

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Review of European languages shows that Maltese LT-related activities lack coordinated support by stakeholders**

Today the Council of Europe celebrates the European Day of Languages, encouraging people across all 47 member states to celebrate their linguistic diversity. The University of Malta, as part of the META-NET initiative, is marking the occasion by highlighting the publication of a set of whitepapers looking at the social, economic and technological status of 30 European languages, including Malta, in modern Europe.

Through the European Day of Languages the Council of Europe is not only highlighting the importance of languages in our increasingly multilingual society but also the economic value that comes with multilingualism through, for example, increased worker mobility. The META-NET Language Whitepapers show how in modern Europe technology plays an integral role in supporting and developing multilingualism both in everyday usage and in facilitating language learning.

The Whitepaper on Maltese highlights the role of the language in society, education and the media. The paper also points out that the state of Maltese Language Technology is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, there are significant efforts made by a small number of well-qualified people across a spectrum of LT-related activities to improve the state of the art. On the other hand, these efforts are uncoordinated, short term and fragmentary, so that progress is slower than it has to be. This is mainly due to the fact that investment in language technology remains at a low level. The authors emphasise that sustained and directed coordination of effort is the only way in which the benefits of LT for Maltese will be realised in a reasonable time as even in a country as small as Malta, the work needs to be shared out amongst different stake-holders.

At the University of Malta, the *Intelligent Computer Systems Department (ICS)* in collaboration with the Institute of Linguistics have developed several resources in LT-related projects. As a member of METANET4U within META-NET, the University of Malta is the Maltese node in a pan European Network of Excellence dedicated to fostering the foundations of a multilingual European information society.

The META-NET Language Whitepaper series is published online at <http://www.meta-net.eu/whitepapers>

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