

National Science Foundation
Workshop for
**Documenting Endangered
Languages**



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EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION

SETTING SCIENCE AGENDAS FOR EUROPE

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ESF

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Experiences with and Perspectives for
Endangered Languages Research in
ESF EUROCORES Programmes

ESF's Membership



c.80 Member Organisations in 30 countries, also beyond the European Union

- Research funding organisations (e.g. research councils)
- Research performing organisations (e.g. national research institutes)
- Academies

Combat fragmentation; create critical mass; advance science

- Partnerships with agencies outside Europe

Funded in 1974

Non-governmental organisation with offices in
Strasbourg and Brussels

Coverage of all scientific domains through
Standing Committees and Expert Boards:

- **Humanities (SCH);**
- Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences;
- Medical Sciences;
- Polar, Marine, Space Sciences
- Radio Astronomy; Nuclear Physics
- Physical and Engineering Sciences;
- Social Sciences

ESF "Mission and Means"

Mission:

ESF provides a common platform for its Member Organisations (MOs) in order to

- **advance European research**
- **explore new directions for research at the European level**

Through its activities, ESF serves the needs of the European research community in a global context

Means:

- Budget: € 41 Mio.
- Budgets networked through ESF: € 1-3 Bio.
- Potential budget leverage: MOs

- Foresight (e.g. nanomedicine; SSH in security research);
- Networking science (e.g. ESF networks; COST €280M)
- Management of transnational Programmes (EUROCORES)
- Quality assurance services (e.g. peer review for ESA; Reference Index project; impact studies)
- MO Fora (e.g. research careers)
- Research Infrastructures

Disciplines: anthropology; archaeology; art & art history; classical studies; history; history & philosophy of science; languages and philologies; linguistics; literature studies; musicology; Oriental and African studies; pedagogy and educational research; philosophy; psychology; religious studies and theology

Fields such as: area studies; cognitive science; culture, development and environment; gender studies; heritage studies; media studies; urban studies etc.

Research questions such as: consciousness; evolution of cooperation; global change; health & welfare; human dignity; landscape research; migration; security; culture & technology etc.

Research Infrastructures

- Understanding of and (self-)reflection on human capacity and perception to create and communicate;
- New multidisciplinary: biological make-up; humans and the natural environment;
- Redrawing boundaries by new understanding of cultures of science;
- Internationalisation of research vs. “identity-creation” through Humanities research;
- New data production and analysis through transnational research infrastructures;
- Contribution of Humanities to wealth creation and social cohesion (long term investments)

"Explore new directions"

Strategy

Exploratory Workshops (15 k€ each);

Research Conferences (45 k€ each)

Forward Looks (150-300 k€ each)

"Advance at European level"

Synergy:

Research Networking Programmes (300-900 k€ each);

EUROCORES: ESF European Collaborative Research Programmes (5-10 M€ each)

EURYI (total ca. 100 M€)

COST (total ca. 280 M€)

ESF EUROCORES Programmes

ESF Collaborative Research Programmes:

- "responsive mode"
- European national funding agencies (+ non-European partners)
- Collaboration: transdisciplinary; transnational; researchers AND funders
- Research: basic research; *working* together, not "just" meeting
- Programme: addressing large-scale issues by offering opportunities for wide-ranging, multi-perspective approaches

EUROCORES Programmes

- OMLL: Origin of Man, Language and Languages (2003-2007);
- **CNCC: Consciousness** in a Natural and Cultural Context (2005-2010);
- **BOREAS**: Histories from the **North** – environments, movements, narratives (2005-2010)
- “Inventing Europe”: Technology and the Making of Europe, 1850 to present (2006-2011);
- **TECT**: The Evolution of **Cooperation and Trading** (2006-2011);
- LogiCCC: Logical Modelling in Interaction, Communication, Cognition and Computation (2007-2012)

- Language and *genes* of the greater Himalayan Region (incl. van Driem)
- The berber and the Berber: *genetic* and linguistic diversity (incl. Dugoujon)
- The prehistory of Amazonian languages: *Ecological* and *cultural* processes underlying linguistic differentiation
- East meets West. Linguistic and *genetic* comparison of modern Eurasian populations (incl. Jacquesson)
- Pioneers of Island Melanesia (incl. Dunn, *Foley*, Levinson)
- Language, *culture*, and *genes* in Bantu: a multidisciplinary approach of the Bantu-speaking populations of Africa
- Emergence and flow of *gene* lineages and languages along the steppe belt and beyond

Example Melanesia in OMLL

Michael Dunn et al. ., "Structural Phylogenetics and the Reconstruction of Ancient Language History" in *Science*, Volume 309 (23 September 2005), pp. 2072-2075.

Based on computerised analysis of 125 structural features of 16 Austronesian languages and 15 Papuan languages
So far: historical linguistic approach of comparing cognate terms suggests that despite their shared name the Papuan languages are unrelatable isolates

New focus: linguistic structure

New method: borrow cladistic methods from biology

New hypothesis: "the divergence of the Papuan languages from a common ancestral stock as part of late Pleistocene dispersals"

New deeper analysis: pushes back linguistic history to 10,000 years ago, much farther than reliably possible using previous methods

Collaboration with anthropology, archaeology, genetics etc.

BABEL: Better Analyses Based on Endangered Languages

(M. Mous; P. Austin, M. Fortescue, N. Himmelmann et al.)

- Rejuvenate linguistics on the basis of data-oriented research
- Reflections on practices and ethics of data-sharing (!) and data storage

BABEL next stages

Now: BABEL-internal preparation: from proposal to Call text

Now: Discussions in scientific boards and communities

26 Nov.: workshop with science rep's of interested funding agencies (to negotiate content of Call)

15 Dec.: Call sent to funders for approval

End of Febr.: final national decisions on participation

March '08: launch of Call for international Collaborative Research Projects (two stage: Outline and Full Proposal); one international Review Panel recommends to all agencies

Autumn'08: funding recommendations

Winter'08: final funding decisions (national level)

ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities

For further information
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