

Fostering Linguistic Capital (FOSTERLANG): A Roadmap for Reversing the Diversity Crisis and Activating Societal Benefits in Europe

Invitation and summary

You are invited to participate in a survey being conducted as part of the FOSTERLANG project. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline this invitation.

The FOSTERLANG project aims to transform how minoritised languages are protected and promoted in Europe, so that they will be in a more stable and equitable co-existence with dominant national and international languages. The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) is one of 14 FOSTERLANG consortium partners which will deliver the project.

Purpose of, and background to, the research

Our study will gather data relating to minority-language use and practice; minority-language ideologies (feelings and beliefs about Gaelic and/or Scots and/or Shaeltan, and other languages if relevant); social and economic benefits of being able to speak a minoritised language; views on/use of language technologies such as AI tools. This will enable our research team to explore aspects of language as an element of human capital, and to help design a Linguistic Capital road map, which will outline recommendations on effective strategies for fostering Europe's linguistic capital and for fostering grassroots multilingualism.

What would taking part involve?

You are being asked to consent to participate in completing an online survey. The questionnaire should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. You do not need to be a fluent speaker of Gaelic, Scots, Shaeltan or a minoritised language to participate. The survey is anonymous.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no specific direct personal benefits for individuals.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

No known risks of taking part have been identified. It is possible that a very limited number of questions relating to possible (past/current) negative treatment of respondents for speaking a minoritised language could be upsetting. Participants can choose not to answer such questions without penalty.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

If you do not wish to continue completing the survey, you can stop at any time without penalty, by closing the browser window. It will not be possible to withdraw consent to participate, or to request your data be removed from the study, once data has been submitted.



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How will my information be kept confidential?

Your data is anonymous. No personal identifying data (e.g. name, email address, IP address) is being gathered. It will not be possible to identify you from your answers, nor will it be possible to identify whether you have taken part. Data gathered during this research is securely stored on password-protected servers, at the University of Warsaw, accessible only by the research team. Survey results will be aggregated for analysis.

The study is scheduled to begin in February 2026, with an anticipated project completion date of March 2028. Survey software will be hosted by the University of Warsaw. Data collected during the study will be retained for a minimum period of five years from the end of the study, on secure servers. The project data management plan outlines that data storage procedures are GDPR-compliant.

What will happen to the results of this study?

Once data has been gathered and aggregated, overall project results will be published in formats including (but not limited to): research digests and research reports; articles for publication in academic journals; papers and presentations to academic conferences.

Who is organising and funding this study?

The FOSTERLANG project is funded by the European Union's HORIZON Europe stream. The project is being directed by the University of Warsaw.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by researchers from the FOSTERLANG consortium. Ethical approval has been granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Highlands and Islands. This investigation was granted ethical approval by the University of Highlands and Islands Research Ethics Committee on 9 March 2026 [ETH2425-0744]. The overall project was granted ethical approval by the Faculty of the Artes Liberales, University of Warsaw, on 6 November 2025.

Commercial exploitation

Aggregated results will be shared in research outputs at the end of the project. These will be made available freely. There will be no commercialisation of the project's outcomes or data.

Your data will or may be shared with the following recipients or categories of recipients

The data you provide will or may be shared with a restricted group of project workers (researchers, data analysts) at UHI, and at UHI's FOSTERLANG consortium partners, in order that they can fulfil their research tasks.

Data is anonymous, and access to metadata will be strictly controlled. Data will be stored on secure servers according to protocols adhering to GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018).



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What happens next?

If you have read, considered and understood what has been detailed in this Participant Information Sheet, and agree to take part, you will be asked to check a box on the front page of this survey confirming your participation. You will then be guided to the survey.

The University of the Highlands and Islands is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office, which implements the Data Protection Act 2018. All personal data (including any data you supply as a participant) must be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, and will be handled in line with the Data Protection Policy of the University of the Highlands and Islands which can be accessed here:

<https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/t4-media/one-web/university/about-uhi/governance/policies-and-regulations/policies/uhi-is-data-protection-policy.pdf>

Data protection

Identity of the Data Controller and Data Protection Officer

The data controller is the University of the Highlands and Islands, UHI House, Old Perth Road, Inverness, IV2 3J. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

dataprotectionofficer@uhi.ac.uk.

