Modern Languages: A Business Perspective
The Language Centre and An Foras Feasa Research Institute at NUI Maynooth
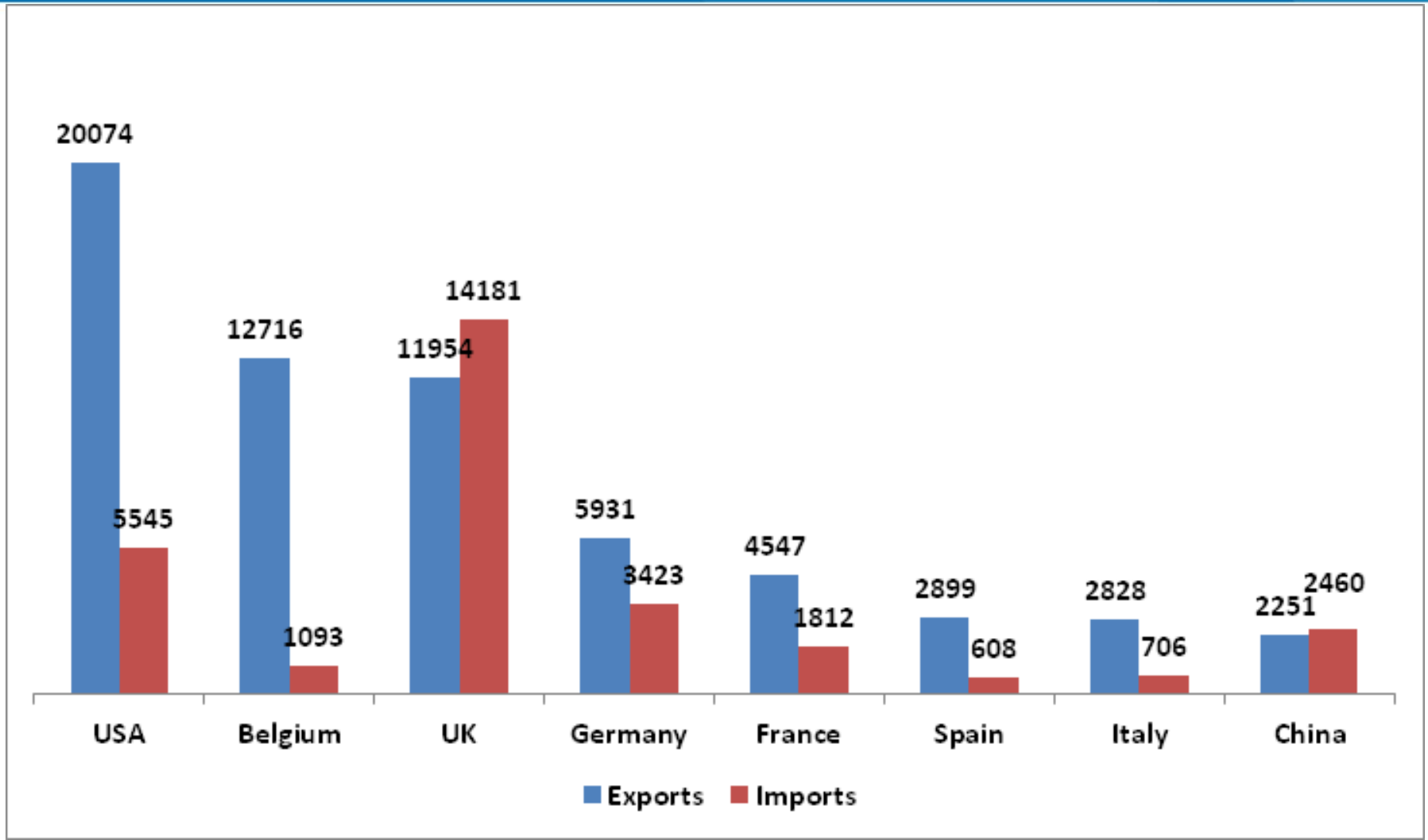## March 9, 2012

