

European Civil Society embraces Multilingualism

National Languages in Higher Education, Science & Technology

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Report on Cyprus

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English in Cyprus

*Some facts about
Cyprus and the
impact of the English
Language in Cypriot
society*

- Cyprus is a country that belongs to the sphere/zone of influence of English
- You can survive by only using English
- Impact of English is not the effect of recent developments, globalisation, internationalisation etc. but the outcome of historical events

English in education and society in Cyprus

Diacronically English has been moving upwards and downwards education

- presence of English in private tertiary education
- diachronically, English has extended its sphere of influence in the educational domain *downwardly* with the creation of elementary and nursery schools where it is used as the medium of instruction, now covering the whole age-range of schooling

but out of public administration and the judiciary

- as a matter of fact the impact of English in Cypriot society has diminished over the years
 - *no more the language of public administration*
 - *no more the language of legislation and the judiciary*

English in higher education in Cyprus₁

Clear distinction in language use policy between public and private universities

- Private universities are consistently using **English** as their primary language of instruction over the years.
- Public universities are consistently using **Greek** as their primary language of instruction over the years.

Parallel trends in language policy in higher education

- *increase* in the number of programs (mainly postgraduate) in English offered by higher education institutions since 2007 is not due to massive introduction of new programmes in English but the result of the accreditation of private colleges as university level institutions
- private institutions have been *introducing* programmes taught in Greek to respond to local demand

English in higher education in Cyprus₂

Factors that contribute to the low number of English taught programmes in public universities

- strong ideological link between language and identity that strengthens the function of a language as an identity marker
- existence of constitutional or legal provisions in the founding laws of public universities which regulate official university language use
- pressures exerted by local markets that need to be satisfied

What we need to keep in mind

- any solution to the problem of national languages in higher education must take into account both **the need** to protect national languages and **the absolute necessity** for young people to be competitive today in a world that is and will for some time, I guess, still be working in English.
- recent developments in the area of open teaching resources that will transform the landscape of higher education in the next few years
- “If you cannot beat them join them?”