

**The linguistic regime of the European Union.  
a multilingual union under the aegis of the principle of the new european  
humanism: unity in diversity**

**Regimul lingvistic al Uniunii Europene.  
O uniune plurilingvă sub egida principiului noului umanism european: unitatea  
în diversitate**

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**Abstract**

*The European integration is launching a new paradigm of existence to the states and their citizens: unity in diversity. The European Union creates the framework for affirming diversity in an area of common political, social and economic values. Each member state has its own identity, language, spirituality, culture, history, civilization, etc. All this European diversity is governed by the principle of unity. In the spirit of respecting diversity, each Member State language is official language of the European Union. The EU language regime is governed by the principle of multilingualism, regulated in the European treaties. The philosophy of this approach is built on respect for national and for individual identity given by the mother tongue, in the framework of the new humanism that defines the New Europe.*

**Rezumat**

*Integrarea europeană lansează o nouă paradigmă a existenței pentru state și cetățenii lor: unitatea în diversitate. Uniunea Europeană creează cadrul pentru afirmarea diversității într-o arie a valorilor politice, sociale și economice comune. Fiecare stat membru are propria sa identitate, limbă, spiritualitate, cultură, istorie, civilizație, etc. Toată această diversitate europeană este guvernată de principiul unității. În spiritul respectului pentru diversitate, limba fiecărui Stat Membru este limba oficială a Uniunii Europene. Regimul lingvistic UE este guvernat de principiul plurilingvismului, reglementat prin tratatele europene. Filosofia acestei abordări este întemeiată pe respectul față de identitatea națională și individuală dată de limba maternă, în cadrul noului umanism care definește Noua Europă.*

**Key words:** *identity, culture, civilization, unity in diversity, official languages, multilingualism, multiculturalism, new humanism*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *identitate, cultură, civilizație, unitate în diversitate, limbi oficiale, plurilingvism, multiculturalism, nou umanism*

**THE CHALLENGE TO NATIONAL SPIRIT**

European integration – a continuously dynamic process – and the general current wave of globalization are the defining elements of the contemporary trend of configuring a new world order. The current developments, which take to a flying rhythm, generate complex realities along new coordinates. The European Union is an unprecedented geopolitical organization at history time scale. Its constitutive rules define it as a Commonwealth of states governed by law, grounded on rights and freedoms, respect for national identity, and having peace and prosperity as an ideal.

Such an entity joining in harmonious coexistence states that were engaged in the past in devastating wars against each other, a construction of material and spiritual progress, having the

citizen and the observance of his rights at its core, has long appeared utopian. But the project that was started half a century ago has become reality. The perspectives outlined by the Union's present appear to confirm expectations. Peace, stability, freedom, democracy, prosperity are all aspirations that define the new political structure. The opening of political, economic, spiritual, linguistic, etc. borders, the extension of the Schengen space, the extended and multi-branched cooperation, communication inside a Union dominated by information and knowledge, open limitless possibilities to community and individual development.

The same features, however, also give rise to questions. Does integration mean dissolution, loss of national identity? Does the new order mean a new uniformization and standardization under the sign of democracy? Are there privileged states and other, second-rank states? What role does the national language play in the new configuration of the states? Will new universal languages acquire supremacy in time? There can be hosts of questions arising and the answers are not simple at all. Some states unconditionally stick to the European idea, seeking the solution to national issues in the common future. Others (like Greece, Portugal, Malta, etc.) show a moderate skepticism, pondering both sides of the European medal, unless they do not downrightly reject the common perspective under the folds of the blue flag. Whatever the case, the questions remain and are waiting for answers.

The economic crisis has deeply affected the EU, the Member States and the euro area. The crisis has hit several countries particularly vulnerable economically, further threatening the entire European construction, as in a game of dominoes. The crisis shook the stability of a geopolitical construction aiming to be a democratic and prosperous way of common existence. It also shook the confidence of the Member States and their citizens in the European project. This phenomenon raised important questions about the viability, stability and even existence of the EU in the future. At the same time, there were warning signs about the EU's future at risk. However, the fact that affected countries have exceeded the critical moments of crisis, with major economic and social sacrifices, that Greece seems to recover with the help of EU solidarity, all these are signs of hope for rehabilitation of the affected states and restoration of the EU stability.