Tony Donohoe,
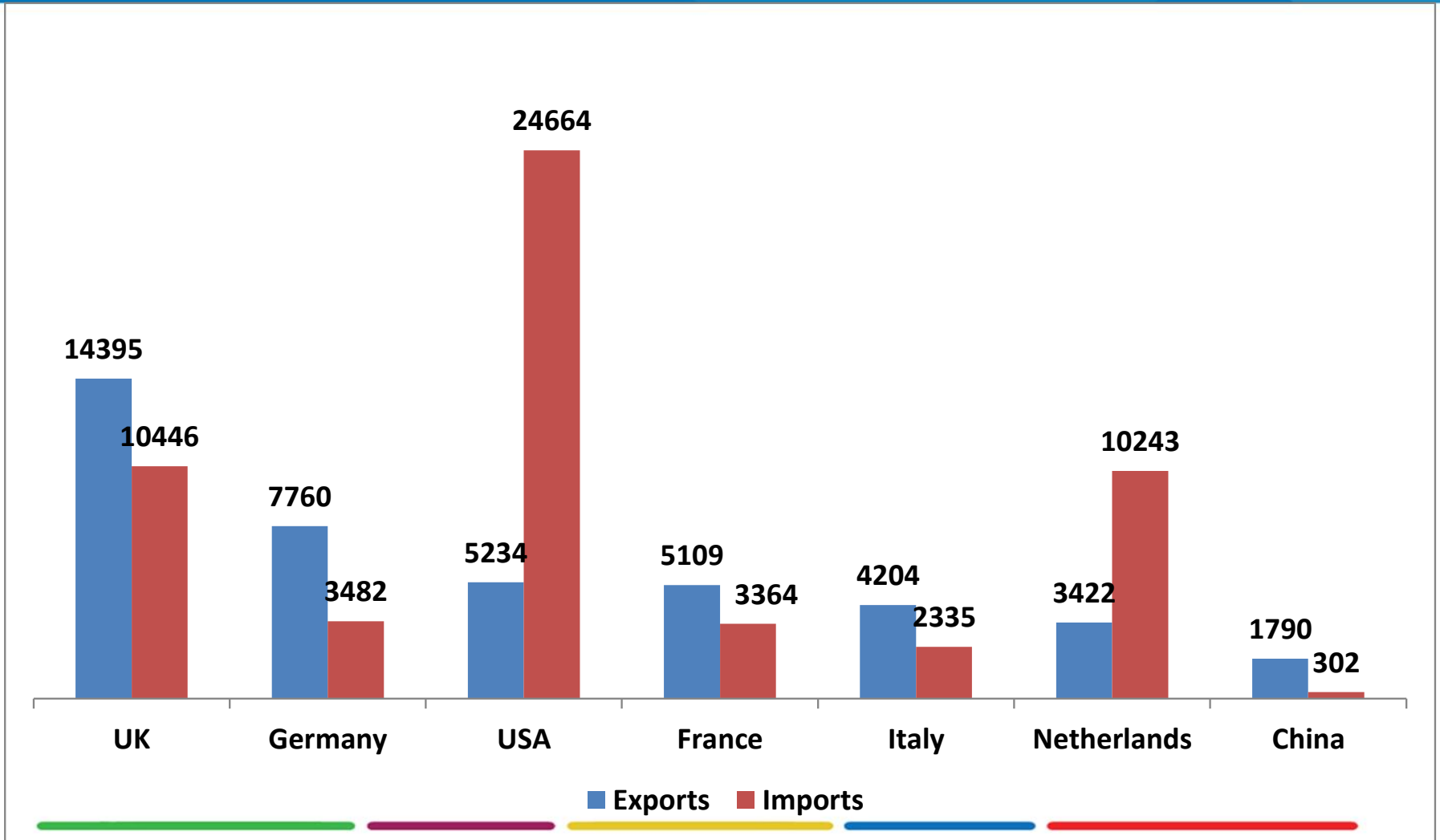
Head of Social and Education Policy

English is not enough

- Business context
- Vacancy overview
- Emerging trends
- Language attainment
- EU languages for jobs report
- Policy options

Goods exports & imports: Jan-Nov 2011 (€m)

Bar chart of goods exports and imports (€m) by country for Jan-Nov 2011:

Country	Exports	Imports
USA	20074	5545
Belgium	12716	1093
UK	11954	14181
Germany	5931	3423
France	4547	1812
Spain	2899	608
Italy	2828	706
China	2251	2460

