, cannot be provided by means of societal forces belonging to both transnational and national speech communities, which ensure the 'translation' of European-wide questions of public concern into national or even local level, thus creating at least a

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[1] It is widely agreed among the interviewees and respondents of questionnaire. 23 out of 31 of latter agree with the assumption „the more languages, the more English" with respect to membership in the European-wide NGOs (see Figure 5 in the Appendix 2).

[2] In the case of the EWL – two languages, however, as noted earlier, even then there is a common *lingua franca* – the gender 'slang' that usually allows communication even between only English and only French speakers (interview: Kamper).

possibility of a mediated but inclusive and open European-wide community of communication.

Beyond doubt, the existence of linguistic possibilities for inclusive transnational communication would not automatically mean the emergence of a European public sphere, as there are more preconditions for that than only language. However, the emergence of a public sphere is unthinkable without favourable language arrangements. Judith Wirth in this context mentioned the analogy with fight for women's rights: "We don't fight for a law because we think the law will help; we fight for a law because we cannot fight for anything else before we have a law." Likewise, there should be appropriate linguistic means before a community of communication can be created.

7 Final remarks and future research

Being inherently normative, the studies of the European public sphere remain an open and controversial research field. It applies also to the discussion of interconnection of multilingualism and possible European public sphere. Several study directions have to be expanded both theoretically and empirically.

With regard to this study, it was already indicated that an in depth research of the 'translation' of the European discourse would be of high value, studying closer member organisations of European-wide NGOs. Also other types of pan-European social movements can be studied. For instance, some respondents whom I contacted in the process of the research emphasized the possibility to explore the emerging pan-European parties – the *Newropeans* and the *United Europe*. In this respect, it would be valuable to study also to what extent these civil society associations are purely European and if a public sphere in this case would be genuinely European. As mentioned in Schlesinger and Deirdre (2000 p.211) Habermas also now portrays the public sphere as having shifted from specific locales to the virtual presence of citizens and consumers linked by public media and thus communicative connections of a public can extend beyond the continent.

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8.2 Interview references

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Kršjaková, Zuzana, the President of the Praha team of the *Café Babel*. The interview was held on April 14, 2006.

Parkes, Gemma, Press and Publications Officer, European Environmental Bureau. The interview was held on March 31, 2006.

Sanchez, Patricia, Press and Communications Manager of the European Youth Forum. The interview was held on February 22, 2006.

Wirth, Judit, the Board Member of the European Women's Lobby, the Chair of NaNE, the Hungarian Coordination of the European Women's Lobby. The interview was held on March 30, 2006.

Thijssen, Irma, a representative of the WECF, a member of the European Environmental Bureau, Netherlands. The interview was held on April 6, 2006.

Zijlstra, Thamar, the member of Amsterdam team of the *Café Babel.* The interview was held on March 25, 2006.

8.2 Questionnaire references

Questionnaires were considered anonymous, only the country and the name of the NGO are used as a reference.

The *Café Babel*:

Head Office, Paris	– Q2, Q17, Q19 (FR)
London	– Q14, Q20, Q27, Q28
Brussels	– Q3, Q4 (FR), Q16, Q31
Sevilla	– Q23
Sofia	– Q1

The European Environmental Bureau:

Austria	– Q15, Q26
Czech Republic	– Q10, Q25
Germany	– Q12
Netherlands	– Q29
The United Kingdom	– Q8

The European Women's Lobby:

Head Office, Brussels	– Q5 (FR)
Belgium	– Q24
Bulgaria	– Q11
Estonia	– Q22
Finland	– Q21
Malta	– Q7
Portugal	– Q18
Italy	– Q30

The European Youth Forum:

Head Office, Brussels	– Q6
Luxembourg	– Q13 (FR)
Malta	– Q9

Appendix No.1

Additional methodological issues

1 Descriptions of the studied cases

1.1 The European Environmental Bureau

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) is one of the largest European-wide NGOs, composed of more than 143 environmental organisations from 31 countries (as on May 1, 2006 – all EU countries, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Norway, Serbia and Montenegro and Algeria). According to the information provided in the homepage (www.eeb.org), the aim of the EEB is "to promote knowledge and understanding of the current and potential EU environmental and sustainable development policies amongst the general public in the EU". It has very wide range of activities, starting from working groups in particular fields (12 working groups composed of the representatives of the EEB member organisations), intensive contacts with the EU institutions to varied seminars, conferences and publications. Regarding the linguistic diversity, this case was chosen as a least likely case to find true multilingual communication. Judging only from the information on the website of the EEB it was implied that the only tribute to multilingualism EEB does is the introductory page of the website containing the name of the organisation in all twenty official languages.

