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Project: Minority Languages in Europe

1) Language policy in Europe

European Charter for regional or minority languages

Article 1: “Regional or Minority languages means languages that are:

traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and different from the official language(s) of that State.

It does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants;

Territory in which the regional or minority language is used means the geographical area in which the said language is the mode of expression of a number of people justifying the adoption of the various protective and promotional measures provided for in this Charter;

Non-territorial languages means languages used by nationals of the State which differ from the language or languages used by the rest of the State's population but which, although traditionally used within the territory of the State, cannot be identified with a particular area thereof.

Each Contracting State shall specify in its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, each regional or minority language, or official language which is less widely used on the whole or part of its territory”.

Article 7: “In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth;

the respect of the geographical area of each regional or minority language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the regional or minority language in question;

the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them;

the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;

the maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups using a regional or minority language and other groups in the State employing a language used in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages;

the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;

the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;

the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions;

the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for regional or minority languages used in identical or similar form in two or more States.”

Measures to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life are linked to:

1) **Education:**

“to make available primary, secondary, technical and vocational education and university in the relevant regional or minority languages

2) **Justice:**

to provide that the court in criminal, civil and administrative matters shall conduct the proceedings in the regional or minority languages

3) **Administration:**

the use of regional or minority languages within the framework of the regional or local authority; to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written documents and receive a reply in these languages.

4) **Media:**

to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of at least one radio station and one television channel in the regional or minority languages; to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works and newspapers in the regional or minority languages.

5) **Culture:**

to encourage types of expression and initiative specific to regional or minority languages and foster the different means of access to works produced in these languages; to encourage direct participation by representatives of the users of a given regional or minority language in providing facilities and planning cultural activities.

6) **Marketing:**

to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents

ts such as instructions for the use of products or installations; to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of illhealth, old age or for other reasons”.

2) Language Policy in ITALY

We want to talk about the Italian Language Policy. Indeed, Italy is a signatory of The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages but it has not yet ratified treaty, so the protecting law about regional languages is not applied in the country. According to the 482 law of 15 December 1999, Italy recognises as minority languages: Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Slovene, Croatian, French, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian. Article 1 declares: “The official language in the Italian Republic is Italian. The Italian Republic develops language and cultural heritage of the Italian Language and also supports other cultures and languages, and encourages their usage by protecting it in this law”. Furthermore Article 2 declares: “Following the Article 6 of the Italian Constitution and general principles adopted by European and International institutions, the Italian Republic protects the language and culture of Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Slovenian and Croatian population as well as of citizens who speak French, Franco-Provençal, Friuli, Romansh, Old Provençal and Sardinian”.

The original Italian Constitution doesn't declare that Italian is the official language but it is implicit because this is the language of the Constitution. According to this, there are some laws and articles that underline the official of Italian:

STATE LAW:

Statute of the Trentino-South Tyrol : (constitutional law of the northern region of Italy close to Trento) (“[...] [the language] Italian [...] is the official language of the State.”).

Code for civil procedure : (Art. 122) (“In all procedures, it is required that the Italian language is used.”).

Code for criminal procedure : (Art. 109) (“The acts of the criminal proceedings are carried out in the Italian language.”).

Article 1 of law 482/1999 : (“The official language of the Republic is Italian”).

Article 4 of Law 482/99, regulates the introduction of minority languages in compulsory education. In the nursery the use of minority languages is allowed juxtapose to the Italian Language to improve educational activities. In primary and secondary schools the use of minority languages is provided as a means of communication. In addition, minority language learning should take place during the

curricular activities. According to Law 482/99 Ministry of Education, University of Research and MIUR should give every year regulations. For this reason, Ministry of Education issues a circular each year containing the criteria for allocating fundings of the Law 482/99. In fact, the teaching of minority languages is developed through projects based on availability of STATEL and regional funding, even if Law 482/99 states that education in minority languages should be guaranteed.

According to the Unesco's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, there are 31 languages in Italy in critical conditions. There are different categories: from safe to extinct. Vulnerable are: Alemmanic, Bavarian, Ladin, Sicilian, Neapolitan and Venetian. Definitely in danger are: Corsican, Emilian-Romagnol, Friulan, Piedmontese, Sardinian, Yiddish (spoken by the Jewish community), Ligurian, Lombard, and Romani (spoken by the Roma community).

REGIONAL LAW:

Several Italian regions recognize regional and minority languages.