Services exports and imports 2010 (€m)

|	Exports	Imports
UK	14395	10446
Germany	7760	3482
USA	5234	24664
France	5109	3364
Italy	4204	2335
Netherlands	3422	10243
China	1790	302

Business export models

- Business to business, business to government, business to consumer
- Direct selling approach
- Companies utilising technology-based services (web etc.)
- Supplying into the global supply chain of another company
- Foreign affiliate headquarters
- Foreign affiliate companies (mainly manufacturing sites)
- Global partnership arrangements/strategic alliance
- Tourism and international education services

Vacancy overview 2012

- Administrative and secretarial occupations
- Associate professional and technical operations
- Professionals
- Language skills a prerequisite for many newly advertised vacancies, particularly in sales, customer care activities, but also at professional level (e.g. ICT, engineering, finance)
- A variety of languages were in demand, predominantly German, French and Nordic languages
- Report highlights the need for foreign languages to form an integral part of the skills portfolio of candidates

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Output and Outlook

Share of World GDP, 1820-2001
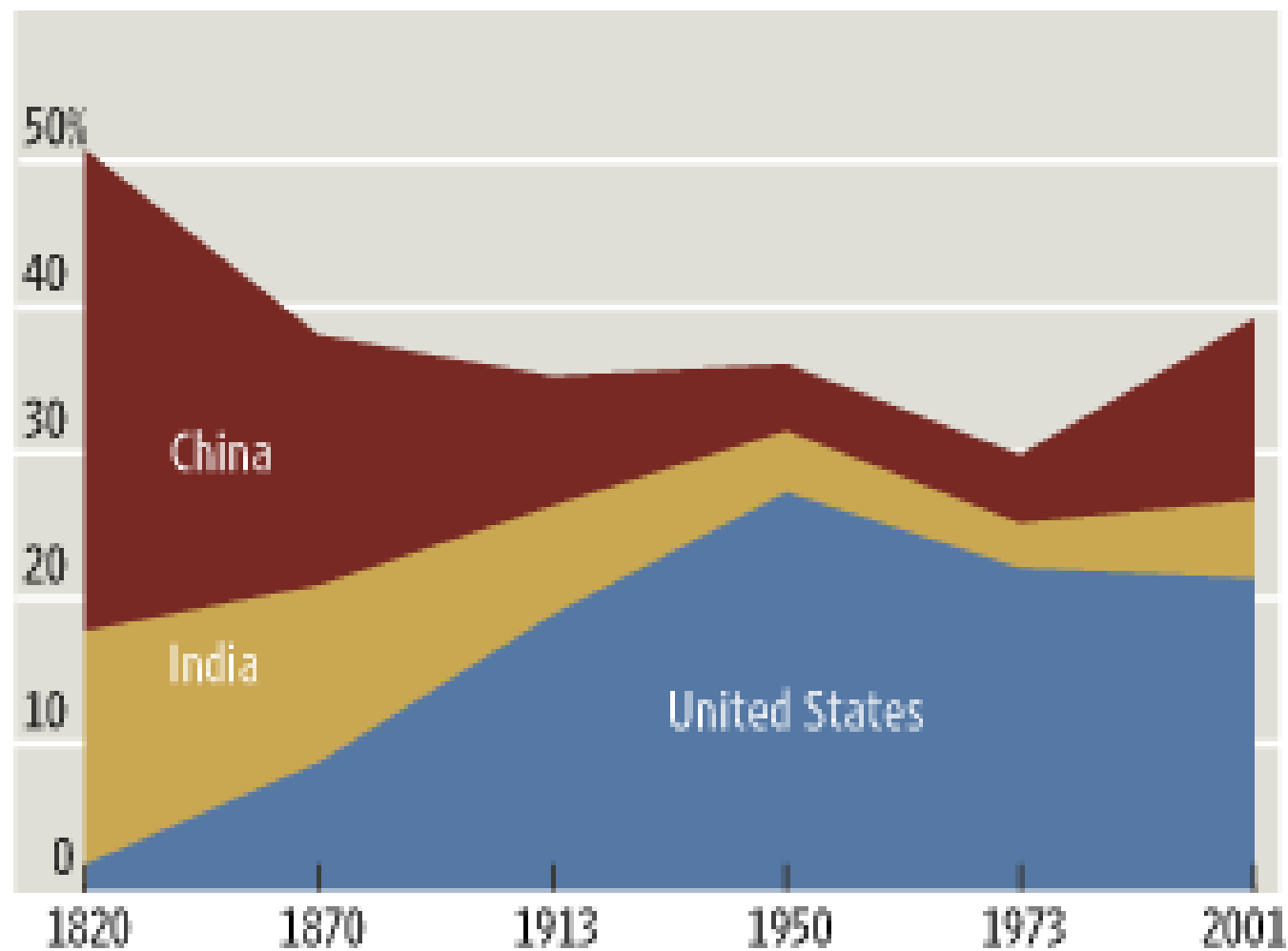
Source: Angus Maddison, "The World Economy: Historical Statistics," OECD, 2003