1.2 The Café Babel

The *Café Babel* is a European-wide network of individuals creating online multilingual European current affairs magazine (www.cafebabel.com), emphasizing "participatory journalism, providing a unique platform of expression for all citizens" with an aim "to stimulate and develop European public opinion". There are two main directions of activity of the *Café Babel*, first, the online magazine on European political and social issues, published simultaneously in seven languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Catalan and Polish). Secondly, at grassroots level – the network of local teams (on May 1, 2006 – 19 teams in 13 countries, including 5 new member states of the EU and forthcoming member – Bulgaria) participating in the publication of the magazine and providing for local discussions through debates, seminars and other events. Although not being thoroughly inclusive and different from the other cases in this study in terms of composition, the *Café Babel* was chosen as a valuable and unique example, firstly, because it was the most likely case to find truly multilingual communication as its publications in the online magazine represent a unprecedented linguistic solution.

The next two cases from the very beginning were chosen as being alike both in terms of composition – umbrella organisations for national NGOs which, in their turn, have national coordinating missions, and in terms of linguistic arrangements

– both having two statutory languages – English and French. However, it was decided to include both organizations for comparative purposes, in order to establish whether there is a difference between use of languages in youth organisations[1] and the organisations comprising all age groups.

1.3 The European Women's Lobby

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest European-wide NGO composed of women's associations in the EU. The range of members covers almost all the EU – 23 countries, and 2 countries that are in the process of becoming members of the EU – uniting 50 full membership organisations (on May 1, 2006 – 32 national coordinations and 18 international members large share of which are European-wide) and 48 associate member organisations. According to the information provided in the homepage (www.womenlobby.org), through this network, "it currently has more than 4000 member organisations". Its aim is "to work together to achieve equality between women and men, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, [..] finally, to make sure that gender equality is taken into consideration in all European Union policies" and it "facilitates dialogue and exchanges between citizens and European policy makers" (www.womenlobby.org). The range of activities reaches from provision of flow of information between different NGOs and governmental institutions (national and the EU level) to lobbying and campaigning actions.

1.4 The European Youth Forum

European Youth Forum is composed of 93 organisations (national youth councils/coordinations and European youth NGOs) from 33 countries (all EU 25 and other European countries). Its main aims, as listed in the website (www.youthforum.org), are to increase the youth participation, to influence policy outcomes in the EU institutions, to foster intercultural understanding and the exchange of ideas as well as "to work to deepen European integration while at the same time contributing to the development of youth work in other regions of the world". The spectrum of its activities include various fields, first of all, youth employment, education and mobility issues, secondly, human rights and gender equality questions as well as general youth policy making.

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[1] According to the *Eurobarometer* (2006 p.11) survey foreign language proficiency is higher among young people (especially students) than the other age groups.

2 Information sources for empirical study

To obtain comprehensive data on the linguistic diversity management and language arrangements in the examined NGOs a number of sources were employed for gathering empirical information. First of all, interviews were conducted with representatives of the respective NGOs, addressing both European and national level of the organisation. Majority of the interviews were conducted by phone, each 20-40 minutes long. Interview guides with main key questions[1] were utilized, varying questions to a different extent if it was considered necessary for the learning process. The information from the interviews was then summarized and to a certain extent condensed[2], avoiding, however, excessive categorisation[3] and treating each interview as an independent source of information.

The information obtained in the interviews was supplemented by questionnaire answers from a wider range of NGO representatives[4]. The necessity to use interviews as well as questionnaires was determined by the fact that neither only in-dept interviews, if carried out to the extent allowed by the volume of this study, neither only questionnaires would provide an adequate amount of empirical data necessary for the research. The questionnaire included mainly open-ended questions (or "yes/no" questions, asking for specifications in case of answering 'yes' or 'no', depending on a question), thus allowing respondents to elaborate more on their answers. Only the "Conclusion" part contained pre-coded questions and it was identical for all respondents, therefore a full summary of this part is presented in the study (see Appendix 2). Apart from the "Conclusion" the questionnaires slightly differed for different NGOs and were sent out to the representatives of head offices of the NGOs as well as member organisations in all EU member states (few – also to forthcoming member states – Bulgaria and Romania). 110 questionnaires in both English and French (allowing the respondent to choose a language he/she prefers) were sent out and 31 answers received. The response rate of 28% in this case is quite low, however, as the questionnaires were treated as qualitative, not quantitative data, and the range of questionnaire respondents were quite broad and represented all the NGOs, questionnaire answers contributed significantly to the understanding of the communication processes in the researched cases.

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[1] See Section 3.1. of this Appendix.

[2] According to Kvale (1996 p.192), interview "*[m]eaning condensation* entails an abridgement of the meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations. Long statements are compressed into briefer statements in which the main sense of what is said is rephrased in few words".

[3] "*Meaning categorisation* implies that the interview is coded into categories. Long statements are reduced to simple categories such as "+" or "-", indicating occurrence and non-occurrence of a phenomenon; or to a single number on scale of 1 to 5, for example, to indicate a strength of a phenomenon." (Kvale 1996 p.192)

[4] See Section 3.2. of this Appendix.

