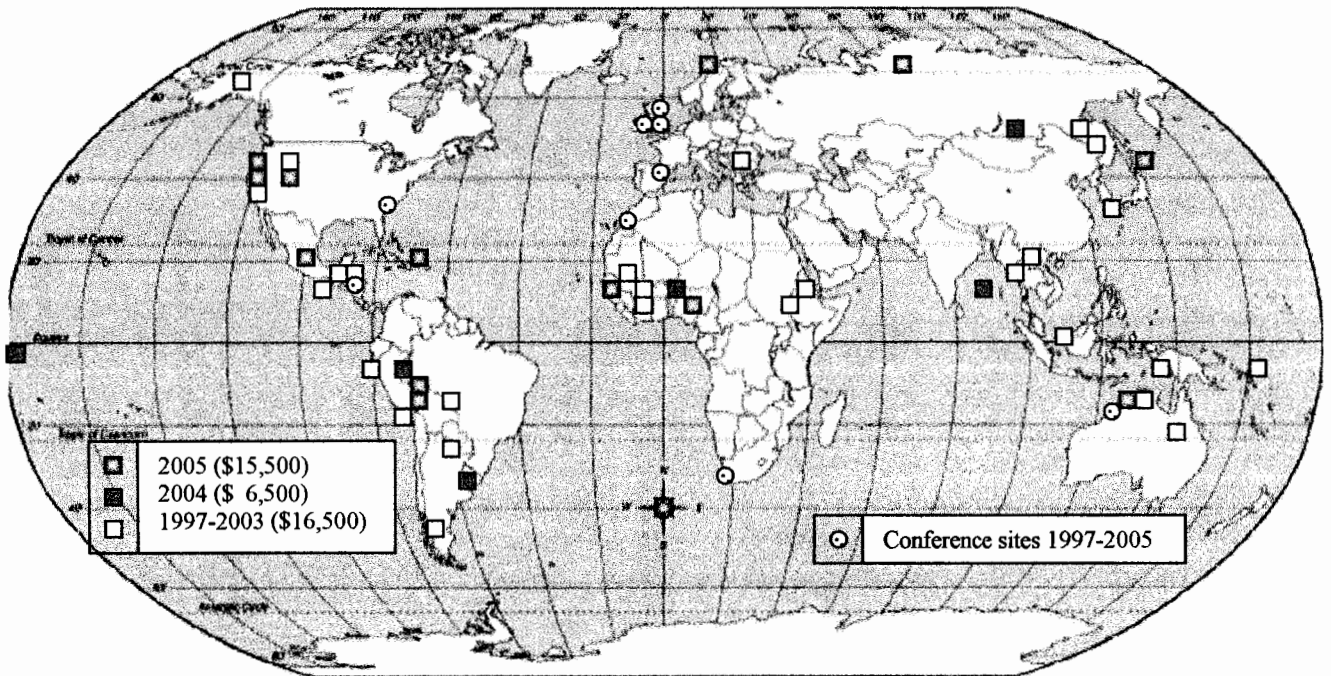
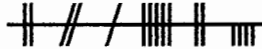


FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

OGMIOS



Incidence of FEL Grants and Conferences 1997 - 2005

This issue of Ogmios announces our latest awards, as well as the site and theme of our next conference.

We have had an excellent year financially, which has put us in a position for the first time to do something approaching justice to the range of excellent grant applications which come to us every year. This year we were able to fund one proposal out of every four, awarding US\$15,500 in all, almost as much money as we distributed in the all the first six years of our grants programme. The map shows where these grants have been directed, this year and in all the years before, and it is clear that our influence, light though it is, is being felt in many of the most inaccessible parts of the world.

Some idea of the variety of work which is being proposed, and will be funded, can be derived from the descriptions of projects in section 2. The manifold role of electronic technology, from dictionary databases to video records of story-telling, is quite notable in these short descriptions. Such technology often provides a concrete target for some action to highlight and utilize a language in a new way; but the challenge always remains for each language's speakers, to bring these new media into active use. FEL retains its aspiration to go on supporting these projects in future, so as to build durable links between concerned funders and speakers.