Post industrial concerns

- Globalisation
  - 75% of world's population does not speak English
- End of US global economic dominance
- Pervasiveness of technology
- Complex, dynamic and interconnected markets
  - Respond to customers, governments, markets, economic and social instabilities
- Growth of services
  - 70% of employment and 50% of exports
- Foreign nationals will engage through English to a certain extent …but language capability will be a competitive advantage

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Language diversity

Language	Speakers (million)
Mandarin	885
Spanish	332
English	322
Arabic	220
Bengali	189
Hindi	182
Portuguese	170
Russian	170
Japanese	125
German	98

Leaving certificate (2011)

Language	Candidates
French	26,766
German	6,955
Spanish	4,004
Italian	361
Russian	308
Japanese	240
Arabic	131

Importance of languages when recruiting graduates

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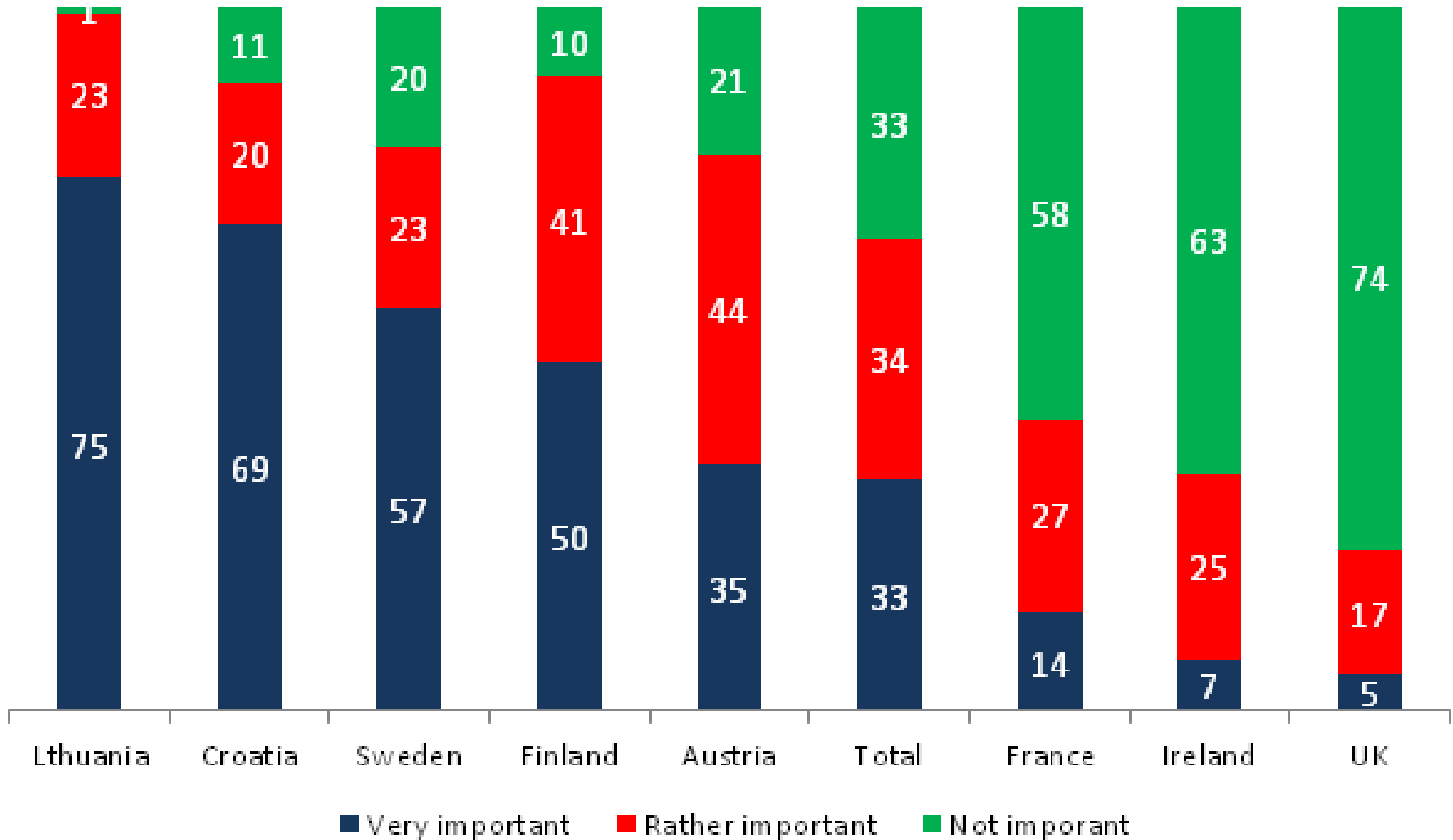
The challenge in Ireland