The problem of communication and transparency in the new Europe generates debate about the language or languages of the Union. The theme, of paramount importance, sparks various views regarding the linguistic regime of this political construction. And just as many difficulties. For the issue of spoken language, of the option for one idiom or another, cannot be expressed outside a notion and reality of greater sensitivity and deepness: **national identity**.

In virtue of the European Union philosophy and policy, built on the consciousness of linguistic identity, the national languages of the member states are official languages of the E.U. A thesis that is now taking shape, supports regional languages in a virtual ascent in the grading of political and administrative importance. The masterminds of the cosmopolitan trend aspire to a universal language, whereas neo-Atlanticists advocate English as the language for European communication. The idea of an artificial language based on Latin or German, or the revival of Latin or Greek has ever fewer followers today.

Each theory regarding the linguistic future can be received with both criticism and arguments. The European expansion will substantially increase the number of official languages and, implicitly, bureaucratic procedures. A regional and separatist policy would result in hundreds of official languages, which would turn united Europe into a linguistic chaos. The variant of a European or universal language clashes against the national alternative, therefore setting the premises in place for a large-scale conflict. The project of an artificial language is not viable, as history has proven.

A coordinate of the European policy in the spirit of respecting national, linguistic and cultural diversity, the principle of multilingualism gives rise to a series of objections. According to the latter, there are too many languages, which complicates things unnecessarily. At present, the European Union comprises 27 Member States and 23 official languages. In a Union with 23 official languages, things get increasingly more complicated: huge expenses, translation and interpretation

services, administrative difficulties, communication problems. In other words, a new Tower of Babel. The critics of multilingualism suggest a simple solution to that: reduce the number of official languages.

But in this case, the situation gets complicated again. What should the selection criteria be? According to the Union's legal regulations, all languages have equal rights. But some enjoy a hard to compete head start. English is currently a quasi-universal language expressing large cultures and civilizations, as well as political, economic, military powers that stand in the frontline of humanity. The expansion of the American model in the four cardinal directions of the world decisively contributes to imposing and rendering English universal. French is another option. Despite having lost ground to the globally expanding English, it preserves its status as an alternative. The Francophonie is an active phenomenon in various areas of the world, legitimated by a prestigious spiritual heritage. English and French are, in fact, the languages used in European institutions and meetings, the languages of the chancelleries and diplomacy. By the political and pragmatic role they play, they have surpassed the status of official languages and hold today a privileged position in the Union.

No sooner would these obstacles be overcome, that the biggest difficulty arises. The process of integration polarizes two concepts, defining fundamental realities: globalism and national identity.

The meanings of the first term are complex and open critical connotations in a hermeneutic of the concept: uniformity, massification, national identity cancellation etc. Conversely, the second is translated through: national language, culture, history, spiritually and morally defining the individual. Giving up the national language, in one hypothesis or another, poses a threat to the very identity of the individual. The new construction thus enables the self-consciousness of the states and their citizens. European integration is **a challenge to the national spirit**. In both ways.

## THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF LINGUISTIC RIGHTS

The situation created by the diversity and antagonism of the opinions on integration, exacerbated by anxieties over globalization, caused debates over time, that reflect the general trends at European or world level and propose solutions for the linguistic future of the communities.

Between June 6 and 8, 1986, the World Conference of Linguistic Rights was held in Barcelona, attended by representatives of 66 non-governmental organizations, 41 PEN Clubs and 41 experts in linguistic legislation from all over the world. Also attending were more than 200 guests from around 90 countries on five continents. The conference took place at the initiative of the Committee for translation and linguistic rights and CIEMEN (the Escarré International Centre for Ethnic Minorities and Nations), with the moral and technical support of UNESCO. On June 6, at the ceremony held at the University of Barcelona, the participants adopted the **Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights**.

Having a universal addressability, by its principles, values and norms, the Declaration is a conceptual and regulatory framework for the EU policy regarding the languages of the Member States, plurilingualism and multilingualism.

The Preamble of the document states that, currently, the situation of each language is determined by several factors: the tendency of the states to reduce diversity, cultural and linguistic plurality; the globalization trend of the economy, information, communications and culture, affecting the internal cohesion of linguistic communities; the economicist growth model, which identifies individualism with freedom, and generates growing inequality on economic, social, cultural and linguistic ground. For the threatened languages to survive and develop, several objectives are set forth in the Preamble: organizing linguistic diversity to enable the effective participation of language communities in the new model of development; equitable relations among all languages and cultures.