But like Robert Bly's wrens 'who make their nests of fancy threads and string ends' (*Listening to the Köln Concert*), we are just 'animals [who] abandon all their money each year'. FEL is now once again penniless, but not hopeless: we rely on an apparent determination, steadily growing among people all over the world, that something must and shall be done, to value and protect the vast human heritage of languages. Thank you for supporting this.

country (in the Republic). These figures point to an L2 role for Irish, in that the spread of Irish into the counties from which it had virtually vanished by 1900 has not displaced English (nor do census figures suggest that those returned as Irish speakers have any great degree of skill in the language), but I still think that the L2 status of Irish is not like that of French or German.

So is Irish language policy a success or not? It really does depend on what you are looking for. My feeling is that when you consider the very real threats posed to Irish in the 19th century, Irish has done very well. And I'm not forgetting the Belfast agreement, the terms of which established a cross-border language authority for Irish (alongside a cross-border authority for Ulster Scots), thus providing international legal support for Irish in Northern Ireland, and, incidentally, bringing the UK to ratify the European Convention on Regional or Minority Languages. (The Irish government has not ratified the Charter for fear of creating a contradiction between the position of Irish as an official language and the view that it might be seen as a minority language. But that's another story.) Of course it also has to be admitted that Irish, like so many languages, is still under pressure from English and that the success of Irish in the long term is still open to question. (Immigration into Ireland in recent years has also changed the linguistic landscape, but that, too, is another story.)

You may be interested in the report which has just been released from the Language Commissioner in Ireland. It is available (in bilingual format) from the Commissioner's website (which is also bilingual).

<http://www.coimisinéir.ie/>

Scots Gaelic Act: Hip Hip Ho-Hum - Murdo MacLeod

Scotland on Sunday 24 April 2005

See the original (in Gaelic too) at:
<http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/opinion.cfm?id=436172005>

The newest chapter in the history of Gaelic and the Gaels has just begun with the Gaelic Bill having passed through the Scottish parliament. Although the Scottish Executive makes far too much use of the word, this time they were right, this was a historic day. We have the first law in many years which is connected to Gaelic. And differently from other Gaelic-connected laws, this one - at least in theory - is trying to help and protect us rather than wipe us out.

We should be thankful for the small mercies, and they do not come much smaller than this. It would have been more honest for the government to have called this law the Gaelic Board Act, because that is what we have.

There is no word of the rights of Gaelic speakers, or where they can use their language, rights which are basic in other countries. We are still unsure whether we are allowed to speak our language in court. There is still not the same kind of safeguards for Gaelic education as there is for English-language schooling.

And we are still in the situation where the Executive thinks that it is perfectly acceptable for government ministers to head for the Western Isles, the Gaelic heartland, and speak to the English-language media while not addressing the Gaelic-speaking locals in their own language. There is no word on broadcasting. There will be some who will say that there could have been no such section because broadcasting is a matter reserved to London with the Scottish parliament having no say on the matter. But that is simply a problem with the Scotland Act which established the Scottish parliament, and Act which was drawn up in 1997 and 1998, and not before the foundations of the earth were laid. The powers of the Scottish parliament to protect our language are restricted precisely because those who are now in power allowed them to be limited.

Am I just too hard and cynical?

This was a bill which was promised to the Gaels in 1997. We had to be patient because the honourable members had to look to more important things, such as building a 440m palace for themselves and debating fox-hunting. And look now at what we have. The Gaelic Board is established in law. A good thing they have a duty to produce a language plan. A good thing. They have the task of increasing the numbers of Gaelic speakers. Another good thing.

And it is also a good thing that they will have a role in education and that they will be able to public authorities and direct them to draw up a Gaelic policy, instead of waiting for a word from the organisations. But wait a minute. These two elements are only there because they were added to the bill after the Gaels went mad with rage at how weak and pathetic the first draft of the bill was.

So that is the criticism. Is there any way that the law can now work? The way the new law is formed, much depends on how energetic the new Gaelic board is and how willing they will be to ask searching questions and refuse to accept excuses. It can work if the board is energetic and refuses to accept any nonsense from public authorities. And they have to start at the heart of the Gaelic-speaking areas. Are they convinced that the Western Isles Council Gaelic policies, and those of the local health board are all they could be? Is enough being done to make sure that the elderly people of the areas get home helps who speak their own languages, for example?

