

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2012

**The European Union – Language Chaos or Multilingualism with a Purpose?**

Have you ever wondered

- Why the EU needs to have 23 official languages instead of just one?
- How the EU copes with the daily and never-ending demands for interpreting between these 23 (and a few non-EU languages, such as Chinese)?
- How European politicians, civil servants and experts actually talk to (and understand) each other?
- What it takes to become an interpreter in the context of the European Union?
- Whether official multilingualism on such a grand scale is a waste of taxpayers' money or a meaningful policy?

We cordially invite you to the guest talk / discussion

**“Interpreting in the EU: The Challenge of Multilingualism”**

by Mr. Marco BENEDETTI,  
Director General of the DG Interpretation in the European Commission (SCIC)

Date/Time: 26 November 2012, 3.00 - 5:00 pm

Venue: Hong Kong Baptist University, Wing Lung Bank Building, WLB 210 (see map attached)

Language: English

Seats are limited. **Please register beforehand at [euaphk@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:euaphk@hkbu.edu.hk)**

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The Directorate General is the largest interpreting service in the world. It organizes 40+ major political conferences and plus about 11,000 other multilingual meetings per year, employing 600 permanent staff interpreters and 3,000 accredited freelance interpreters.

The European Union Academic Programme (EUAP) is a consortium of four universities in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Baptist University, The University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Lingnan University), co-financed by the European Union. It is designed to strengthen EU-Hong Kong relations through academic work and enhance the understanding of the EU.



This project is co-funded  
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EU rules demand that any document may be sent to EU institutions and a reply received in any of these 23 languages. EU regulations and other legislative documents have to be published in all official and working languages. Multilingual conferences and meetings prepare such EU Regulations and Directives in a permanent negotiation process.

Interpreting can take on different forms – from consecutive interpreting between two languages, for which one interpreter is required, to simultaneous interpreting into and out of 23 or more languages (total symmetry), which requires at least 69 interpreters. Elected representatives, for example, get full, symmetric language coverage in formal sessions, while officials and experts get a whole range of different arrangements. The DG uses techniques of direct interpreting, relay (interpreting via a bridging language), two-way or retour interpreting, and asymmetric language coverage.

The DG also supports the Commission's efforts to promote multilingualism among Europe's citizens (mother tongue + 2).

### Introductory Links

- Listen to all the official languages in the European Union: [http://europa.eu/abc/european\\_countries/languages/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/european_countries/languages/index_en.htm)
- More about EU languages and EU language policies: [http://ec.europa.eu/languages/languages-of-europe/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/languages/languages-of-europe/index_en.htm)
- Speaking for Europe: Languages in the European Union (pdf):  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/doc3275\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/doc3275_en.pdf)
- Language Knowledge in Europe: <http://languageknowledge.eu/countries/eu27>
- Interpreting for Europe: Working for the European Commission (pdf):  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/docs/become\\_an\\_interpreter/2012\\_open\\_day\\_brochure\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/docs/become_an_interpreter/2012_open_day_brochure_en_web.pdf)
- What is Conference Interpreting? (DG Interpretation): [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/index_en.htm)

This event is organized by the **European Union Academic Programme Hong Kong** and hosted by the **Centre for Translation at Hong Kong Baptist University**, with additional support from the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao and the Department of Government and International Studies / HKBU.

### Press Contact

European Union Academic Programme Hong Kong, Martin Ho (Programme Officer)

DLB 515, David C. Lam Building, Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Tel. +852 3411 8202, Fax +852 3411 5799, Email [martintcho@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:martintcho@hkbu.edu.hk)

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