The Declaration refers to **linguistic communities** and not to states, in the context of the strengthening of international institutions capable of ensuring the equitable development of all humanity. Its purpose is to encourage the creation of a political framework for linguistic diversity based upon respect, harmonious coexistence and mutual benefit.

At Title One “General principles” Article 7 spells out the definition of language and states the necessity to have the development prerequisites in place: “All languages are the expression of a collective identity and of a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality and must therefore be able to enjoy the conditions required for their development in all functions.” Article 10 states at Point 1 the equality of rights of all languages: “All language communities have equal rights” and terms at Point 2 the discrimination against language communities for whatever reason as “inadmissible.” According to Article 17 (1), linguistic communities are entitled to have all official documents pertaining to them translated into their official language. Article 23 states at Point 2 that education must help maintain and develop the language spoken by the language community of the territory where it is provided, and at Point 3 that education must “always be at the service of linguistic and cultural diversity and of harmonious relations between different language communities throughout the world.” Also according to Article 29, everyone is entitled to receive an education in one’s own language.

The Declaration comprises provisions regarding the communication and cultural means (the right of linguistic communities to use their language in all forms of cultural expression, as per Article 41), the social and economic sphere, additional and final dispositions.

The Declaration proclaims the equality of all languages beyond any linguistic classification, equal linguistic rights, regardless of distinctions such as: official/unofficial, national/regional/local, minority/majority, modern/archaic. It also affirms the right of each linguistic community to unfold its existence in its own language, in all areas. The Barcelona Declaration aims to protect all languages in an international context that threatens the survival of many of them. Its declared goal is a just and equitable linguistic peace throughout the world, based on linguistic awareness and the recognition of language rights.

## **A MULTILINGUAL UNION: THE STATUS OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES**

The basic treaties signed in Paris and Rome comprise only few provisions relating to the linguistic regime of the Communities. By virtue of Article 10, the ECSC Treaty is written in French, Article 28 of the EEC Treaty requires the Treaties of Rome to be worded in German, French, Italian and Dutch. According to Article 217 of the EEC Treaty, the language regime of the institutions is established by the Council.

**The Treaty on the Establishment of the European Community** comprises a series of regulations regarding the official language regime inside the Community. This is the consolidated version of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (signed in Rome on March 25, 1957 and entered into force on January 1, 1958), following successive amendments due to: the Single European Act (February 17 to 28, 1986), the Treaty on the European Union (the Treaty of Maastricht, February 7, 1992), the Amsterdam Treaty (October 2, 1997), special laws such as the 1965 Treaty on the merger of the Executives, the Treaties amending certain budgetary positions etc. The treaty was also amended following the four enlargement moves of the European Community.

Whereas Article 2 spells out the “mission of the Community”, presented as a set of general goals, Article 3 sets forth the means for attaining these goals. One of them, stipulated at Article 32, is the contribution to “to education and training of quality and to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States.” National language as a fundamental instrument for a state’s culture is also approached in the provision, which thus acknowledges the importance of the Community’s states as well defined political and cultural entities.

Article 21 of the Treaty (a regulation introduced by the Amsterdam Treaty) provides the citizens’ right to choose their official language:

“Every citizen of the Union shall have the right to petition the European Parliament in accordance with Article 194.

Every citizen of the Union may apply to the Ombudsman established in accordance with Article 195.

Every citizen of the Union may write to any of the institutions or bodies referred to in this Article or in Article 7 in one of the languages mentioned in Article 314 and have an answer in the same language.”

Article 255 sets forth the citizens’ right to access official documents: “Any citizen of the Union and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, shall have a right of access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.” Access to documents presupposes the existence of a version in a language that is understandable to the applicant.

Further on, Article 290 specifies: “The rules governing the languages of the institutions of the Community shall, without prejudice to the provisions contained in the Statute of the Court of Justice, be determined by the Council, acting unanimously.”

Article 314 instates the **principle of multilingualism** throughout the European Community. The Treaty is “drawn up in a single original in the Dutch, French, German, and Italian languages, all four texts being equally authentic.” At that time the European Economic Community incorporated six states: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The European enlargement process progressively included other states too: Denmark, Ireland, Great Britain (1973), Greece (1981), Spain, Portugal (1986), Austria, Finland, Sweden (1995). As the number of member states increased, so did the number of the Community’s official languages. Until 2004, the European Union comprised 15 states and 11 official languages. For this reason, the initial provision of Article 314 was completed with an add-on paragraph: “Pursuant to the Accession Treaties, the Danish, English, Finnish, Greek, Irish, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish versions of this Treaty shall also be authentic.” On 1 May 2004, ten more states became members of the European Union, the EU’s biggest ever enlargement: Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia. On 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU, which grew to 27 members and 23 official languages.