Finally, websites, publications and newsletters[1] of each NGO were analysed in order to establish, first, the linguistic solution chosen for publications and, second, the range of contributors to the publications. The main questions answered in the examination process were:

- What is/are the language(-s) of the website?
- Is there an online forum? Are there any language use regulations for the forum? In what language are discussions held?
- Are there newsletters or any other kind of regular publications? In what languages are they available? Is it possible to trace contributors to newsletters? If yes, are there certain tendencies of participation regarding countries?
- Are there any other publications? In what languages are they available? Is it possible to trace the contributors? If yes, are there certain tendencies of participation regarding countries?

The range of documents examined included:

- Newsletters – the EWL – "Newsflash", EYF – "e-Youth Opinion", the EEB – "Metamorphosis".
- Publications – Annual reports and other guides and reports, regular publications (for instance, EEB Memoranda to Presidencies, EYF magazine "Youth Opinion"), large scale publications, if available, for instance EEB "EU Environmental Policy Handbook".

Analyzing newsletters and publications of the NGOs comprised several difficulties for the envisaged analysis, as, firstly, for instance, in the case of the EWB newsletter, the contributors were not listed, in the case of the EYF electronic newspaper contributors were the members of the EYF Secretariat, i.e., head office. For large share contributions it was not possible to establish the country of origin of the author, as they were writing in the name of other international NGOs.

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[1] For all NGOs except the *Café Babel* which does not issue any regular publications, except the online magazine.

3 Samples

3.1 A sample interview guide[1]

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0. Participation[2]

0.1. Can you shortly describe how your organisation participates in the work of … [the name of the NGO]?

I. Languages in official/unofficial communication

I.1. What are the languages used in unofficial/official communication within the …?

I.2. Can one of the languages be considered as leading? For instance, are majority of documents drafted in one language? Is there a *lingua franca* of the organisation?

II. The range of participants

II.1. Which, according to your opinion, are the most active participants of the …?

II.2. Are members from countries where the official language is native more active?

II.4. Do you think that there are any members whose more active participation is precluded by linguistic arrangements of the organisation?

II.5. Hypothetical situation – if there was an organisation which wanted to participate in the work of ..., but it could not make contributions in the official language of the organisation, would there be a way found to provide its participation?

III. Managing language diversity

III.3. Is multilingual communication in the organisation enhanced by some means?

III.4. Which languages do you use for communication with other NGOs which are not member organisations of … ?

IV. General conclusion – more theoretic questions

IV.1. Do you think that *lingua franca* is crucial for transnational communication or those can be two or more languages?

IV.2. Would you agree with an assumption that common values and interests are more important for meaningful transnational communication than language?

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[1] Contains key questions, the actual procedures of the interviews were quite significantly varied.
[2] Only for representatives of member organisations.

3.1 A sample questionnaire[1]

QUESTIONNAIRE "MANAGING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN EUROPEAN NGOs"

This questionnaire is anonymous and will be used only for research purposes. Respondents are encouraged not only to answer questions but also provide additional comments on them at any point.

O. Participation in the Café Babel[2]
Please describe shortly how you and your team participate in the work of the Café Babel.

I. Linguistic arrangements	

I.1. What language/-s is/are used in the communication within the Café Babel? ***(apart from the online magazine in 7 languages)***	
• in official documents	
• in publications	
• in meetings	
• events (debates, seminars)	
• unofficial communication (day-to-day communication, e-mail forums, etc)	

I.2. If there is more than one language used in the communication process, can one of them be considered as leading? (Yes/No)	
If Yes, which?	
• in official communication (documents, publications, meetings)	
• unofficial communication (day-to-day communication, e-mail forums, etc)	

I.3. Is there lingua franca of the organisation, i.e. is there one language that can be used in communication with any member of the Café Babel? *(Yes/No)*	

II. International participation	
II.1. Which of the following describes the participation in the activities (events, publications, day-to-day discussions, e-mail forums) of the Café Babel the best:	
a) teams from all countries (where there	*Answer and comments, if any:*

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[1] Sample of the questionnaire for the Café Babel. The questionnaires slightly varied for different organisations and head/member office representatives.
[2] Only for representatives of member organisations.

are representatives) participate evenly;	
b) teams from 1-3 countries are more active than the others (please name);	
c) teams from 4-6 countries are more active than the others (please name);	
d) the activity depends on the issue area (please name examples of the issue area and respective country).	

II.2. (Skip if answer a) is given to the question II.1.) **From which countries are the most active teams in the following activities?**

• contributing to the magazine	
• in events and meetings	
• in day-to-day discussions, e-mail forums	

II.3. Are teams from countries, where the official language/-s is/are native, more active? (Yes/No)

II.4. Is there a difference in language use between teams from old and new EU member states? (Yes/No, if Yes, please explain)

II.5. Do you think that there are any teams whose <u>more active</u> participation is precluded by linguistic arrangements of the Café Babel? Yes/No (if Yes, please name the country, if possible)

II.6. Do you think that there are any possible participants/contributors to the Café Babel magazine or other activities whose participation is precluded by the linguistic arrangements? Yes/No (if Yes and you recall any particular examples, please specify)

III. Managing linguistic diversity

III.1. Have you experienced any major problems deriving from language diversity of members of the Café Babel teams? (Yes/No, if Yes, please specify)

III.2. What are the cases when translation/interpretation resources are used? (if there are any)

III.3. Are translators/interpreters available in-house? (Yes/No) If Yes, for how many languages?

