RISE UP

Horizon Europe Projects as Platforms and Catalysts for Policy Recommendations

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Dydh da (Cornish)

Zdravo (Burgenland Croatian)

Bunâ dzuâ (Aromanian/Vlach)

Òla (Aranese)

Tereh (Seto)

Introduction:

RISE UP is an international project funded through Horizon Europe, the research framework program of the European Union. The project aims to support the revitalisation of endangered languages and safeguarding of cultural diversity. RISE UP aims to empower endangered language communities by building connections between relevant actors, identifying good practices already in place and developing methods through a multi-disciplinary approach. Furthermore, RISE UP wants to foster the self-confidence of these communities, which in our understanding include learners, new speakers, proficient speakers, people who have not yet had the chance to learn their heritage language, supporters, and more. Five communities have been selected which RISE UP especially focuses on: **Aranese** (Spain (Val d'Aran), France), **Aromanian/Vlach** (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia (FYROM), Romania, Serbia), **Burgenland Croatian** (Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic), **Cornish** (UK) and **Seto** (Estonia, Russia).
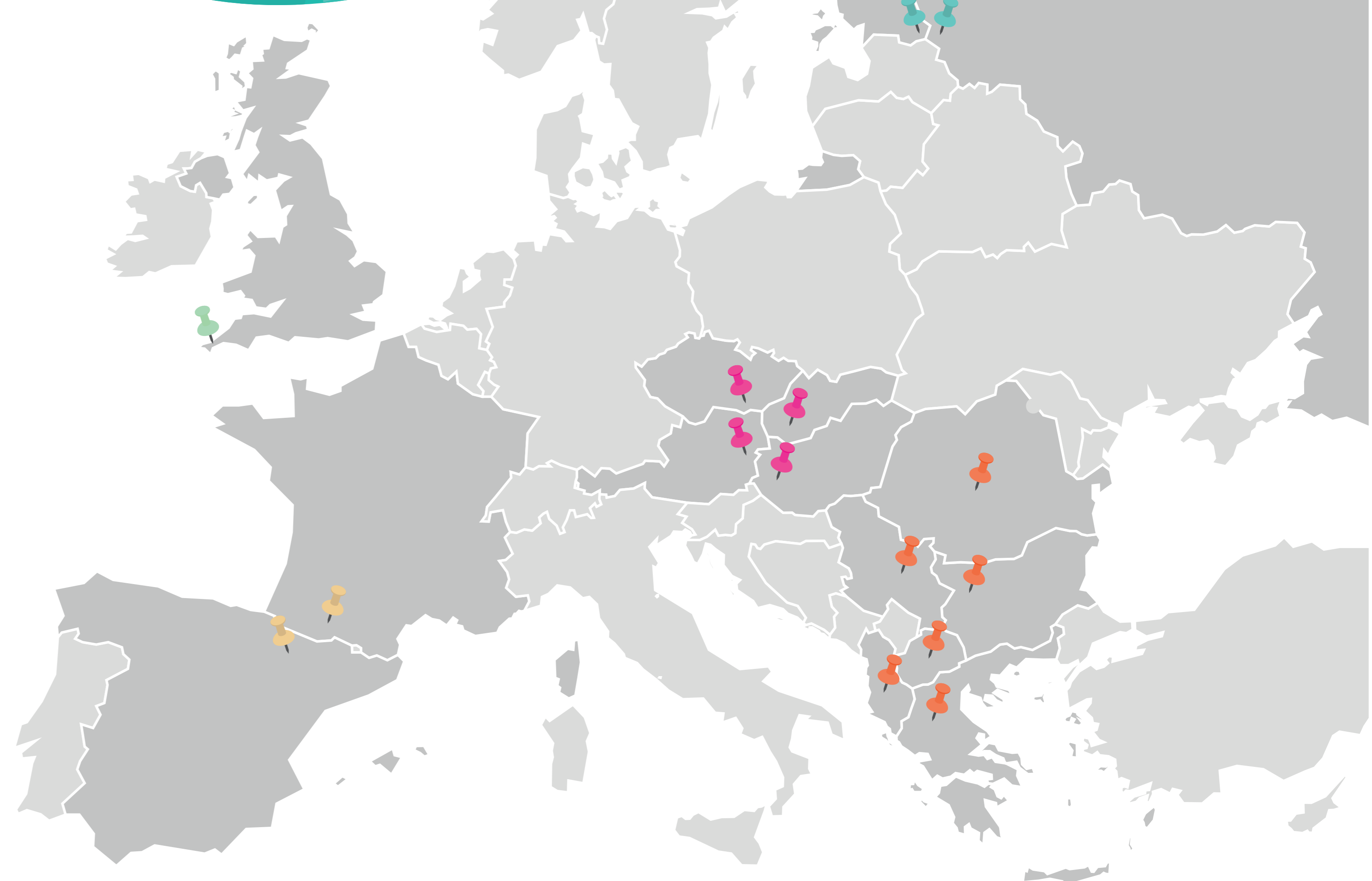
The European Factor:

A major advantage of Horizon Europe projects is that they allow for research and policy recommendations across national borders. This is crucial: many minoritised languages are cross-border languages and affected by various national policies (see Aromanian).

The Horizon Factor:

As part of the HORIZON ecosystem, RISE UP can draw upon various infrastructures that are already in place, such as the Horizon Results Booster and the Policy Support Facility. There are also two Review Meetings and one Final Meeting with EU Policy Officers.

