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Title: Multilingual service encounters in corona times: communication needs and practices in public service provision contexts

As a result of the corona situation, several initiatives have been set up worldwide at different levels (e.g. NGOs, governmental organisations and national governments) to make information on the COVID-19 virus (such as information on prevention and screening measures) available in several languages. An example in Belgium is the multilingual corona virus information site, available in more than thirty languages (including the Flemish sign language): <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/translation/>. This is just one of many initiatives worldwide to provide corona information in multiple languages. The aim of this project is, on the one hand, to explore the extent to which such initiatives have been picked up by local governments and public organisations in communication between service providers and people speaking other languages and, on the other hand, to find out what experiences and insights result from these initiatives. On the other hand, the project aims at gaining insights into the way in which organisations in public sectors (such as education and health care) have (or have not) adapted their communication practices during corona times. The central questions in this project are a) whether the corona situation has strengthened the multilingual communication needs of these organisations, b) to what extent it has changed the multilingual communication practices (e.g. through the use of interpreters, through the use of multilingual communication technologies, etc.) and c) whether it has brought about a change in the organisation's multilingual language policy.

This project runs in parallel with two other projects within the Brussels Institute for Applied Linguistics (<https://bial.research.vub.be/>): 1) the AMICA project funded by the European AMIF-funds until June 2022 which investigates how information in the context of migration and asylum is tailored to applicants with a vulnerable linguistic profile (e.g. illiterate applicants) and 2) the MATCHeN project funded by the TETRA fund of VLAIO until November 2021, aimed at multilingual communication in the health sector. The MSCA project can be linked to the themes in these two projects, but can certainly also be approached from a broader perspective.

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