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Beyond COVID-19:
preparing for the next pandemic

How risk perception and uncertainty
can improve climate change policies

Society simulation tool
enables informed counter-terrorist
policies

SPECIAL FEATURE
SPEAKING IN TONGUES:
CELEBRATING LINGUISTIC
DIVERSITY

Editorial

The richness of Europe's language diversity, how the sound of your voice can lead to discrimination and the return of EU Agenda

welcome to this month's Research*eu magazine

Your editor is a native English speaker and only really began learning foreign languages when he was an older teenager. The first foreign language he actively chose to learn was Italian, due to his first love being an actual Italian (the common trope that the easiest way to learn a language is through love – so, so true in his opinion). When leaving his home country to work in another EU Member State, he began learning French and then Dutch. French was initially the most important due to it being the most useful for everyday interactions. In recent years, Dutch has overtaken French because he's now engaged to a native Dutch speaker (yeah, it didn't work out with the Italian)... though, when it comes down to it, his first linguistic love, the foreign language he still feels most comfortable expressing himself in even if he doesn't get to practise it very often any more, will always certainly be Italian.

Perhaps, dear reader, you're thinking this story is a little too personal for a publication such as this. Perhaps you're right but this story is just one of billions of individual language stories, with millions of new ones starting every single day at the moment of birth. Language is one of the defining traits that separates humans from every other organism on this planet. Whilst many animals do have complex systems of communications, none have come even close to the uniquely human capacity for speech. Even if you never learn a second language, your relationship with your mother tongue also evolves throughout your life, from the sheer challenge of having to learn it from scratch as a child to being constantly exposed to new and evolving vocabulary and speech patterns as you go through your life.

Europe is a particularly language-rich continent, with around 200 languages spoken within its borders. The EU has 24 official languages, with around 60 recognised regional languages on top of that. Then

there are the many dozens of additional languages that did not originate in Europe but due to decades of immigration have found a home here. And this is one of Europe's great strengths, its linguistic diversity. 26 September is the **European Day of Languages** and to celebrate all things languages-related, this issue's special feature highlights seven EU-funded projects that are, in their own way, working to preserve and enhance Europe's wonderful linguistic diversity.

This leads us on nicely to this month's **Life After** feature – for what is language without voice? Indeed, this month we meet again a former Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow whose research is focused on the notion that the sound of our voice, or more specifically, the perception that others have about our voice when they first hear it, can lead to sometimes subtle, sometimes very unobvious forms of discrimination.

Meanwhile, in **Project of the Month**, we meet IN-PREP, a project that has been developing new technologies that will help emergency services better respond to emergencies and disasters. And of course, we have our nine usual thematic sections covering everything from Health to Security, Energy to Fundamental Research (and more).

Finally, we're pleased to announce the return of our **EU Agenda** feature where we highlight upcoming events in October. However, a word of warning – at the time of writing, these events were scheduled to go ahead but a rise in coronavirus cases over the autumn may cause some to be cancelled or shifted into an online format, so we very much advise you to keep checking the event website for further updates.

As always, wishing all of our readers good health – but if you have any queries, questions or suggestions (hopefully never a complaint), please feel free to drop us a line at editorial@cordis.europa.eu

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Editorial coordination
Birgit Alice BEN YEDDER

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Pioneering new technologies to help civil protection agencies handle and respond better to large crises and emergencies



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The IN-PREP project has designed new technologies to enhance preparedness and support effective command and control and efficient incident management during emergencies, disasters and crisis events, now especially important following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IN-PREP's Mixed Reality Preparedness Platform (MRPP) combines multiple technologies including a scenario building tool for crisis planning and training, advanced command and control technology to assist in situational awareness during crises and the latest in threat impact and evacuation modelling capabilities.

Four exercises to test and improve the technology have taken place in Italy, the Netherlands and Northern Ireland.

“ We're happy that the technologies developed in IN-PREP contribute to scenario building, training and response planning that allows civil protection agencies to effectively collaborate during large disasters and crises, ensuring the most efficient level of command, disciplinary and spatial boundaries. ”

Evangelos Sdongos, Project Coordinator

Now in its final year, two further demonstrations will be carried out later in 2020 and a first-of-its-kind Handbook on Transboundary Preparedness will be developed to serve not only as a user manual for IN-PREP's MRPP, but also as an invaluable resource in comparing the different crisis management procedures used throughout EU Member States.

Additionally, a recent IN-PREP study undertaken by the Italian Fire and Rescue Service found that recent technological developments have allowed the emergency services to exchange data in a more effective way, overcoming the existing barriers in location, language and technology, and protecting workers in the emergency services who are responding to COVID-19.

To find out more, please see the official IN-PREP website.

IN-PREP

- Coordinated by the Institute of Communication and Computer Systems in Greece
- Funded under H2020-SECURITY
- cordis.europa.eu/project/id/740627
- Project website: in-prep.eu
- ▶ bit.ly/38EYo71

If you are interested in having your project featured in 'Project of the Month' in an upcoming issue, please send us an email to editorial@cordis.europa.eu and tell us why!