III.4. Has language use in the day-to-day communication ever been discussed within the Café Babel? Is there any language policy?

III.5. Is multilingual communication within the Café Babel promoted by some means? (Yes/No, if Yes, please specify)	
III.6. What language/-s is/are used for communication with other NGOs?	

IV. Conclusion[1]

In this section, please place your opinion on a scale from 1-5 where
'1' is 'strongly agree';
'2' is 'agree';
'3' is 'no opinion' (i.e. neither agree nor disagree);
'4' is 'disagree';
'5' is 'strongly disagree'.
Answering the questions, please take into consideration the current situation in the Café Babel and in the EU NGO sector in general – linguistic diversity, available resources, etc.

IV.1. Meaningful transnational communication in European-wide NGOs can be provided if:	
• there is a *lingua franca* (i.e. all participants share one language)	
• there is no *lingua franca* but the linguistic diversity of participants do not exceed 2-3 languages	
• there is no *lingua franca* but the linguistic diversity of participants do not exceed 4-5 languages	
• there is no *lingua franca* and communication has to be managed in all languages of members of the NGO	
IV.2. Common interests are more important for transnational communication than common language (namely, if there are common interests, the ways of communication can be found)	
IV.3. Common values are more important for transnational communication than common language (namely, if there are common values, the ways of communication can be found)	
IV.4. Language diversity and insufficient language knowledge is the main impediment for ensuring a genuine European-wide public discussion	
IV.5. European-wide non-governmental organisations in the EU do not possess enough resources to provide communication in all official languages of the EU	
IV.6. Do you agree with the assumption "the more languages, the more English", meaning the wider is language diversity of members of certain NGO, the more important English language becomes in the communication?	

Thank you for your answers!

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[1] Identical in all questionnaires.

Appendix No.2

Overview of the "Conclusion" part of the questionnaire

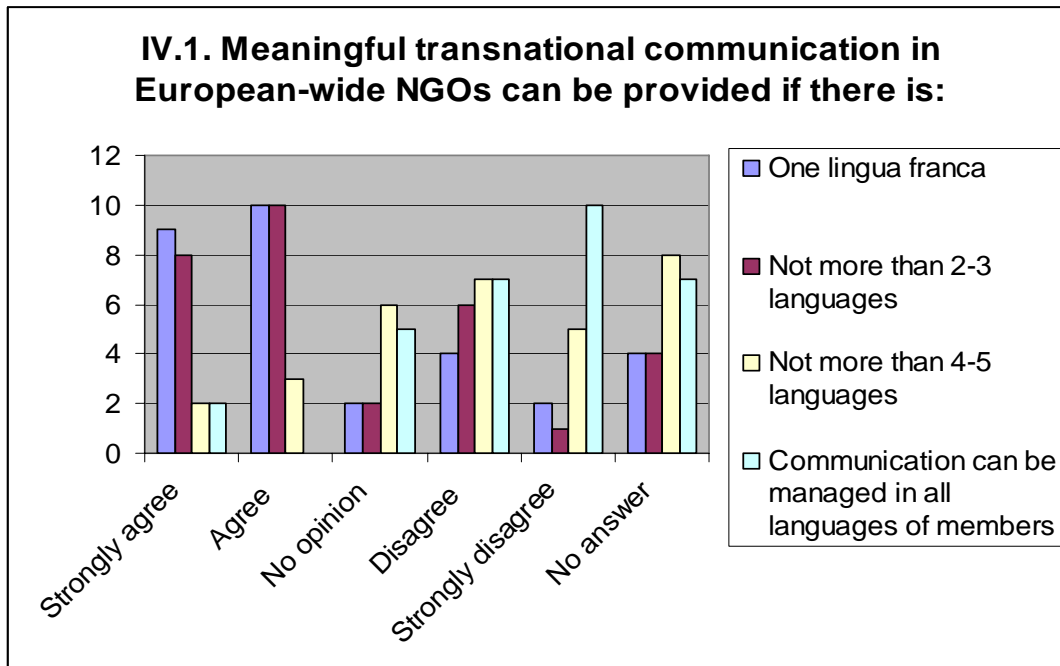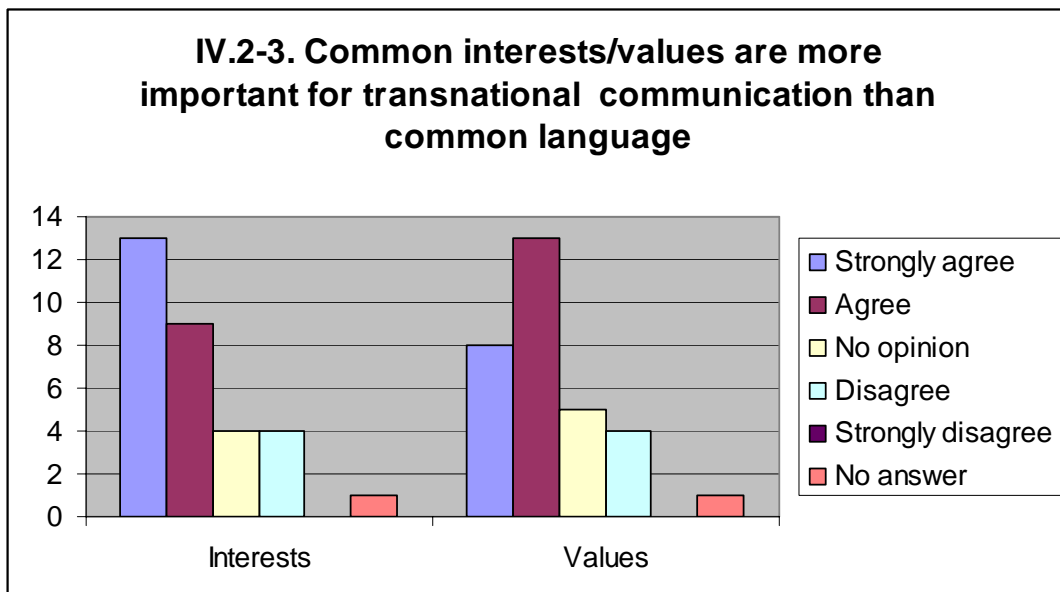**Figure A2.1. Necessity of a lingua franca for meaningful transnational communication[1]**