They have to be noisy and pushy, they have to show that they will not accept poor excuses from anyone. And in addition to the public authorities in the islands, they also should be harder on how the Scottish Executive deals with and informs the Gaels. When government minister appear each day on English-language radio and TV programmes, it is an absolute disgrace that they refuse Scotland's Gaelic speakers the same chance to get the information in their own language. Each time an official speaker appears to give information in English it means that Gaels are deprived of the chance to get knowledge from their own rulers.

I am not saying that every member of the Scottish Executive ministerial team must learn the language. But what I am saying is that there should be the brain-power in the Executive to deal with this issue. Is it that they could not care less or that they just think that we should have to listen in in English to get things straight.

I am dubious about whether this new law, and the board, will have the teeth to address these lacks. In contrast to the Welsh situation, the board will not have the final word in laying down to organisations that they must deal with the rights and needs of Gaelic speakers. The final word will be with ministers, and there is no guarantee that they will always show goodwill toward the language.

I for one hope that it will not emerge that we shall need to campaign for a new bill in a couple of years time.

But I have my doubts.

6. Reports on Field Research

A survey of Dogon languages in Mali: overview - Roger Blench Mallam Dendo Ltd., Cambridge, UK

The languages spoken on the Dogon Plateau and adjacent areas in northern Mali are generally known to outsiders as 'Dogon', but this term is not used by individual groups. For a long time, research on the Dogon was dominated by the work of Marcel Griaule and his successors, which focused on a very specific group, the Dogon of Sangha. Bertho published short comparative wordlists of some Dogon lects but these made little impression. Calame-Griaule (1956) published a dialect map of Dogon, the relationship between the named communities and the Toro-Soo represented in her dictionary (Calame-Griaule 1968) remained unclear in the absence of data. Until recently, Dogon was treated in reference books as if it were a single language (e.g. Bender-Samuel *et al.* 1989), but Hochstetler *et al.* (2004) estimated there are no less than 17 languages under the Dogon rubric and that the family is highly internally divided.

The classification of the Dogon languages is a matter of considerable dispute. They have always been considered part of Niger-Congo, but their place in that family is difficult to determine. Hochstetler *et al.* (2004) review the various theories that have been advanced, which are essentially either Gur, Mande or an independent branch. Conventional wisdom now treats Dogon as its own branch of Niger-Congo (Williamson & Blench 2000).

Many Dogon languages are known to only have a small number of speakers, but information on populations, locations and language endangerment status was non-existent in most cases. Indeed, for many lects, the sole concrete data were hundred-word wordlists collected in 1998 and a list of villages with GPS-determined locations (Hochstetler *et al.* 2004). As a consequence, further survey of Dogon languages seemed to be a high priority. Roger Blench and Denis Douyon (ENSUP/FLASH, Université de Bamako) undertook this in February and March 2005, with funding from the Swiss Ethnoarchaeological Research Project¹⁴. A list of all the communities surveyed follows and greater detail on individual groups from the point of view of language endangerment will appear in this and forthcoming issues of Ogmios.

One language in the Dogon-speaking area is apparently not Dogon but which is difficult to classify, Bangi me (see separate report). This language contains some Niger-Congo roots but is lexically very remote from all other languages in West Africa. It is presumably the last remaining representative of the languages spoken prior to the expansion of the Dogon proper. This is dealt with in a separate piece below.

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¹⁴ The mission was conducted under the auspices of the Mission archéologique et ethnoarchéologique suisse en Afrique de l'Ouest (MAESAO), Genève. I would like to thank the director, Eric Huysecom for support in this work, also my colleague, Denis Douyon of the Université de Bamako, who was part of the broader research on Dogon languages.

Hochstetler, J. Lee, Durieux, J.A. & E.I.K. Durieux-Boon 2004. *Sociolinguistic Survey of the Dogon Language Area*. SIL International. Available at: <http://www.sil.org/silesr/2004/silesr2004-004.pdf>

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2005 field surveys

Linguistic materials on:

Ampari Pa, Ana, Bangime, Bunoge, Dogul Dom, Ampari Kema, Nyambeenge, Tebul Ure, Tommo So Pirö, Walo, Yanda.

Four languages, Ana, Bunoge, Tebul Ure and Walo were recorded for the first time.

A previously undocumented sign language was discovered among the Tebul people and a video record of sample sentences and narratives in sign language, Tebul Ure and French was made.

All these languages have only a small number of speakers and reports on the endangerment status of individual languages will appear in future issues of Ogmios.

