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## **The Conception of Diversity in the EU**

### **Koncepcja różnorodności w Unii Europejskiej**

#### **Abstract**

The growing diversity of the European Union is seen as one of its core political and cultural characteristics. As a result, the idea of a common EU identity is based on the understanding of how different cultures, traditions and languages of Europe enrich its population and strengthen the Union. “United in Diversity” is the official motto of the EU. Despite the fact, that multilingualism is seen as an important component of the EU Language Policy, English is still (and likely will continue to be) very popular among the non-native speakers of the European Union. It is used as lingua franca that aids intercultural communication, mobility and various educational programs like Erasmus+.

Our analysis of the concept DIVERSITY and its verbalizers in the EU English-language academic and official discourse demonstrated that the most frequent collocates with “*diversity*” are formed with help of the attributes “*cultural*”, “*linguistic*” and “*gender*”. The results show the EU priority areas of the implementation of its “United in Diversity” policy.

**Key words:** *European Union, European Integration, DIVERSITY, language policy, lingua franca.*

### Abstrakt

Wzrastająca różnorodność Unii Europejskiej jest postrzegana jako jedna z jej wartości politycznych i kulturowych. W konsekwencji idea wspólnej tożsamości UE opiera się na pojmowaniu tego, jak różne kultury, tradycje i języki Europy wzbogacają jej mieszkańców oraz jednoczą Unię. “Zjednoczona w różnorodności” – to oficjalna dewiza UE. Mimo że wielojęzyczność postrzegana jest jako istotny składnik polityki językowej UE, język angielski wciąż jest (i prawdopodobnie będzie nadal) bardzo popularny wśród obywateli Unii Europejskiej, dla których nie jest on językiem ojczystym. Język angielski działa jako lingua franca i sprzyja relacjom międzykulturowym, mobilności oraz wdrażaniu różnorodnych programów edukacyjnych, na kształt Erasmus+.

Nasza analiza konceptu DIVERSITY i jego werbalizatorów w angielskojęzycznym akademickim i oficjalnym unijnym dyskursie wskazuje, że najczęściej z “*diversity*” używane są przymiotniki “*cultural*”, “*linguistic*” oraz “*gender*”. Wyniki świadczą, że właśnie te kierunki są priorytetowymi w realizacji strategii UE “Zjednoczona w różnorodności”.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *Unia Europejska, integracja europejska, DIVERSITY, polityka językowa, lingua franca.*

Life in post-war Europe was defined by the idea of common citizenship, shared humanistic values and patriotism. Renowned political leaders like Winston Churchill or Charles de Gaulle supported a newborn concept of “the United European Family”. They saw it as a basis for peace, protection of human rights and freedom of speech. As Alberto Martinelli states, “in the post-war era, European identity was regarded as an antidote to the disastrous nationalisms that had caused the World War II catastrophe, a prerequisite for the continent’s moral and economic reconstruction and the most effective alternative to the resurgence of separate national identities and opposing nationalisms. It was believed that the stronger the sense of belonging to Europe, the more it weakened nationalist ideology”. (Martinelli, 2017, p. 20)

As the European Union developed, the need to shape and manage its growing diversity led to a new stage in the formation of its own identity. Signed in 1973 in Copenhagen, The Declaration of European Identity gave a start to a long and fruitful discussion on the essence of a new, supernational

European society and its core values. The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 defined European culture as the one based on respect for national and regional diversity. According to the Treaty, national cultures are seen as integral parts of the common identity and legacy of a united European culture.

This was the time, when thesis UNITY IN DIVERSITY first appeared in the EU media and political contexts. It summarized the strategy of the Union to occupy “an intermediate position between an almost national concept of European identity and a universalistic concept. Separate identities are constituent elements of common identity (which does not claim any priority over them) and of diversity, in the sense that none of the separate identities question the existence of the common identity”. (Martinelli, 2017, p. 22)

In 2000, the phrase “United in diversity” became the motto of the European Union. “It signifies how Europeans have come together, in the form of the EU, to work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the continent’s many different cultures, traditions and languages”. (*The EU...*, 2020) The motto was translated into all EU official languages and became one of the most important cultural messages in the modern European history.