For questions about the research study please contact: Principal Investigator

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Lawful basis for processing personal data:

The lawful basis for processing personal data is:

Use is necessary for the performance a task in the public interest (with a basis in law) or under official authority vested in us (public task). In this case the undertaking of education or research by the University or its students in keeping with the University's public task. This public task including the planning, delivery, and communication of research. Research includes conducting the research and the taking all required steps to ensure the safety, validity and academic integrity of the research. It may also include re-use of the research data for further research, storage for later inspection, auditing and archiving.

Special category data

The data being used includes special category (sensitive) data:

Religion

Health

A limited number of questions in the survey relate to religion/religious affiliation, and to general health, however, respondents are free to choose not to answer these questions.

We use this sensitive data under the following legal condition(s):

Processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes. That purpose being the undertaking or research by the University.

Use is necessary for the performance a task in the public interest (with a basis in law) or under official authority vested in us (public task). In this case the undertaking of education or research by the University or its students in keeping with the University's public task. This public task including the planning, delivery, and communication of research. Research includes conducting the research and the taking all required steps to ensure the safety, validity and academic integrity of the research. It may also include re-use of the research data for further research, storage for later inspection, auditing and archiving.

Your data will or may be shared with the following recipients or categories of recipients:

- UHI and, for this project, its Academic Partner Organisations, including European Language Equality Network, Linguapax International (Spain), Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, Stowarzyszenie Wilamowianie, Stowarzyszenie Ruska Bursa, Naja Szkoła, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (the Netherlands), Universidad del Pais Vasco/ Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (Spain/the Basque Country), Dublin City University (Ireland), Universitetet Oslo (Norway), University of the Highlands and Islands (UK), University of



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Wales Trinity Saint David Royal Charter (UK) and Pädagogische Hochschule Kärnten (Austria).

- Data may be handled by UHI, or academic partners, ICT or records management staff who are required to undertake actions to keep the data safe, maintain data integrity, or ensure the data is handled and secured in keeping with UHI's data policies and procedures. The parties may include UHI staff, contractors or selected external individuals. Such access will only be used as necessary.
- Service providers providing, under contract, services to UHI that are used for the research purposes such as productivity tools (eg Microsoft Word, Google, etc), storage areas, analysis, transcription, or any other service relevant to the research.
- ODK (Online survey tool)

International Transfers

Personal data will be transferred, or otherwise made available, to recipients in the research consortium partners. These partners are in the EEA or UK. Personal data, therefore, will be made available to recipients in the EEA and UK. The basis for international transfers between these territories is that the territories are designated as 'adequate' (have an adequacy decision setting out that transfers to these territories is safe and allowed) within the relevant data protection laws. The UK is adequate for the purposes of the EU GDPR and the EEA is adequate for the purposes of the UK GDPR.

For details on the adequacy of data protection in relation to international transfer, see: https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-topic/data-protection/international-dimension-data-protection/adequacy-decisions_en

Retention of data

Your data will be retained for the following length of time:

Processed, anonymous data will be made available to external users through the following repositories: the University of Warsaw [RepOD](#), the [UW Repository of Research Data](#), and [CLARIN-PL's dSpace](#). These data will be stored for a minimum of five years, preferably 10 years or longer, in line with disciplinary standards and the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable). Personal data will not be stored indefinitely but will be securely archived in accordance with the GDPR principles relating to the processing of personal data. All personal data will be inaccessible to anyone other than trained members of the project or individuals authorised by law. All personal data, financial, and legal documentation will be stored for five years from the date of receipt of the final payment from the European Commission. Contracts procured by the consortium partners will be subject to the same personal data protection rules, in accordance with the practices of each institution and their countries. After the mandatory storage period, personal data included in contracts (e.g., with subcontractors) will be completely deleted.



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