Figure A2.2. Common values/interests and common language

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[1] All the values – the number of respondents.

Figure A2.3. Language diversity – an impediment for the public discussion

IV.4. Language diversity and insufficient language knowledge is the main impediment for ensuring a genuine European-wide public discussion

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- No opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No answer
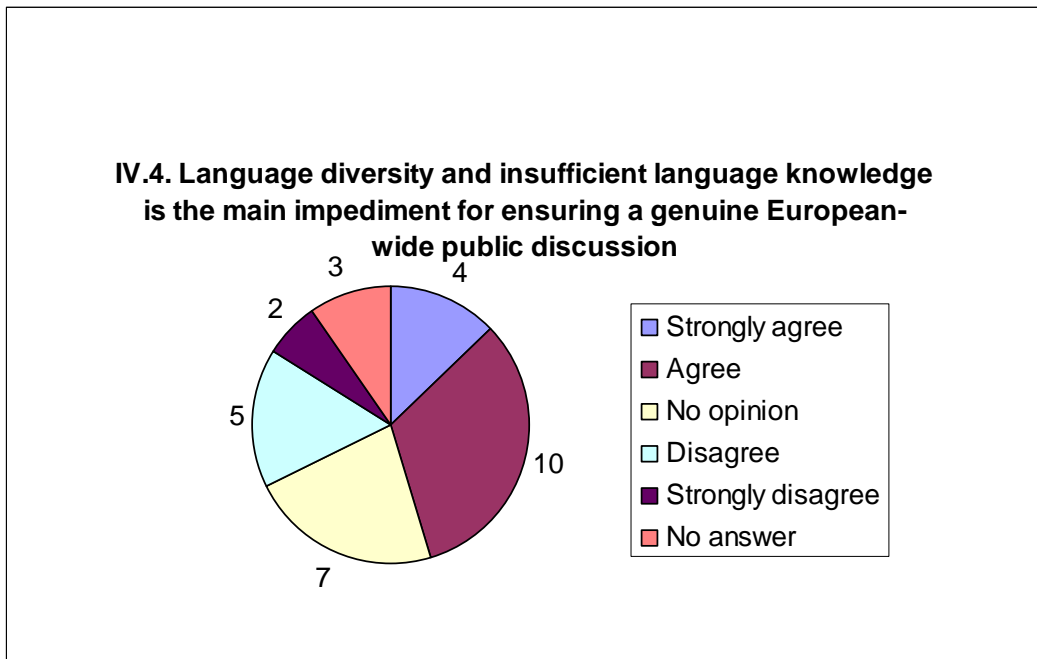
Figure A2.4. The resources of the European-wide NGOs

IV.5. European-wide non-governmental organisations in the EU do not possess enough resources to provide communication in all official languages of the EU