The first regulation adopted by the Council of the European Economic Community refers to the official languages of the Community: **Council Regulation No 1 of April 15, 1958 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community**. Article 1 of the Regulation provides the following: “The official languages and the working languages of the institutions of the Community shall be Dutch, French, German and Italian.” Yet faced with the new reality of the European expansion, the wording of Article 1 changed into this: “The official languages and the working languages of the institutions of the Union shall be Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish.”

Article 2 of the Regulation sets forth the following: “Documents which a Member State or a person subject to the jurisdiction of a Member State sends to institutions of the Community may be drafted in any one of the official languages selected by the sender.” Also, “the reply shall be drafted in the same language.”

The Regulation also lays down some fundamental principles: the official languages enjoy equal status in the Union; member states decide what the official languages and the working languages of the institutions shall be; the legislation of the European Union shall be translated **in all official languages**; the European institutions may decide which language to use in particular cases (internal talks a.s.o.). The Regulation’s underlying provision is Article 290 (former Article 217) of the Treaty on the Establishment of the European Community.

The provisions of the Regulation set in place the **principle of multilingualism** in the European Community. The **Council Regulation No. 1 of April 15, 1958** provides the legal basis for the European Union’s linguistic regime.

**The Single European Act** (signed on February 7, 1986 in Luxembourg and on February 28, 1986 in the Hague, and become effective on July 1, 1987) asserts in the Preamble the common wish of the signatory states to promote democracy, the observance of the fundamental rights recognized in the constitutions, in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Social Charter. Through the founding principles it lays down, the Community represents the political framework where “the wishes of the democratic peoples of Europe” can be fulfilled. Among the fundamental rights invoked there is the right to preserve the individual’s identity, his/her right to use the mother tongue, the right to education, the right to exert a profession, the freedom of expression and conscience a.s.o., which all come to fulfillment in the broader framework of the national identity. Individual and national aspirations stand in close interdependence with the exercise of fundamental rights. Even if it represents just a statement of principle and not a regulation in itself, the text of the Preamble states the common official stance to the political meaning of the new European construction and its cardinal values.

The principle of multilingualism is expressed at Article 34, which provides that the Act shall be “drawn up in a single original in the Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish languages,” all versions being equally authentic.” Finnish and Swedish were added to the list by dint of the Accession Treaty that came in effect in 1995.

**The Treaty on the European Union** (signed in Maastricht in 1992 and entered in force in 1993) expresses in its Preamble the “attachment” of the signatories to the “principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law.” It also asserts the signatories’ desire to “deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their tradition,” values that cannot be considered outside the notion of national identity and of the reality thereby defined.

Article 1 of the Treaty provides that with a view to “creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe,” decisions shall be taken as openly and “as closely as possible to the citizen.” Transparency and closeness to the citizens imply in the first place optimum communication, which needs to take place in the language known to the majority of a state’s citizens, that is the national language.

Article 6 of the Treaty sets forth three fundamental provisions:

“(1) The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States.

(2) The Union shall respect fundamental rights, as guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms signed in Rome on 4 November 1950 and as they result from the constitutional traditions common to the Member States, as general principles of Community law.

(3) The Union shall respect the national identities of its Member States.”

By the provisions of Article 6, the Maastricht Treaty, which sets in place a new political reality – the European Union – consolidates the foundation of the construction made up of principles and values universally acknowledged in the democratic world. In the new multinational and multilingual edifice, the national identity of the states and implicitly, of the individuals, represents an element of paramount importance.

Article 53 defines the Treaty’s linguistic regime, as the document shall be “drawn up in a single original in the Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish languages, the texts in each of these languages being equally authentic.” Under the 1994 Accession Treaty, the Finnish and Swedish versions of the act are also “equally authentic.”