The vision of unity achieved through diversity continues to be central to the EU integration strategy. However, common history is not enough. EU political leaders believe that a strong sense of belonging to Europe can be enhanced by people’s mobility and multilingualism. Sarah Ciaglia, Clemens Fuest and Friedrich Heinemann in their 2018 paper “What a Feeling?! How to Promote ‘European Identity’” for the EconPol Policy Report developed the idea of M. Bruter on the components of a diverse EU identity. (Bruter, 2004) It includes “cognitive mobilization (education, knowledge, information, interest and discussing politics frequently); transnational contact as a means to broaden the personal horizon and understanding for different cultures; the socio-economic background, and, finally, age”. (Ciaglia et al., 2018, p. 6) In a 2004 research on “The Role of Language Skills and Foreign Country Experiences in the Development of European Identity”, the authors find another important asset to engage in transnational contact – foreign language proficiency. (Fuss et al., 2004)

European Union Language Policy is focused on the idea of multilingualism. It is seen as a necessary pre-condition for smooth integration, intercultural communication and the development of the EU identity. The Official website of the European Union states: “The EU’s motto “united in diversity” symbolizes the essential contribution that linguistic diversity and language learning make to the European project. Languages unite people, render other countries and their cultures accessible, and strengthen intercultural understanding. Foreign language skills play a vital role in enhancing employability

and mobility. Multilingualism also improves the competitiveness of the EU economy”. (*About...*, 2020)

The 2002 Barcelona Objective invited Member States to promote multilingualism and language competences, especially among the youth. Multilingualism is seen as the main building tool for multicultural dialogues, advanced educational and career possibilities and continuous European integration. The project ELDIA (European Linguistic Diversity for All), launched in 2010 and coordinated by the Johannes Gutenberg University combined linguistic, sociological, legal, and statistical experts from seven European countries into a consortium committed to investigate multilingualism and linguistic diversity.

One of the main findings in the ELDIA project was the fact that multilingualism itself is legally established only to a very limited extent. What is usually entrenched is a particular language, which can be used by a particular aggregate of people in a particular territorially defined region. (*The Development...*, 2012) Individual multilingualism is spread within minority areas or regions where languages are spoken locally, but it is not typical for larger social environments, created as a result of people’s mobility and globalization.

European Commission Policy Review on the development of European identity describes the views of European multilingualism and linguistic diversity as largely characterized by a fatal dualism. “On the one hand, acquired multilingualism (learning and teaching of major vehicular languages such as English) is seen as an asset for the individual and a necessary educational investment for the society. From this viewpoint, becoming multilingual is a positive action, which can be supported and promoted. On the other hand, minority languages often have been seen, not in terms of “doing”, but in terms of “being”, as an integral part of belonging to an ethnic group. This implicitly “ethnifying” perspective, combined with sociopolitical issues of identity and (in)equality can lead to interpreting minority languages as a problem and a potential cause of inequality in society. In this perspective, minority languages are a burden both for the individual (who has to invest more effort in learning additional languages) and the society (in terms of extra investments, both in language teaching and in supporting minorities)”. (*The Development...*, 2012, p. 23)

Another important finding is a result of the research project LINEE (Languages in a Network of European Excellence). It states that the English language does not threaten linguistic diversity of the European Union, quite the contrary. “English has emerged from the LINEE case studies as a neutral common language with only a marginal national connotation. It is

also perceived as a facilitator for further language learning, intercultural understanding and contact, and as an asset on the job market. Many non-native speakers of English perceive it as a facilitator for further language learning, intercultural understanding and contact". (*The Development...*, 2012, p. 19)

Our observation of the Erasmus students of The Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European National University supports the vision of English as a universal lingua franca. The students who travel to our partner-universities in Poland, Lithuania, Germany and Finland predominantly choose English as the language of their study. It also gives them access to diverse cultural environments and facilitates exchange. Academic mobility increases the motivation of our students for the English language learning. EU statistics proves that English is the most thought foreign language in Europe.

Modern linguists agree that non-native English of the EU is legitimate and authentic. A strong support of the language by the EU citizens, even after the Brexit, demonstrates the fact that English in the European Union is not a threat, but a guarantee of its UNITY IN DIVERSITY.

The above-mentioned analysis shows the importance of the concept DIVERSITY in the life of the European Union. Having analyzed more than 2000 pages of the EU documents available on the official EU web portal *europa.eu* we have extracted four main concepts EUROPE, UNION, EQUALITY, and DIVERSITY is among them. These concepts characterize modern academic English discourse of the European Union and are represented by the corresponding lexemes that have very high frequency among other EU related key words. The chart below shows the frequency of their use.