- Only six Member States had a majority of mono-linguists in 2006
    - Ireland (66% of people not knowing any other language than their mother tongue),
    - United Kingdom (62%), Italy (59%), Hungary (58%), Portugal (58%) and Spain (56%)

The main challenge for Ireland is to move away from "an official but lame bilingualism" to become a truly multilingual society, where the ability to learn and use two and more languages is taken for granted and fostered at every stage of the education system and through lifelong education

European Council's Language Policy Division (2006)

Languages for jobs

- Demand for language and communication skills
  - 40% of recruiters highlighted their importance
- Language and cultural barriers important obstacle for SMEs
- English as 'lingua franca' but need for 'competitive edge'
- Languages of neighbouring countries
- Languages brought by immigrants
  - 175 nationalities within the European borders
- Labour market needs – putting language skills in context

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Languages offer in the education system

- Multilingualism encouraged more actively at all school levels
- Choice of languages needs to be widened
- Dedicate language content for occupation purposes
- Content and language integrated methodologies/immersion learning
- Teacher and trainer training
  - Pre-service
  - In-service – 'the gap between classroom and workroom'
- Learner mobility
- Target adult learners

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Recommendations for action planning

- Improve the information flow about the language skills needs on the labour market
  - *Regular surveys: bring to the attention of careers advisors*
- Widen the supply of languages in secondary education
  - *Promote new methods of teaching languages*
- Increase the opportunities to continue language training in higher education
  - *Cross curricular collaboration and incentives*
- Re-orient language teaching to develop targeted options and put language skills in context
  - *Integrate languages into specialised vocational training and particular occupations*

Recommendations for action planning

- Develop specialist language training modules for VET trainers and teachers
  - *Encourage collaboration between language and other teachers*
- Create best practice networking between training institutions
  - *Collaborate to adopt common principles for language teaching*
- Increase learner mobility across the board
- Encourage targeted language learning in the adult population
  - *Vocationally oriented language including migrants*

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The way forward

- Integrated coherent language in education policy (including Irish)

- Emerging markets languages strategy

- Use the resource of the resident non-Irish population

- Junior cycle reform and transition year – strengthen language and intercultural awareness

- Utilise emerging technologies to enhance the quality and delivery of language teaching.

- Enhance vertical and horizontal coherence in language learning at all stages of the school curriculum (including primary school)

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The way forward

- Contextualised language at third level (e.g. sales/marketing personnel, engineering)

- Language 'conversion' courses for graduates from other disciplines

- Additional credits for foreign language study within third level qualifications

- Overseas placement programmes (e.g. EOP)

- Language awareness campaign aimed at SMEs (including case studies)