**The Amsterdam Treaty** (signed on October 2, 1997 and come into force in 1999), amending the Treaty on the European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, contains a fundamental regulation of the European Union’s linguistic regime. Thus, Article 2.11. of the Treaty refers to the citizen’s right to petition European institutions and exert this right in one of the official languages, while at the same time having the right to receive an answer in the same language. The provision was included in Article 21 of the Treaty

establishing the European Community (cited here above) and reinforces the principle of multilingualism.

Article 15 specifies the linguistic regime of the Treaty, which shall be “drawn up in a single original in the Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish languages, the texts in each of these languages being equally authentic.”

In the context of the Treaty, mention should be made of **Declaration No. 39** on the quality of the drafting of Community legislation. According to this document, the quality of the formulation is “crucial” for the proper implementation of the legislation by the competent national authorities and its better understanding by the public and in business circles. The Declaration emphasizes that the legislation must become more accessible and recommends to this end the codification of legislative texts.

A document of major importance for asserting institution principles and values is the **European Union’s Charter of Fundamental Rights**, solemnly proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on December 7, 2000, in Nice.

The Preamble sets forth the Union’s attachment to the “indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity,” to the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It is in this framework that the Union affirms its respect for the “diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe, as well as the national identities of the Member States.”

Article 22 contains a cornerstone provision: “The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.”

Article 41.4 reiterates a regulation included in the Treaty establishing the European Community: “Every person may write to the institutions of the Union in one of the languages of the Treaties and must have an answer in the same language.”

**The Treaty of Nice** amending the Treaty on the European Union, the Treaties establishing the European communities and certain related acts, signed on February 26 2001 and entered in force in 2003, reaffirms at its Article 13 (Part Two: Transitional and Final Provisions) the principle of multilingualism: the act shall be “drawn up in a single original in the Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish languages, the texts in each of these languages being equally authentic.”

**The Council Resolution** of February 14, 2002 on the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning in the framework of the implementation of the objectives of the European Year of Languages 2001 reiterates a series of principles that underpin the European Union’s linguistic regime. Point (4) of the Resolution emphasizes that: “all European languages are equal in value and dignity from the cultural point of view and form an integral part of European culture and civilization.”

At Point (9) of the Resolution, the Council invites awareness of the member states of the wealth of linguistic diversity within the European Community and calls on them to “encourage, inter alia, cooperation between official centres or other cultural institutions for the dissemination of the languages and cultures of the Member States.”

**The Treaty of Lisbon (the Reform Treaty)**, signed by the EU member states on 13 December 2007, entered into force on 1 December 2009, amends the European Union’s two core treaties, **the Treaty on European Union (the Maastricht Treaty)** and **the Treaty establishing the European Community (the Treaty of Rome – renamed the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union)**.

In Article 7, **The Treaty of Lisbon** also provides **the principle of multilingualism**: “This Treaty, referred to as the Treaty of Lisbon, drawn up in a single original in the Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish languages, the texts in each of these languages being equally authentic, shall be deposited

in the archives of the Government of the Italian Republic, which will transmit a certified copy to each of the governments of the other signatory States.”

## THE PRINCIPLE OF THE NEW EUROPEAN HUMANISM: UNITY IN DIVERSITY

An advanced political structure as the European Union cannot offset the national spirit of the member states. The imposition of a standardization model, the dissolution of national identities into a new, global and artificial identity, massification would undermine its foundations. Such a political structure is viable only as long as it proves to be an environment of freedom, of diversity, of affirming the principles and perennial values of people, nations and humanity. Among these, the national identity of the state and of the individual hold a privileged position.

The founding elements of a nation's identity are language, spirituality, history, civilization, culture, religion. Together they form a spiritual treasure each nation carries with it, preserves and enriches throughout its existence. Political identity grounds on this ethical, cultural and spiritual foundation.

The identity of the individual is determined by national identity. These two notions stand in tight interdependence. National identity is composed of individual identities. Each historical individual is the creator and bearer of the values that add up to form the vast national identity. That is why language, history, civilization, culture and religion are the foundational values of the individual. Undermining them endangers individual identity and in extenso, national identity too.

Language is the fundamental factor of identity. It acts on both the individual and the state, but also at the level of region, enclave and minority. Language is the instrument of thought and understanding, an individual and collective code of communication, the means of self- and world knowledge. Everyone is that what he speaks. Language asserts itself as the existential emblem of the human individual and – at social level – of the citizen. Its definition encompasses spiritual, ethical, historical and national elements. At the same time, language confers legitimacy to the national state as a political and national reality. Loss of language is tantamount to loss of identity.