The Transdisciplinary Factor:

RISE UP, like most Horizon Europe projects, unites researchers from various backgrounds – such as ethnographic, sociolinguistic, cultural studies, language policy, language teaching, programming & gamification, multilingualism, and artistic curation excellence – as well as civil society representatives, such as minority youth organisations.

Feeding the Policy Cycle:

In terms of the policy cycle, RISE UP (and similar Horizon Europe projects) can most effectively contribute to **evaluation** processes (evaluating existing policies, projects, initiatives, and approaches) to understand the baseline context and lived reality of minoritised language communities; **problem-definition** processes (research into what is currently lacking, underlooked, undervalued, underfunded, etc.), and finally, **agenda-setting** (providing research-backed recommendations and assembling stakeholders for community-driven processes of planning and change). To the right, RISE UP presents **first mid-project findings** (that may yet shift until the end of the project!) to serve as a first basis of evaluation and problem-definition. Below, a list of **project outcomes** that may prove useful for future agenda-setting.

RISE UP Outcomes

Engaging, laymen-friendly **online portraits** of endangered language communities, cultural practices, art and artists

Analysed results of the **RISE UP questionnaire** for five selected language communities (Aranese, Aromanian/Vlach, Burgenland Croatian, Cornish, Seto)

Digital Toolkit for endangered languages that can be used to create language courses, share materials, gamify learning, connect communities, and more

Online Database on endangered language resources, stakeholders, past, present, and future initiatives & available lists and maps

Policy Briefs, Definitions of Quality Criteria, and Recommendations for future policies and initiatives based on Policy Roundtable

Reports on past and present language policies, preservation ecosystems, best practice strategies, and more

MID-PROJECT FINDINGS OF RISE UP

MAIN FEEDBACK: RISE UP IS HELPFUL - BUT WE NEED MORE

RISE UP RECOMMENDS

R — RESEARCH & ALLYSHIP

Many community members are never or barely remunerated for their language work

So far, RISE UP has identified a lack of reliable, research-backed, up-to-date and publicly available data on minoritised languages and their vitality in Europe. There are no fixed frameworks in place on how to best interact with community members, nor on how to remunerate them for their support and labour, often leading to unpaid "research fatigue". This needs to be accounted for in future European projects. There is a lack of linguists researching and documenting certain communities (e.g. Seto).

follow-up European language research initiatives, and remuneration for community research participants

I — INCLUSION OF MORE VARIETIES

After English and Irish, the 3rd most spoken language in Ireland is Polish

RISE UP is focussed on local heritage languages, while migrant languages are not taken into consideration. There are numerous minoritised migrant languages in Europe, which all play a big factor in the lived realities of their speakers. A wider perspective is needed, also on non-endangered minoritised languages, e.g. how Estonian has long been a minoritised variety to Russian. Each community has unique circumstances and requires individual tools, support, and solutions.

complementary European language research initiatives on migrant & other minoritised languages

S — SUPPORT & FUNDING

In small communities, the dedicated and funded work of individuals can make a great difference

Among the most frequent requests from community stakeholders have been a) education and teaching about and b) access to funding opportunities and support programmes. Many community activists are either unaware of or not eligible for available funding, making it difficult to kickstart or keep going local initiatives, such as the publication of books, magazines and translations, multilingual kindergartens, or minoritised language art.

funding and community support opportunities for endangered language communities & awareness campaigns

E — EDUCATIONAL ACCESS & MATERIALS

There is a lack of role models who a) speak minoritised languages well, b) are good teachers, and c) can teach their language in school or as nannies (e.g. the Seto "grandfather")

Minoritised language use often steeply declines if the language is not supported in educational environments (kindergarten, schools, university, etc). Often, the curriculum is not designed with multilingualism in mind, nor is multilingualism sufficiently covered during teacher education. More research is also needed on how AI and modern technologies could assist in the creation of online corpora and digital resources for interested autodidacts/ students. There are only few available digital resources.

support programmes for multilingual teacher education, resources for learners interested in self-study & research on potential of AI

U — USAGE SUPPORT & RESOURCES

"The expectation of perfection makes people feel insecure, and they don't practice. Am I ALLOWED to speak X (with my children) if I don't have the right grammar?"

Some languages, on the other hand, are only spoken in educational contexts with next to no colloquial usage, especially among the youth, e.g. in Aranese. It is important to foster networking among communities, so that best practices for linguistic risk-taking in "linguistic safe spaces" can be shared, i.e. such as language cafés, cultural initiatives, games, community and friendship-building in language camps and "party commissions".

creation and support of events, initiatives, camps, and "linguistic safe spaces" that encourage community networking, and the colloquial use of the endangered language

P — PUBLIC AWARENESS

Endangered languages actually change faster than healthy ones, yet there is often the persistent idea of a historic "moment of authenticity", rather than embracing New Speakers

Public awareness is integral in three domains: 1) increasing the awareness among the general European population of the wealth of minoritised languages in the EU, 2) increasing the awareness of minoritised communities of each other, 3) increasing awareness within the communities of key socio-linguistically inclusive concepts such as "new speakers", "linguistic safe spaces", "translingual practice", etc.

creation of laymen-friendly educational materials on endangered language communities in Europe & key socio-linguistically inclusive concepts