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- No opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No answer
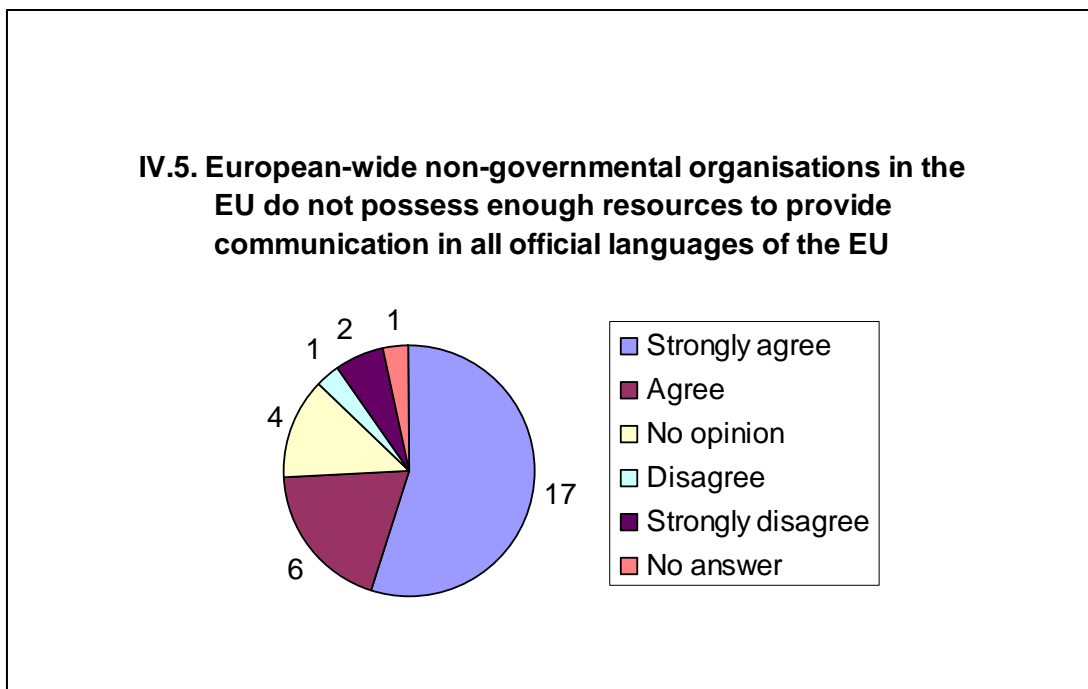
Figure A2.5. Predominance of English in expanding transnational community

IV.6. Do you agree with the assumption "the more languages, the more English", meaning the wider is language diversity of members of certain NGO, the more important English language becomes in the communication?

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- No opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No answer

Values: 1, 0, 1, 6, 14, 9
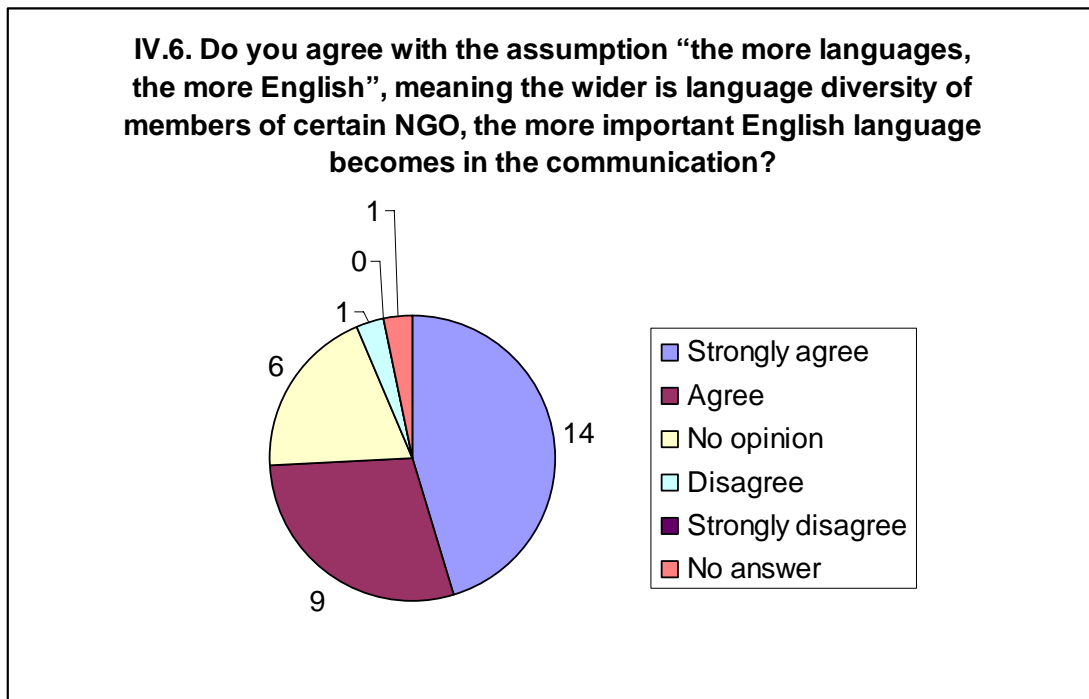
Appendix No.3

Selected statistical data on foreign language knowledge in the EU

Source: Eurobarometer Survey 2006. Europeans and their Languages. (Special Eurobarometer 243 / Wave 64.3 Fieldwork: November – December 2005, Publication: February 2006)

