

EAFT–ELETO Symposium

“National Languages and Terminology in Higher Education, Science & Technology”

Athens, Greece, 7 November 2013

English translation of the **Opening speech of Kostas Valeontis, President of ELETO**

Dear friends,

- from EAFT
- from other European countries
- from Greece

In any state, the national language is the highest common social and cultural property. On one hand, it is the common code of communication among private citizens, among scientists, as well as between private citizens and scientists; on the other hand, by its functional structure and terminology, it is the vehicle for conveying and transferring knowledge to the new scientists who disseminate it – via application and education – to wider social strata.

New knowledge is acquired and consolidated in Higher Education, Research and Technology. National Higher Education Institutions are committed to teaching this knowledge in the national language. These activities are financed by the taxpaying citizens of a state and should be carried out to their benefit; they should satisfy the citizens' right to acquire new knowledge in the language which they speak and by which they communicate. Moreover,, depriving the national language of its capability to describe and transfer new knowledge is a serious harm to the language itself resulting to its progressive estrangement from the developing domains and eventually its shrinkage.

ELETO's main objective is terminology – i.e. the interface between knowledge and language – and specifically the Greek terminology; and its action line is to adopt Greek terms equivalent to the new foreign language terms as soon as possible. Thus, ELETO immediately embraced the EAFT's initiative (with Jan Roukens in a leading role) to organize this event. I wish that this Symposium be quite successful and contribute substantially to the claim of national languages that they should participate actively and equally in contemporary scientific and technical discourse.