Bangi me, a language of unknown affiliation in Northern Mali

Roger Blench, *Mallam Dendo, Cambridge*

Language isolates are extremely rare in the world, and those in Eurasia, such as Basque and Burushaski, have received their fair share of scholarly attention. However, the few African isolates, Hadza, Laal, Jalaa are much less well known, which is surprising, given their overall importance in understanding the linguistic history of the continent. Another likely isolate is spoken among the Dogon language cluster in northern Mali. An annotated wordlist of the Bangi me language was collected¹⁵ with the assistance of Kabo Bamani from a group of villagers in Niana on the 2nd and 9th of March 2005. The informants were Yamba Babaji, Kunja Kasambara, Baba Tarawali, Ali Babbaji, Kola Basogo and Samba Babbaji, who all appear in this picture.

¹⁵ Roger Blench is grateful to Eric Huysecom and the Swiss Ethno-archaeological project for providing funding for this survey.



I would like to thank them for their patience as the elicitation sessions were long.

This language has quite a number of alternative names, given the small quantity of published research on the language. These are (Table 1);

Table 1. Comparative records of names applied to the Banga-na

Reference	Language name	Comment
Bertho (1953)	Dyeni or Yeni	Village name
Calame-Griaule (1956)	Bāngeri mē	Endonym
DNAFLA/DRLP (1981)	Numadaw	Unknown
Togo (1984)	Noumandan	Unknown
Plungian & Tembine (1994)	Numa-daw	Unknown
Plungian & Tembine (1994)	Elebo	Outsiders' name
Plungian & Tembine (1994)	Bangeri-me	Endonym
Hochstetler et al. (2004)	Bāngeri-mē	Endonym

The terms 'Numadaw' and similar were completely unknown. This survey found the language name to be Bangi-me and the name of the people to be Banga-na. The intrusive -ri- is found in many records of endonyms in this area (e.g. Duleri for the neighbouring Dulo Dogon and probably derives from Fulfulde).

Location and settlements

Bangi-me is spoken in seven villages east of Karge and reached by turning off the Sevaré-Douentza road 38 km. north of Sevaré. Table 2 shows the names of these villages with map locations.

Table 2. Banga-na villages with locations

Official	IPA	pop. 1987	N	W
Bara	Bara	211	14:48:20	3:45:30
Bounou	Bunu	418	14:47:50	3:45:40
Niana	Nyana	241	14:48:10	3:46:50
Die'ni	Jene		14:47:10	3:45:50
Digari	Digaro		14:47:40	3:46:50
Doro	Doro		14:49:20	3:47:20
Duc	?Jeni		14:48:20	3:47:00

Source: survey and Hochstetler et al. (2004)

Visual observation does not suggest major increases in size since the 1987 census, but the

uncensused villages are at least equal in size to those recorded. The population of Bangji-me speakers is likely to be 2-3000.

The Bangji me language is presently being transmitted to the children. However, there appears to be a loss of complex vocabulary. For example, the numbers above ten have been replaced in ordinary speech and some lexical items were only recalled by elder speakers. The second language of Bangji me speakers is Niononkhe, the Mande language spoken in Karge. Niononkhe is a dialect of Bozo or Sorko and is referred to as Sogo. Fulfulde, a dominant language in the zone, is known to some individuals and there is a limited amount of French spoken, usually by migrant workers or students. These languages are the source of a small number of loanwords. There are no schools in the Bangja-na villages but some children go to the state school in Karge. The Bangja-na are now all Muslims, which represents a great cultural loss. Possibly aspects of their pre-Muslim culture are recoverable with more in-depth fieldwork.

The classification of Bangji me

All the authors that have written about Bangji me have noted how different it is from other Dogon varieties. The only published data on this language is the short wordlist of 'Yeni' in Bertho (1953:433) which appears to be accurate and the hundred words collected by the Durieux in 1998, cited in Hochstetler et al. (2004). These latter forms incorporate significant elements from the bound morphology and should thus be used with care.

Bertho (1953:413) considered that the affinities of the Dogon languages as a whole were with the 'Voltaic' languages (i.e. Gur) but placed Yeni in its own group. He says;

"The Dyeni or Yeni dialect of the Dogon from the Leol-Géou canton shows the highest deviation from the norm; nonetheless, it is clearly distinct from Bozo-Mande and Fulani. It also possesses as much Voltaic root vocabulary as the other Dogon dialects; but these items are not from the same Voltaic roots as those conserved by the other Dogon dialects, as if the Dyeni dialect had parted from Voltaic ancestor either in a different period from the other dialects, or at a different location within the Voltaic group, a group which as ifs well-known extends from Sikasso in the Sudan up to the borders of Nigeria."