Figure A3.1. The proficiency of foreign languages (number)
(*Eurobarometer* 2006 p.8)

Figure A3.2. The proficiency of foreign languages (languages)
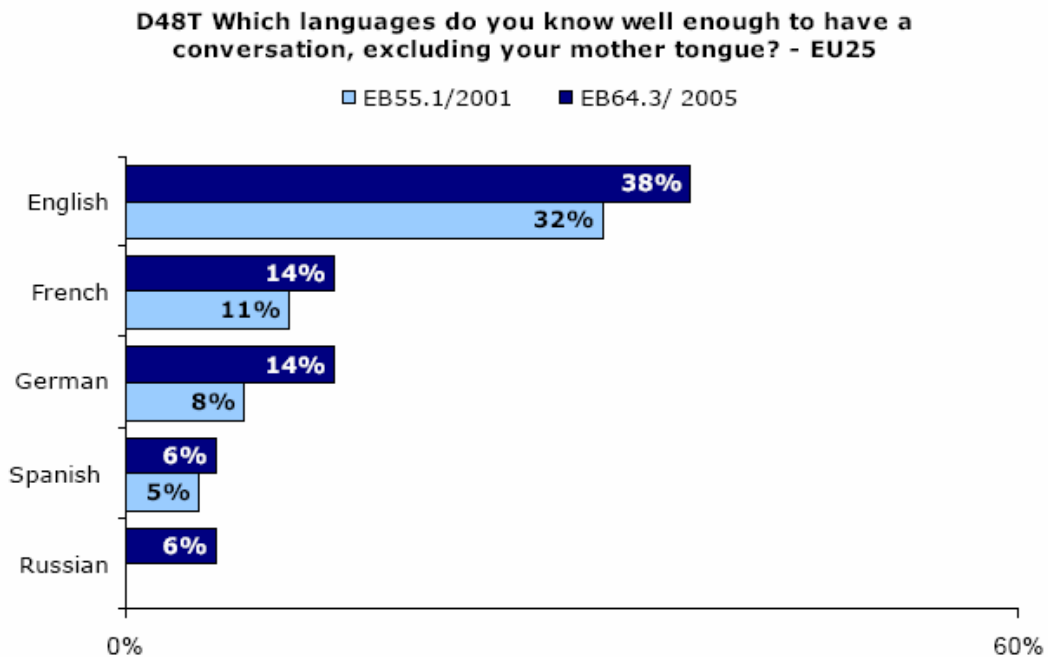(*Eurobarometer* 2006 p.12)

Figure A3.3. Socio-demographic categories
      (*Eurobarometer* 2006 p.11)

D48b-d Which languages do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation, excluding your mother tongue?
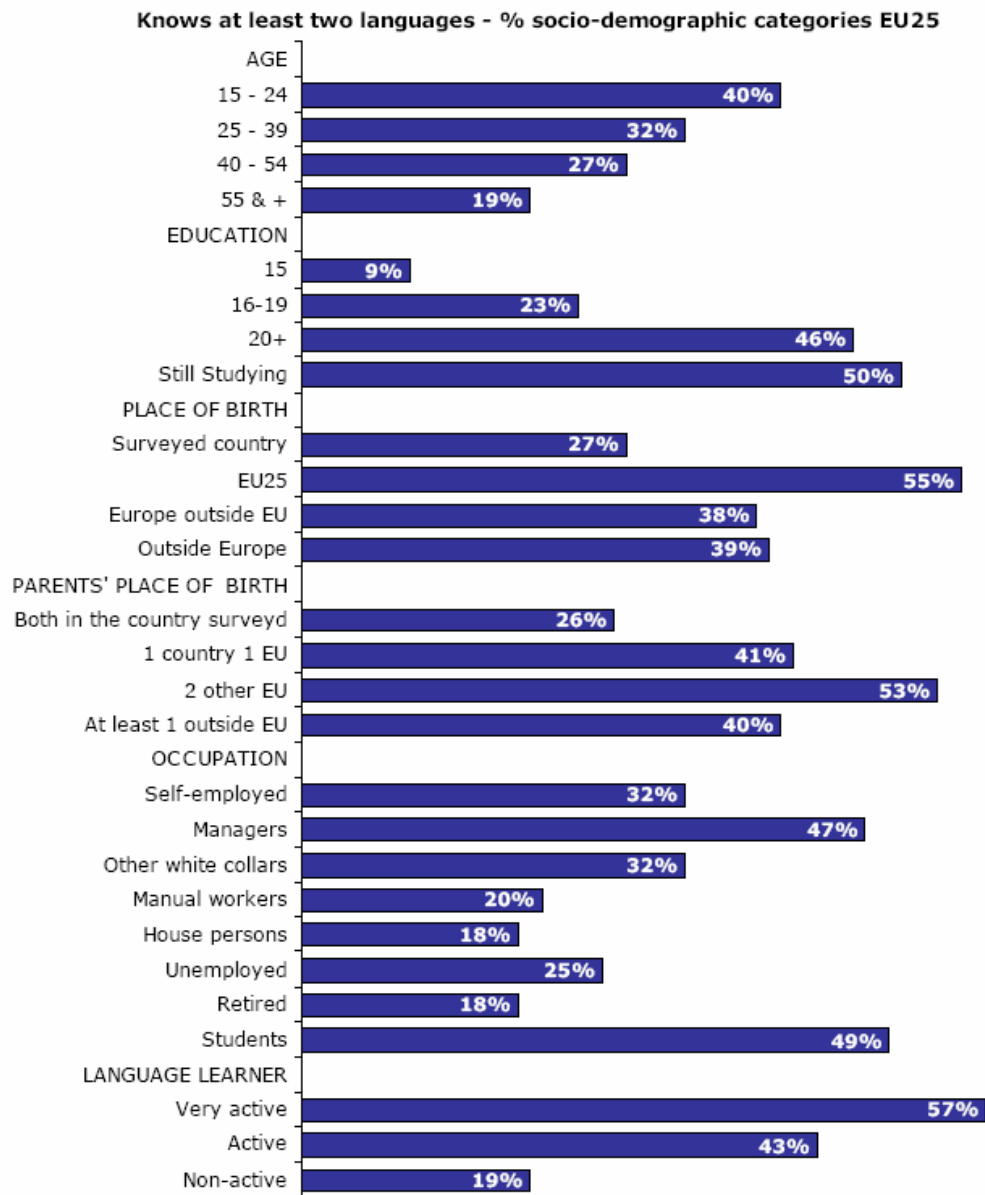
Knows at least two languages - % socio-demographic categories EU25