1) Aosta-Valley: French is co-official in the whole region with same dignity of Italian Language; (Le Statut spécial de la Vallée d'Aoste, Title VIe, Article 38); German is unofficial but recognised in the Lys Valley (Lystal) (Le Statut spécial de la Vallée d'Aoste, Title VIe, Article 40 bis)

2) Campania: Neapolitan is encouraged, but not recognised, by the region (Reg. Gen. nn. 159/I 198/I)

3) Friuli- Venezia Giulia: Friulian and Slovene are encouraged but not recognised by the region (Regional Law of 18th December 2007 n.29 Art. 1)

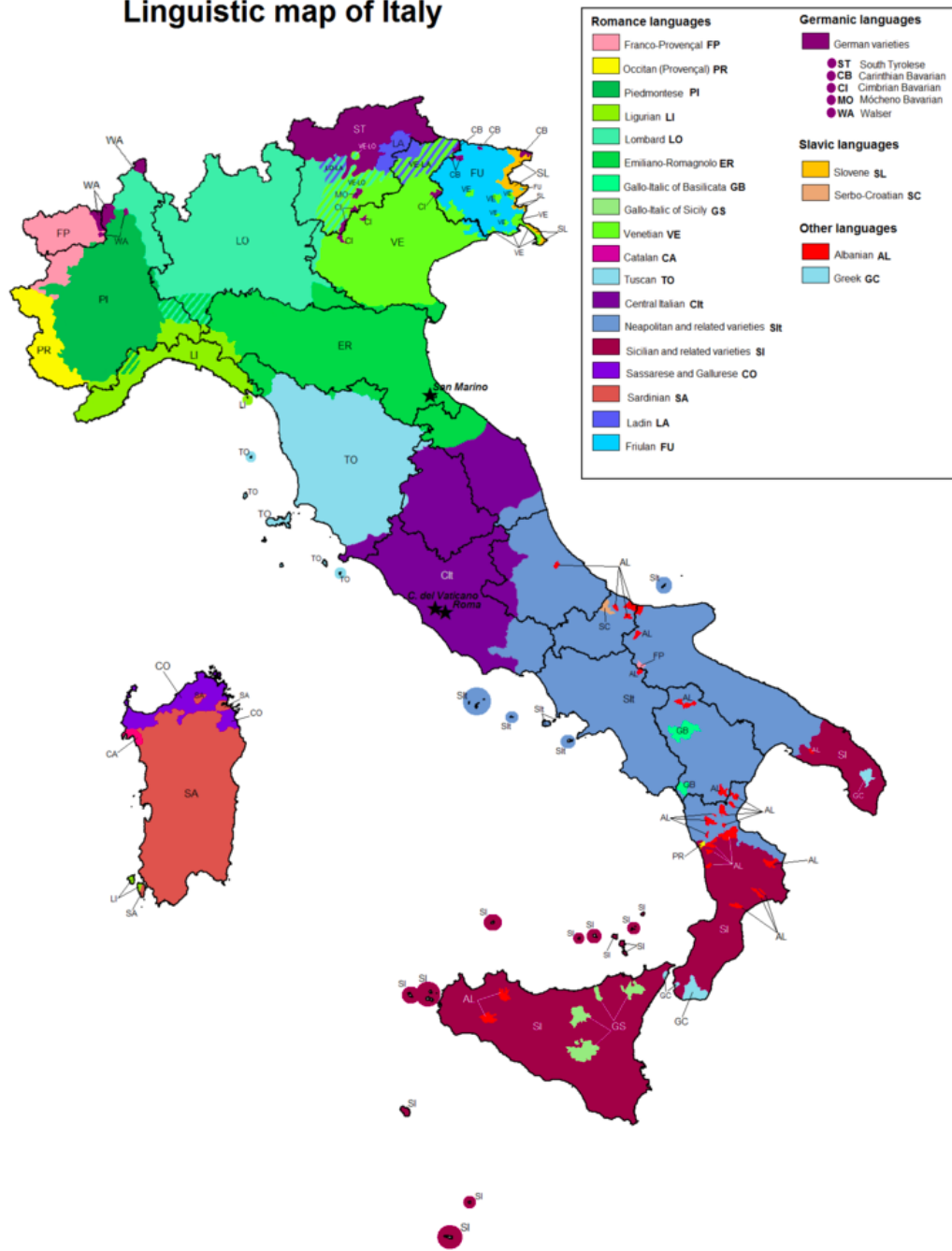
4) Piedmont: Piedmontese is unofficial but recognised as the regional language; the region encourages but doesn't recognize the Occitan, Franco-Provençal and Walser languages (Regional law of 10th of April 1990, n. 26. Art.3).

