ES
español - Spanish
Official language in: Spain
Bienvenidos

CS
čeština - Czech
Official language in: Czech Republic
Vítejte

DA
dansk - Danish
Official language in: Denmark
Velkommen

DE
Deutsch - German
Official language in: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg
Willkommen

ET
eesti keel - Estonian
Official language in: Estonia
Tere tulemast

EL
ελληνικά (ellinikà) - Greek
Official language in: Greece, Cyprus
Καλώς ήλθατε (Kalos ìlthate)

EN
English
Official language in: United Kingdom, Ireland, Malta
Welcome

FR
Français - French
Official language in: France, Belgium, Luxembourg
Bienvenue

GA
Gaeilge - Irish
Official language in: Ireland
Failte

IT
italiano - Italian
Official language in: Italy
Benvenuto

LV
latviešu valoda - Latvian
Official language in: Latvia
Sveiki

LT
lietuvių kalba - Lithuanian
Official language in: Lithuania
Sveiki atvykę

HU
magyar - Hungarian
Official language in: Hungary
Üdvözöllek

MT
Malti - Maltese
Official language in: Malta
Merħba

NL
Nederlands - Dutch
Official language in: the Netherlands, Belgium
Welkom

PL
polski - Polish
Official language in: Poland
Witamy

PT
português - Portuguese
Official language in: Portugal
Bem-vindos

RO
română - Romanian
Official language in: Romania
Bine ați venit

SK
slovenčina - Slovak
Official language in: Slovakia
Vitajte

SL
slovenščina - Slovenian
Official language in: Slovenia
Dobrodošli

FI
suomi - Finnish
Official language in: Finland
Tervetuloa

SV
svenska - Swedish
Official language in: Sweden, Finland
Välkommen

BG
български (bulgarski) - Bulgarian
Official language in: Bulgaria
Добре дошли (Dobre doshli)

English français Gaeilge italiano latviešu valoda
slovenščina suomi svenska lietuvių kalba
ελληνικά eesti keel português română slovenčina
español čeština dansk Deutsch Nederlands polski
magyar Malti
EN
español čeština dansk Deutsch Nederlands polski
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English français Gaeilge italiano latviešu valoda
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português română slovenščina
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español čeština dansk Deutsch Nederlands polski
português română slovenščina suomi svenska lietuvių kalba

The most multilingual organisation in the world • The most multilingual organisation in the world • The most multilingual organisation in the world

The most multilingual organisation in the world

The European Union currently has 23 official languages, making it the most multilingual organisation in the world. When a new country joins the EU, its national language becomes an official EU language. As some countries share the same language (e.g. Germany and Austria), there are fewer official languages than member states.

Which language can a citizen use?

The citizens of all EU member states can use their own languages in all contacts with the European institutions and bodies. The websites of the European Council and the Council, as well as of other EU institutions and bodies, are available in all official EU languages.

www.consilium.europa.eu

www.european-council.europa.eu

Which language can my minister use?

Representatives of the EU member states are free to use their own languages during European Councils and Council meetings. The documents for those meetings are normally prepared in 23 official languages. Likewise, EU legislation must be passed simultaneously in all official languages.

Diversity of EU languages

Many EU languages belong to one of the branches of the Indo-European language group:

- Germanic (e.g. English and German),
- Slavic (e.g. Czech and Polish) and
- Romance (e.g. Spanish and Romanian).

Some EU languages are not of Indo-European origin:

- Maltese, for example, is close to Arabic and belongs to the Afro-Asiatic family, while
- Finnish, Hungarian and Estonian form part of the Finno-Ugric language group.

Regional / minority languages:

- specific to a region and not a dominant language in any country (e.g. Breton in France),
- a language which is spoken by a minority in one country, but is a majority language in another (e.g. Italian in Slovenia).

Interesting facts:

- the EU language with the largest number of native speakers: German (90 million)
- first foreign language among EU citizens: English (38%), German (14%), French (14%)
- 26 September – European Day of Languages
- the Council Language Service translates around 13 000 documents (1 million pages) per year
- 56% of EU citizens speak at least one foreign language

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