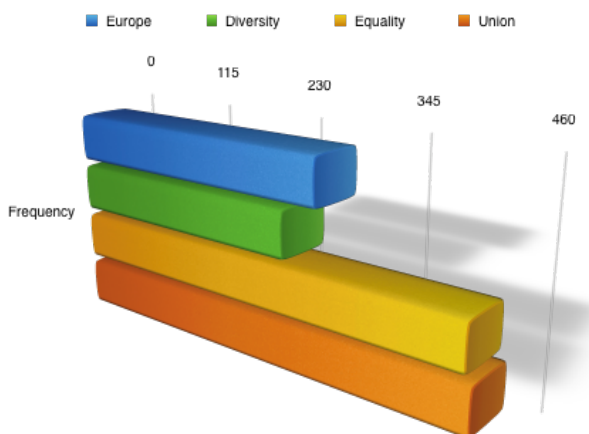


Chart 1: Frequency of use of the key concept verbalizers in the EU academic discourse

The concept DIVERSITY expressed by the corresponding verbalizer seems to be a unique one, since, alongside with its high frequency, it comprises a condensed meaning of variability, divergence, which can be inferred from its meanings taken from the Dante lexical database output:

Diversity:

**1 n** uncount [GOVT] [POL] [SOCIOLOGICAL] the fact that very different cultural, racial, ethnic, etc people/aspects co-exist within a group

**STRUCTURE** AJ\_pert

**COLLOCATE TYPE** TYPE OR NATURE

**COLLOCATES** cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, social, racial.

**STRUCTURE** PP\_X of

**COLLOCATE TYPE** FORMS OF RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

**COLLOCATES** celebrate, increase, value, encourage.

**2 n** uncount [ECOLOGICAL] [BIOLOGICAL] [SCIENTIFIC] variety

**COLLOCATE TYPE** EXPRESSING SCALE (OCCASIONALLY HYPERBOLIC)

**COLLOCATES** rich, sheer, enormous, vast.

**STRUCTURE** AJ\_pert

**COLLOCATE TYPE** EXPRESSING TYPE OR NATURE

**COLLOCATES** biological, genetic, ecological, geographical.

Dante search is based on frequency of collocates drawn directly from the text corpora. Thus, the first **COLLOCATE TYPE** “*TYPE OR NATURE*” **COLLOCATES** *cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, social, racial* and corresponds to the results of our EU official papers analysis and enables us to create the following structure of the concept DIVERSITY in modern academic EU discourse:

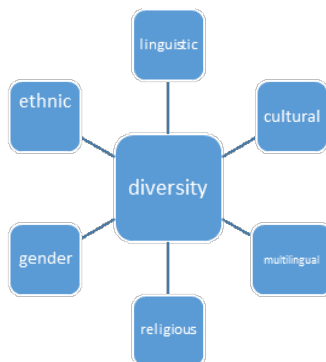


Chart 2: Structure of the concept DIVERSITY modern academic EU discourse

The most numerous group of collocates is the word combination “cultural diversity” which can easily be repeated in close context violating the well-established rules of avoiding repetition in academic writing, e.g.:

*“...having regard to its resolution of 14 January 2004 on preserving and promoting cultural diversity: the role of the European regions and international organizations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and to its resolution of 4 September 2003 on European regional and lesser-used languages – the languages of minorities in the EU – in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity”.* (Eppink, 2007)

The results of statistical word search have demonstrated that the second numerous group of collocates with “*diversity*” is formed with help of an attribute “*linguistic*”.

*“Thus the linguistic diversity and the presence of endangered languages within a country should be seen as an asset instead of burden, and so should be supported and promoted”.* (Report..., 2020)

The harmonious co-existence of many languages in Europe embodies this. Languages can build bridges between people, giving us access to other countries and cultures, and enabling us to understand each other better. Thus, the two concepts “cultural diversity” and “linguistic diversity” commonly come along together in many contexts.

Below are represented the results of frequency corpus research of various spheres of use, where the above-mentioned collocations demonstrate the highest occurrence.

