

THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR APPLIED MULTILINGUALISM ECAM: A POSSIBILITY TO GET CLOSER TO MULTILINGUALISM

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If we assume that multilingualism is one of the key challenges of the 21st century and if we also agree that this key challenge has reached European higher educational institutions, we really need to ask ourselves what it effectively means and, above all, where multilingualism takes place, who actually deals with it and how it expresses itself at this higher educational level. If we also take into consideration that big themes related to multilingualism include migration and integration, global economy and global job markets, diversity management, global availability of information and cross-border topics in general and if we look for the institutions where those themes are studied, then of course we have to accept that universities and their language centres are laboratories for multilingualism. It is a fact, however, that those two big laboratories (universities and language centres) approach this topic in a very different way. Having these thoughts in mind, we (The Language Centre of The European University Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder) created The European Centre for Applied Multilingualism ECAM (Europäisches Zentrum für Angewandte Mehrsprachigkeit EZAM). The European Centre for Applied Multilingualism is a think tank for models, projects and ideas for the implementation of multilingualism in society. On the one hand, we want to examine areas of investigation like: Multilingualism in higher education; Bilingualism and early learning; Multilingualism in institutions or Language policies and others. On the other hand, our new centre offers us a place to get acquainted to themes like those in spite of the every-day-life and duties we all have as language teachers. During my presentation I explain in detail the ways our centre works and offer participants further possibilities to get closer to multilingualism in their institutions in similar ways to ours.