

## NEAL – NETWORK OF EUROPEAN APPLIED LINGUISTS

To make the work in research and practice of AILA members more visible during the time between the triennial AILA World Congresses, AILA pursues a strategy of regionalization that aims at establishing closer international cooperation among Applied Linguists from more or less neighbouring countries who are related to AILA by fostering joint events, projects and publications in the respective region. While such a close cooperation has already been established in North America between AAAL and CAAL for a long time, cooperation in other areas of the world could be more intense. Therefore, AILA explicitly encourages the formation of regional networks between affiliates beneath the level of AILA as a global umbrella organization.

The need for more regional cooperation among Applied Linguists is obvious in Europe in particular, where there always has been a vast amount and a wide variety of work in Applied Linguistics, but where cross-border cooperation so far takes place only on a smaller scale.

In September 2006, to increase intra-European cooperation, a group of European AILA affiliates agreed with the AILA Secretary General to set up a *Network of European Applied Linguists (NEAL)*.

NEAL has as its objectives to improve communication and cooperation among European Applied Linguists and for this purpose intends

- to inform on a website about latest publications, projects and congresses of the individual national AILA affiliates,
- to organize joint conferences or similar events that make it easier geographically for Applied Linguists from Europe to meet and to exchange ideas,
- to edit a *European Journal of Applied Linguistics* which focuses on European topics and research done by European scholars in particular and which publishes contributions in several European languages,
- to promote young researches by organizing an annual conference exclusively for junior researchers of Applied Linguistics from all over Europe where they can present their research findings,
- to conduct an annual meeting of representatives from European AILA affiliates as a NEAL steering group, where new issues of European concern, in particular with respect to multilingualism will be identified and where priorities for future cooperation will be set.
- to initiate and carry out joint projects to such Europe-related topics.

The organization of NEAL is intended to be as lean as possible and will be mainly restricted to a NEAL Coordinator and a NEAL steering group. Until the next meeting of the representatives from the European AILA affiliates involved at the AILA World Congress 2008, NEAL is being coordinated by the AILA Secretary General.

Up to now, the national associations of Applied Linguistics from the following countries have joined NEAL:

Austria  
Belgium  
France  
Finland  
Germany  
Greece  
Great Britain  
Italy  
Netherlands  
Sweden  
Switzerland

## Current activities of NEAL:

- In January 2007, the first “*European Junior Researchers Congress of Applied Linguistics*” took place at the University of Groningen, Netherlands. The next one will be held in Arhus, Danmark, in 2009.
- In June 2007, the Second NEAL Meeting took place at the University of Erfurt, Germany, where members of special interest groups formed at the First NEAL Meeting in Bolzano made presentations on the problems of language testing for citizenship in EU member states, on multilingual literacy, and on the impact of lay theories of language and language acquisition on language policies.
- As a result of the Erfurt meeting, it was agreed to investigate the possibility of applications for funding at the EU LLP framework of two joint projects for research and development with the following objectives:
  - a) to compare the language tests for citizenship across all European countries and to develop unified criteria for such tests,
  - b) to collect, systematize and present for dissemination data on language usage in key situations of the passage of life (“rites de passage”) in the various European languages and cultures as a contribution to the European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue.
- Given the amount of competence on language policy related issues in Europe available among the European associations of Applied Linguistics, NEAL will attempt to achieve consultative status with the EU and the Council of Europe.
- NEAL will be represented with a string of Europe related symposia at the 15<sup>th</sup> AILA World Congress in Essen, Germany, 2008.
- Mouton-de Gruyter Publishers, Berlin, is currently negotiating with the AILA Secretary General the founding of the *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*.

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> NEAL meeting will take place at the 15<sup>th</sup> AILA World Congress in Essen 2008, the 4<sup>th</sup> NEAL meeting will be organized jointly by the Finnish and the Swedish affiliate in autumn 2009.
- With the help of a questionnaire sent to all individual members of the European AILA Affiliates, NEAL will survey the fields of interest and preferred areas as well as ways of cross-border cooperation among European Applied Linguists.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** In the 3<sup>rd</sup> NEAL meeting at Essen (26-08-2008), during the 15<sup>th</sup> AILA World Congress, there was a spontaneous vote to give a new name to NEAL to reflect association with AILA:

**AILA-Europe**

AILA-Europe will be the official name from now on.