



## One Voice for Languages -

*What we believe: languages are essential, valuable and exciting*

*What we want: language issues to be raised at the highest levels of government and to be brought to the consciousness of the country as a whole*

*What we will do: act as a rallying point and a powerful voice for all interested in language issues*

# ONE VOICE FOR LANGUAGES



**Background:** Towards the end of 2011, largely at the instigation of the authors of the EU report *Languages for Jobs*, it was agreed to explore the establishment of an umbrella group which would promote the importance and benefits of language learning for Ireland. This group would represent all levels of the education system and all its partners, including parents' associations. It would also welcome representatives from industry, the arts, foreign embassies and cultural institutes.

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# ONE VOICE FOR LANGUAGES



## ***One Voice for Languages - promoting the knowledge of other languages as an essential skill in 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland***

The One Voice for Languages Group aims to be a unified voice for various language networks and associations in Ireland. The group will be inclusive and will cooperate with various members from across Irish society as well as with experts in linguistics, thereby highlighting all aspects of language learning and teaching in a multilingual and multicultural context.

All members of the group One Voice for Languages firmly believe that it is both timely and appropriate that such a group be established and that it should seek to encourage a greater awareness of the critical importance of language learning not only in terms of increasing employment possibilities and meeting industry needs, but also its broader value in the spheres of education, the arts and in the context of supporting social cohesion and intercultural understanding.

## ***One Voice for Languages – highlighting language needs across all sectors of society***

Building on ample research evidence regarding the numerous benefits of language learning and as a response to repeated calls from high level industry leaders, employment specialists, advisory bodies and experienced linguists, the One Voice for Languages group intends to raise awareness at government level of the deficit in appropriate language skills and the important role the learning of other languages can play in the improvement of literacy levels. An appreciation at government level and among the wider public regarding the significant cognitive, social, developmental, cultural and linguistic enhancement that can be attained through the learning of additional languages will also be promoted.



## ***One Voice for Languages – highlighting the exciting potential of language learning for our young people, for Ireland's economy and for Irish society***

The Ireland of today is indeed a rich tapestry of languages. The last census indicates that there are over 160 languages spoken by the new citizens of this country and both in the contexts of social cohesion and resource potential, it is imperative that we harness this enormous linguistic wealth and foster awareness of the many benefits of learning languages and of acquiring additional communicative and intercultural skills. We hope to support the Irish government in capitalising on the significant varied language and cultural backgrounds of the new Irish population and to equip our young people with the language skills they need to fully integrate and assume their role in the global marketplace.

The past number of years has seen an acknowledgement of the need to improve and support the teaching and learning of the science, mathematics and engineering fields and this promotion targeted at education providers, industry and Irish society at large has yielded positive results. It is hoped that One Voice for Languages can begin the dialogue in ensuring that language learning may now also be accorded the same priority and commitment and that its diverse network of members can contribute to this debate which we believe is of fundamental importance to the educational and economic future of this country.