

## The Perception of Language Skill Significance in Europe

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### Introduction

In the context of Europe, where European Union member states adhere to a shared language policy promoting multilingualism and foreign language acquisition, a strong emphasis is placed on citizens learning two FLs in addition to their native language. However, the applicability of this multilingual policy in people's lives has come into question, especially given the ascendancy of English as a lingua franca. This survey-based study contributes to understanding the relevance of the EU multilingual policy within the framework of intra-European migration. The study focuses on Swedish migrants in France who are native speakers of Swedish. The research investigates the perceived significance of skills in FL French, FL English, and L1 Swedish for both professional and personal aspects of life. By analyzing survey data, the study aims to shed light on whether the EU's multilingual policy resonates with the lives of Europeans, specifically Swedish migrants in France. Quantitative analyses reveal that participants consider skills in French and English equally important for their professional lives, while skills in Swedish are perceived to be less crucial. For personal life, skills in French are ranked as the most important, followed by English, and then Swedish. In conclusion, the multilingual language policy of the European Union appears to manifest in the lives of Europeans, particularly among Swedish migrants in France. This suggests that the value of language skills is indeed relevant in individuals' professional and personal lives.

### Description

The discrepancy between the ideal and the real has been largely ignored by both policymakers and the academic mainstream, and only fairly recently have there been signs of any serious debate on this important issue." To date, little is known about the importance of skills in multiple languages in European citizens' lives. This study begins to fill this gap and aims to contribute knowledge about the relevance of EU multilingual language policy. The European Union's multilingual policy advocates for linguistic diversity and proficiency among its citizens. The policy aims to enhance mobility, intercultural engagement, education, and career opportunities, acknowledging multilingualism as an essential competency for lifelong learning. However, some argue that a disconnection exists between EU language policy and the increasing prominence of English as a lingua franca in European contexts. English has organically become a primary means of communication in the European Union, driven by factors such as globalization, digital media, culture, and science. While EU member states actively promote FL learning, English has emerged as the most studied FL and a language commonly used in professional settings and higher education.

## **Conclusion**

This study addresses the disparity between the EU's multilingual policy and the evolving linguistic landscape. It focuses on Swedish migrants in France to ascertain the importance of language skills, particularly FL French, FL English, and L1 Swedish, in their daily lives. The survey data collected from participants reveal that both French and English skills hold equal importance in professional contexts, while Swedish skills are deemed less essential. In personal contexts, French skills are prioritized, followed by English and Swedish. These findings suggest that the EU's multilingual policy is indeed relevant in the lives of Europeans, especially among Swedish migrants in France. The study underscores the value of language skills in both professional and personal spheres, contributing empirical insights to the ongoing debate surrounding the EU's multilingual policy and its alignment with individuals' real-world language needs.