Category	%
AGE	
15 - 24	40%
25 - 39	32%
40 - 54	27%
55 & +	19%
EDUCATION	
15	9%
16-19	23%
20+	46%
Still Studying	50%
PLACE OF BIRTH	
Surveyed country	27%
EU25	55%
Europe outside EU	38%
Outside Europe	39%
PARENTS' PLACE OF BIRTH	
Both in the country surveyd	26%
1 country 1 EU	41%
2 other EU	53%
At least 1 outside EU	40%
OCCUPATION	
Self-employed	32%
Managers	47%
Other white collars	32%
Manual workers	20%
House persons	18%
Unemployed	25%
Retired	18%
Students	49%
LANGUAGE LEARNER	
Very active	57%
Active	43%
Non-active	19%

Figure A3.4. Most useful languages to learn (personal)
　　　　　　(*Eurobarometer* 2006 p.30)
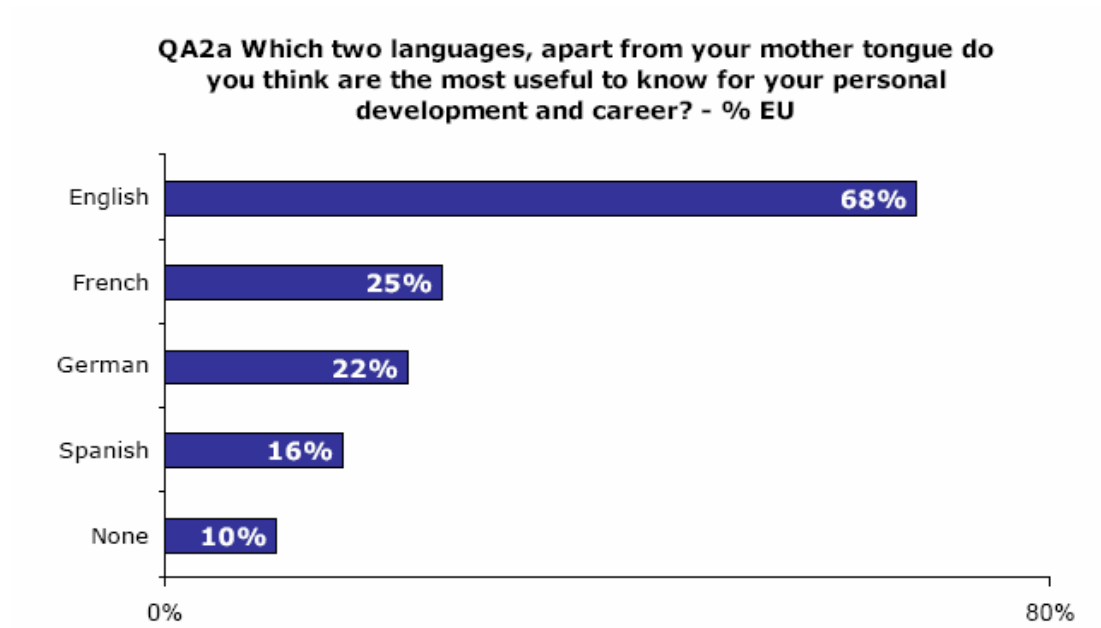
Figure A3.5. Most useful languages to learn (children)
　　　　　　(*Eurobarometer* 2006 p.33)