Unfortunately, Bertho presents no data to justify his argument and no particular relationship with Gur is apparent in the present data. Calame-Griaule (1956:66) says;

"This is a dialect unique of its kind spoken in the Léolguéou-Nonnonké canton with fewer than 1,000 habitants; it is completely deviant and is unlike any other, although it is more like Dogon in structure. The other villages of the region speak Bozo."

and again in Calame-Griaule (1968:viii):

"From another point of view, the study of the little dialect called /bāñeri mé/, spoken by a small Dogon group in the utmost north-west of the country, and which, although recognized by the others as "Dogon", seems to have some totally deviant features, would be very useful to establish the criteria for linguistic filiation in Dogon."

The lexicostatistical table in Hochstetler et al. (2004) records percentages below 10 with other Dogon lects and this would usually be taken to exclude a language from an established grouping. This survey, based on much more extensive material, finds no reason to alter this view, and as a consequence, Bangji-me is treated as a language isolate. Indeed, given that it is surrounded by Dogon speakers and has a grammatical structure similar to Dogon, it is remarkable that the percentage of Dogon words is not higher by the usual process of language interaction.

If Bangji me is isolated, where is it to be classified? It has slightly more links with common Niger-Congo vocabulary than Dogon, but as with Dogon, the morphology and syntax do not suggest Niger-Congo at all. Certainly it has no links with a particular family of Niger-Congo and for the moment, the best strategy is to treat it as a true isolate, like Hadza and Laal, with some contact with Niger-Congo but heavily influenced by Dogon. Clearly, more extended research is a high priority.

Data on Bangji me is published in full on the web at:
http://homepage.ntlworld.com/roger_blench/Language%20data/Bangime%20wordlist%20pa.pdf

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Dogon survey I: Tebul Ure, a language of the Dogon group in Northern Mali

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Prof. Denis Douyon
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General

The Tebul Ure language is spoken by people who call themselves Tebul U. This appears to be the same language referred to in previous documents as Oru yille and Tew tegu (Calame-Griaule 1956:67). However, the settlement data is highly inaccurate so there are some uncertainties in identifying this population. The term 'Oru Yille', first used by (Calame-Griaule 1956:67) and subsequently repeated in the literature, is entirely erroneous. It appears to mean 'two words' in the Tebul Ure language, although no-one could explain how this error came about.

Calame-Griaule (1956:67) says,

"This dialect (called 'Tew Tegü' en Dyamsay and 'Bede So' in Toro) is spoken in the villages of Upper Bamba. (Those of Lower Bamba speak Dyamsay Bama Tegü)."

Hochstetler et al. (2004) say 'Oru yille is spoken in three tiny villages of Bamba du Haut. In addition to the xenonyms mentioned in Calame-Griaule (1956), Yanda-dom speakers call it 'Tebl.'" They give the population from the 1987 census as 400. This seems surprisingly inaccurate; the Tebul U live in twenty villages plus the recently-founded Dasalam [=Dar es Salaam]. The villages are mostly in the hill areas above Bamba and are often no more than hamlets. There are probably 3-4000 speakers. Table 3 shows the villages recorded by the survey and the locations of three that are listed in the

1987 census. The villages are so sub-classified.

Table 3. Tebul U villages

Group	Wards	Pop. '87	N	W
Tebul Tembe	ende gando			
	Zan Sege Zan Denge Bende Mande Bedi Tombogo endelgo Pedema	129 110	14:41:30 14:41:25	3:06:15 3:06:25
Daya	Toon Kumbulu Dul Gyel			
	Na Didim Tabade			
	Säära Diine Säära Pondu Bamba Tende			
Uluban	ankanda Ulu kanda Sege Dotaya Tabango			

Language status

The Tebul Ure language is presently being transmitted to the children. The second language of Tebul Ure speakers is Jamsay Tegu (another Dogon language) and many also know Yanda. Fulfulde, a dominant language in the zone, is not very well known and there is a limited amount of French spoken, usually by migrant workers or students. However, the nearby village of Bamba has recently been added to the Dogon Plateau hiking trail, and the isolation of the Tebul U villages will shortly end, with the usual outcome for the language. Nothing is known of Tebul U history, but today all villages are strongly Islamised.