Table 1: DIVERSITY: frequency corpus research. (*EU...*, 2019)

Sphere of Use	Cultural Diversity	Linguistic Diversity	Gender Diversity	Ethnic Diversity	Multilingual Diversity	Religious Diversity
Business and Industry	586	78	20	22	9	25
Economy, Finance, and Investment	106	10	27	2	3	4
Environment, Food, Natural resources	463	20	24	7	18	12
EU in the world	3888	63	888	62	-	160

Functioning of the EU	3008	587	1157	241	158	270
Health, Wellbeing, Consumer Protection	240	45	43	23	11	17
Infrastructure, Research, and Innovation	20302	73	46	164	27	78
Life and Rights of the EU	135	28	70	31	1	43
Media, culture and languages in the EU	683	68	33	9	14	16
Others	856	112	189	301	277	119
Social	6	1	1	-	-	-
Work and Education	234	15348	115	304	439	29
Total	30505	16433	4425	1166	957	773

The above-mentioned corpus research demonstrates that the most frequently used collocation “cultural diversity” is predominantly used in the documents related to the sphere of Infrastructure, Research, and Innovation (20302). This signifies a special attention the EU pays to supporting and promoting cultural diversity in the newest spheres of human social activity. On May 20, the EU celebrates The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, which is marked by a great number of publications illustrating the use of the collocation “linguistic diversity”, e.g.:

*The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is an occasion to promote culture and highlight the significance of its diversity as an agent of inclusion and positive change. (Celebrating..., 2020)*

On the occasion of the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development all EU institutions pay tribute to the very important role of cultural diversity in Europe and around the world for fostering dialogue, respect, and contributing to sustainable development and growth. By its central ideas, Europe provides common space for cultural diversity. All European communities, institutions, laws and legal proceedings are based on the exchanges of ideas, values, traditions and memories. Below, we present the list of the most frequent context for the collocation “cultural diversity” (and its variation “culture diversity”) according to the EU corpus search:

- celebrating *culture diversity* across the globe;
- the essential role of *cultural diversity* in Europe and around the world;



- Pilot project on the economy of *cultural diversity*;
- Portuguese Communication Award for *Cultural Diversity*;
- Measuring *cultural diversity* with the Stirling model.

The general tendency in the EU to understand culture as a source of sustainable growth and job creation is clearly seen in the EU's work to promote cultural diversity worldwide. 2018 was officially declared to be the European Year of Cultural Heritage. Throughout this year, the EU supported various projects to foster cultural exchanges worldwide, such as the Cultural Heritage Route in the Western Balkans and the pilot project of the European Houses of Culture. Common European initiatives were supported by the national cultural institutes from the 27 EU Member States. It helped to reinforce their fruitful cooperation through the specially created network for European Union National Institutes for Culture. This can easily explain the extensive growth in the number of uses of the collocation 'cultural diversity' in various contexts related to the sphere of innovations and social cooperation.

Further analysis of the contexts of the collocations "cultural diversity" has shown that two other remarkably numerous spheres of use are *EU in the World* (3888) and *Functioning of the EU* (3008). It is a common knowledge that the EU finances a number of projects across the world, including Creative Europe projects in countries from the EU's Eastern Neighborhood; the Ethical Fashion program employing craftsmen in textile productions in Western Africa; or an annual program in the Caribbean and Cuba that stimulates the creative industries and mobilizes cultural heritage notably through sustainable tourism. Thus, in this respect, it looks pretty reasonable that the collocation "cultural diversity" represents such a high frequency of use in the papers related to promoting the preservation of cultural heritage and the memory of the EU history showing a strong cooperation with the world's civil society organizations, economic and cultural institutions as part of the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In the "Joint Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Tibor Navracsics on the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development" (May 20, 2019) high European officials claim that "Europe's strength lies in its cultural diversity. This is why the EU together with its Member States and partners on the ground stays committed to support protection and promotion of cultural spaces and cultural exchanges as a powerful tool for dialogue and positive change locally, in Europe and worldwide". In

this quote the emphasis is made on a conceptual metaphor CULTURAL DIVERSITY IS STRENGTH which goes through the texts of the predominant majority of the EU's official papers. With this metaphor the EU entwines positive connotation into its main system of values treating cultural diversity as an instrument of power and unity. Given that national cultural institutes from the 27 EU Member States facilitate their cultural cooperation through the network of the EU official institutions, cultural diversity indeed serves as a tool for strengthening integration between the representatives of different nations and different cultures.