Building a large European “family” implies, at the first glance, a historical risk: the influence in time of the national identity, linguistic and mental leveling by a general model. The abolition of political, economic, cultural, spiritual borders outlined during millennia of history, generates the fear that not only the state, but the individual himself will lose identity. From the hyperbolized spectrum of globalization ensues the hypothesis of nations being transformed in an amorphous mass, with no national consciousness or language of its own, and just carrying the memory of a history and of a biography. In this scenario, the individual only has the vague title of: European or global citizen.

The motto of the European Union, a reality under continuous construction, deeply rooted in history, is **unity in diversity**. More than a slogan used for political purposes, this phrase is a *definition*. The European Union is the geopolitical framework allowing member states to individually and jointly manifest themselves. Each state participating in the vast process of construction expresses a national identity and consciousness. It's from the summing up of identities that the common European consciousness springs up, built up on founding values regarding history, civilization, culture, arts, etc., displaying a rare richness and variety. The identity sign of the European construction is *diversity*, with all its linguistic, spiritual, national, cultural, historical facets. This feature instills coherence and historical legitimacy to the European project. The European Union is a *political form of organizing diversity*.

The fundamental principle, the cornerstone of the entire European edifice, is spelled out at Article 6 of the Maastricht Treaty: “The European Union shall respect the national identities of its Member States.”

This principle gives concise expression to the philosophy of this entire political construction. This is where the other principles laid down in legislation and enforcement policies derive from.

The European Union is a political entity defined by transparency and the rule of law. Law is the universal foundation and enforcement rule. The European edifice thus asserts itself as a space where national identity and values are respected, but where fundamental rights and freedoms are also duly observed.

National identity expresses the very existence of a state. Respecting its national identity means recognition thereof as a political, historical and cultural reality in the context of a Union that makes of diversity the purpose of its existence.

Member States have equal rights within the Union. Each represents a distinct voice in the concert of European nations and its expression code is the national language. A definition element for a state's identity, each national language is elevated to the rank of official language of the European Union. The official languages have equal status and rights. By virtue of compliance with national identity, the European legislation, the basic documents that provide the rights and obligations of Member States - the *acquis communautaire* - are translated into every official language. Transparency is thus ensured. Every citizen has access to documents in his/her own language and it is in the same language that, according to European Union regulations, he/she officially communicates with Union institutions.

The condition of the individual provided in the new geopolitical context is built on the basis of fundamental rights and freedoms provided and secured by law. The European citizen preserves his national identity. He has the right to education and expression in his own language, he has the freedom of choice in all areas of existence. Under the same rules imposed by Community law, he is also protected against any discrimination. His existential definition is freedom. And freedom is the foundation of identity. It's through the identity of the individuals that the states' national identity is being built and perpetuated.

## Conclusion

The European Union is a continental-scale construction that promotes a new model of political, economic, social, cultural existence and development to the Member States. The EU is built on the foundation of democracy, rights and freedoms under the aegis of the human values and common aspirations. At the same time, the Member States, each of them with its own language, culture, civilization, history, i.e. with its own national identity, form a remarkable diversity within the EU. This diversity represents the very essence of the European history, civilization and becoming. The European idea is in itself a challenge to the national spirit and identity of the Member States and their citizens. Given the diversity that underpins European civilization, the philosophy and development of the EU are based on the founding principle: unity in diversity.

Language is the cornerstone of the identity of the Member States and their citizens. That is why the EU pays special attention to national languages in the European concert. The European policies regarding languages are governed by the principle of multilingualism. It is provided in all core EU treaties. According to it, the national language of each Member State is the official language of the European Union. At present, the EU comprises 27 countries and 23 languages. The European Union language regime allows every citizen access to European legislation in the national language and also to address the European institutions and have an answer in the national language.

The principle of unity in diversity and of multilingualism show respect for the national and individual identity, with all its founding elements, for the spiritual and cultural heritage of each Member State. The two principles define the new humanism of Europe today and tomorrow, in the metamorphosis of the European Union. Under this philosophy and the EU policy concerning the identity, diversity and unity, the Member States and their citizens can preserve and affirm the national identity in all its aspects, linguistic, spiritual, cultural, scientific, aesthetic, etc., participating with the values of their own heritage in building the common European space, an unprecedented global construction.

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