In addition to the spoken language, a sign language exists in Uluban and related hamlets, which is used to communicate with a small number of deaf individuals. Almost all the inhabitants seem to have some fluency in this sign language and videos were made of a number of narratives with 'translation' into Tebul Ure and French.

The classification of Tebul Ure

Calame-Griaule (1956:67) says,

"This is in no way a sub-dialect of Dyamsay, but a very distinct dialect whose only similarity is with Yanda. It is spoken by about 2,000 Dogon who have to use Dyamsay to communicate with their fellows."

Calame-Griaule's observation appears to be quite false. Yanda is probably the closest relative of Tebul Ure on the basis of recent

survey data. Despite the cognacy of many items, the degree of erosion in many words would make intercomprehension impossible and these are undoubtedly separate languages.

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7. Overheard on the Web

EU Constitution to be Translated into Welsh, but Not Other UK Languages

EuroLang 10 March 2005

<http://www.euroLang.net/news.asp?id=4963>

Davyth Hicks

Plaid Cymru Euro-MP Jill Evans has welcomed the news that the proposed EU Constitution will be translated into Welsh as reported on EuroLang (17th February). A formal announcement came yesterday from UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in a response to a parliamentary question tabled by the party's UK parliamentary leader Elfyn Llwyd MP.

Ms Evans, who has been leading the party's campaign for greater recognition for the status of the Welsh language in Europe, described the announcement as a first step in winning official EU status for Welsh. Jill Evans was the first MEP to legally use Welsh on the floor of the European Parliament when rules were changed to allow non-official languages to be used last year.

Speaking from Strasbourg, Jill Evans MEP said: "We're delighted that we've won this battle to get the EU constitution translated into Welsh. This was the first step in our campaign for Welsh to be recognised as an official European language and we now hope that the New Labour Government in Westminster will go further and propose Welsh as an EU working language."

Meanwhile, the Scottish National Party (SNP) has stepped up its campaign to have the proposed EU Constitution translated into Scotland's indigenous languages. The Foreign Office informed EuroLang that the UK government does not intend to translate the document into Gaelic or Scots. The SNP believes that translations should be provided prior to any referendum on the proposed Constitution.

Speaking to the press yesterday, Europe spokesperson Ian Hudghton MEP said: "The recent enlargement of the EU has seen a huge leap in linguistic diversity. Scotland's indigenous languages are part of that diversity and are an important part of the rich cultural tapestry of Europe."

"The European Commission has confirmed to me that the proposed Constitution can be translated into Scotland's languages - if the UK requests it. Such a step would mark a significant commitment to the future well-being of Gaelic and Scots."

"We congratulate the Welsh on securing a commitment from the government for a translation to be made in their language. However, if it's good enough for Wales, it's good enough for Scotland. The government must rethink its stance and show full respect for Scotland's culture."

The Foreign Office has informed EuroLang that the UK government has no plans to translate the Constitution into Irish or Cornish either.

Language issues were also raised in the European Parliament's plenary session in yesterday's debate to prepare for the forthcoming European summit in Brussels. Catalan Republican MEP Bernat Joan called for coherence from those Spanish MEPs who have been demanding greater pluralism and respect for diversity within the EU, due to the ongoing reduction in the use of the Spanish language in the EU institutions. "You cannot call for pluralism in Europe and then on the other hand refuse it, for example, as happened in the Spanish state Parliament", said Mr Joan.

In this context the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) representative in the European Parliament observed that without the participation of the stateless nations Europe would remain incomplete. Mr Joan went on to express his approval "for the differential vote in the Basque Country and Catalonia in the referendum on the EU Constitutional Treaty" which saw a higher 'No' vote.

Bernat Joan closed his remarks with a few words in Catalan: "without Scotland, Wales, the Basque Country, or Catalonia, Europe is not Europe. Without the Catalan language, a complete and worthy Europe will not be built".

Dutch foreign minister announces Frisian translation of the European Constitution

Onno P. Falkena, *The Hague* 22 Apr 2005
www.euroLang.net

The Dutch foreign minister Bernard Bot has decided that the Netherlands will publish a translation of the complete European Constitution in Frisian. The minister made the