

Name: **Javier Montiel Alafort**
Institution: Karlshochschule International University
Country: Germany

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Title: **Europe at a Crossroads - Cultural Diversity and Multilingualism: the Spanish Case**

Abstract:

During the last decade the so-called "European Years" have frequently had remarkable social orientation focused on diversity. 2001 was for instance the European Year of Languages, 2007 the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the current 2012 the European Year of Active Ageing. In essence they all seem to be aimed at encouraging the creation of a fairer, more cohesive and more participatory European society. Specifically the objective of social cohesion was formulated in 2000 in the so-called "Lisbon Strategy". Perhaps it should be reminded that the Lisbon Strategy was designed to render the EU the most competitive economy in the world, something that, from today's perspective, when economic speculation seems to dominate upon policy decisions, sounds like a colossal irony. Maybe it's precisely a short-sighted economism responsible for the failure of this project in the different policies outlined at the beginning of the century, such as language policy.

In 2002 the European Council Meeting in Barcelona agreed on specifying the language policy goal in the formula "mother tongue +2": It was the aspiration that every citizen of the European Union acquired a good command of two foreign languages besides their mother tongue. In 2008 a commission of experts chaired by Amin Maalouf recommended to keep on deepening in this strategy and introduced the term "personal adoptive language" to promote a networked growth of a European society. Finally, in 2011 the Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism established by the European Commission proposed a language policy clearly focused on plurilingualism. Are the Member States' policies consistent with these EU-guidelines? And what is exactly plurilingualism? These are the first two questions considered in this contribution.



A word cloud of terms related to diversity and multilingualism. The words are arranged in a horizontal line and vary in size and color. The most prominent words include: DIFFERENT, DIFFERENTIATION, DEMOGRAPHIC, GLOBALIZED, PLURIMETHODICAL, RECOGNITION, COMPLEX, NARRATIVE, INTER-DISCIPLINARY, MINORITIES, SOCIETIES, IMAGES, MONO-CAUSAL, STUDIES, RIGHTS, CHANGES, IDENTITY, URBAN, MULTIPLE, POPULATION, PHENOMENON, VARIABLES, CULTURE, MARKETS, PERSPECTIVES, AGE, GENDER, REALITY, DEFINITION, GOVERNANCE, AWARENESS, CONSTRUCTIONS, LINKED, STRUCTURES, SEGREGATION, COMPLEXITY, DYNAMISM, ORGANIZATIONS, WORLD, INTEREST, MANAGEMENT, GOVERNANCE, CATEGORIZATION, MULTICULTURALISM, DECADES, BORDER-CROSSING, and NEW.