A close-up review of the spheres of use of the next collocation “linguistic diversity” shows the frequency of use, which is twice smaller than that of “cultural diversity”. The results of the context analysis for this collocation have shown an extensive number of concordances where “linguistic diversity” is used in combination with “promote language learning”, which altogether creates a specific structural and semantic entity working as a language pattern in many EU's official documents. Not only does it form a linguistic cluster, but also shapes the style of thinking of the citizens of the Member States treating these two concepts – “linguistic diversity” and “language learning” as one.

The European Commission has a long-standing commitment to promoting language learning and linguistic diversity. The first comprehensive program promoting language teaching and learning, *Lingua*, came into force in 1989 and since then languages have been at the heart of European programs in the field of education and training.

In the annual report “Linguistic diversity: the heart of Europe's DNA” Androulla Vassiliou, Member of the European Commission for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth (Brussels, 24 June 2014) uses a very demonstrative metaphor. Linguistic diversity is the heart of Europe's DNA, which indicates that the EU thrives on its multilingualism and languages are at the core of its functioning. Linguistic diversity and the ability to speak many languages are essential for the success of the EU democratic project. Indeed, corpus search demonstrates that 93% (Table 1) of the uses of 'linguistic diversity' belong to the sphere of Work and Education. Multilingualism is a key area where Europe can get closer to citizens' needs. Thus, the following three strategic areas present the biggest interest for the European Union in the sphere of linguistic diversity: lifelong language learning, better language teaching, building a language-friendly environment. So, we may conclude that the collocation 'promote language learning and linguistic diversity' functions as a ready-made verbalizer to utter one of the key concepts

of the EU's communication strategy – to support multilingual communication and give rise to new language-teaching initiatives.

As for the collocation gender diversity, the highest frequency of use is demonstrated in the sphere Functioning of the EU (1157). This word combination is commonly used in various Press Releases to set up the official position of the EU concerning the gender issues, e.g.:

*Together, the Commission and the ECB will indeed master Europe's challenges. This will be true for both financial stability and the challenging area of gender diversity.*

*For me all these studies and facts make it crystal clear: women mean business and profit. But there is also a clear macroeconomic argument for more gender diversity on boards. The glass ceiling that keeps women out of decision-making roles.*

*July 18, 2018 – the Commission held a public consultation inviting the public – individual businesses, social partners, interested NGOs and citizens – to comment on what kind of measures the EU should take to tackle the lack of gender diversity in boardrooms. (Gender..., 2020)*

The distributional contexts of the collocation – *the challenging area of gender diversity, macroeconomic argument for more gender diversity, to tackle the lack of gender diversity* – suggest that it is still a challenging issue for Europe in general and the EU in particular. All the contexts represent public tension that is normally associated with gender diversity and requires special attention from the EU policy makers.

It should be noted that the collocation gender diversity has become the central concept of many projects funded by the European Commission, this it is very often used in project descriptions, especially in the contextual environment with LGBT abbreviation, e.g.:

*Herein, gender and gender diversity are presented as main focus throughout the whole project.*

*Welfare aspects including possible medical, mental, psychological, and psychiatric aspects of gender diversity and sexual orientation. (Transition..., 2020)*

An interesting observation with regard of the use of the collocation “gender diversity” in the EU official discourse is concerned with the fact that regardless of its relatively high general frequency in the texts of the EU official documents, it is not widely represented in social media, forums, public

internet platforms. Thus, it was used only once in Twitter (twitter.com) on the official account of the World Economic Forum (March 4, 2018), e.g.:

*How gender diversity enhances society. (World..., 2018)*

However, this tweet did not receive public appreciation; it was liked only 89 times, and re-tweeted 74 times, which indicated low level of public interest and motivation to encourage discussion on gender diversity.

The European Union as a socio-political phenomenon has brought a new meaning to the understanding of cognitive and communicative functions of language in general, and functioning of the English language (its academic variant) in particular. Recently we have been witnessing the formation and linguistic specification of some new cultural and linguistic concepts, which exemplify specific stages in the political, economic, and cultural development of the EU.

The concept DIVERSITY comprises a condensed meaning of variability, divergence and is extremely frequent in the modern EU English-language discourse. The results of statistical word search have demonstrated that the first numerous group of collocates with “*diversity*” is formed with help of an attribute “*cultural*”, the second numerous group of collocates is formed with help of an attribute “*linguistic*” and the third – with attribute “*gender*”. These results demonstrate the EU priorities in the development of its policy on DIVERSITY.

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