5) Sardinia: Sardinian, Sassarese and Gallurese are unofficial but recognised and promoted with the same dignity of Italian in their territories (Regional law of the 15th of October 1997 n.26), The same legislation concerns Catalan in Alghero and Tabarchino in the islands of Sulcis

6) Trentino- Alto Adige /Südtirol: German is co-official in South Tyrol with the same dignity of Italian (Special Statute for Trentino Alto Adige. Title XI, Art.99).Ladin, Cimbrian and Mòcheno are unofficial but promoted and recognized (Special Statute, Title XI, Art. 102).

7) Veneto: Venetian is unofficial but recognised (Regional Law of 13th of April 2007, n. 8, Art. 2).

Linguistic map of Italy



3) Franco-Provençal

Franco-Provençal Arpitan or **Romand** (in Switzerland) is a Gallo-Romance variety of Latin. This language is currently spoken in east-central France, western Switzerland, northwestern Italy, and in the Province of Foggia in Apulia, Italy. This language, called *patois*, is still the strongest determinant of identity because it connects the communities around Mont Blanc. Originally the word *patois* stated for a spoken rough, rural language, employed by a small population, whose level of civilization is now judged lower than those who use the language in use. For this

reason, in the Aosta Valley, in the 70s, with the birth of Harpitanya (a movement whose aim was to restore the ancient home of Franco-Provençal), some names were proposed as alternatives: Aosta, Arpitan (inhabitant of the Alps), grayèn (language of the Alps Graie) or even Provençal, erudite name used in the scientific. These variants were unsuccessful: the patois word has now lost any negative connotation. For those who speak patois, it has any negative sense. On the contrary it has taken a sentimental value, is the "language of the heart" of the Aosta Valley.

The historical linguistic domains of the Franco-Provençal language includes the following areas:

Italy:

- 1) Aosta Valley (in Valdôtain patois: *Val d'Outa*; in Italian: *Valle d'Aosta*; in French: *Vallée d'Aoste*)
- 2) The alpine heights of the Province of Turin in the Piedmont
- 3) Two enclaves in the Province of Foggia, Apulia region in the southern Apennin Mountains: the villages of Faeto and Celle di San Vito

France:

- 1) Some areas of Rhône-Alpes and Franche-Comté regions, Switzerland
- 2) Most of Romandie (Suisse-Romande)
includes cantons: Geneva (Genève/Genf), Vaud the lower part of Valais (Wallis), Fribourg (Freiburg), and Neuchâtel. Note: Jura, and the northern valleys of the non-German-speaking parts of Berne linguistically belong to the *Langue d'Oïl*.

The Piedmont region includes areas once occupied by pre-Roman Celts (Sequani, Helvetii, Ceutrones, Salassi and Allobroges). Franco-Provençal has several distinct dialects: Oïl languages, Occitan, Gallo-Italian, and Romansh. The famous linguist Ascoli gave the name to the language in the 19th century because he found out common features between French and Provençal as well. This definition is justified by the fact that this type of idioms, while preserving individuality and independence from the language of oïl and the langue d'oc, shows similarities with both the French and with the Provençal. The Franco-Provençal can be defined as a proto-French archaic and primitive. It has never coincided with a political entity, it has never known a moment of unification and it has never built a *koinè*. It presents in the form of a multitude of talk, in other words the great variety of its patois. *Arpitan*, a neologism, is becoming a popular name for the language and the people who speak it. A neologism is a new word or sentence that it is entering in the common use.

Historically, Franco-Provençal couldn't conquer the cultural prestige of its three neighbors: French, Occitan, and Italian. Territories where speakers lived were

generally isolated from one another and the interior boundaries of the entire area were divided by wars and religious conflicts. Any dialect of Franco-Provençal had just one possibility to establish itself as a major language but this did not happen because of an edict. The above-mentioned edict dated 6 January 1539 and it was confirmed in the parliament of the Duchy of Savoy on 4 March 1540. The edict explicitly declared that Latin, and not French, was the language of law and the courts. However, Franco-Provençal dialects were spoken in their linguistic areas until the 20th century but, when French political power expanded, Franco-Provençal speakers abandoned their language because of the cultural prestige of French.

Nowadays, the largest number of Franco-Provençal speakers live in the Aosta Valley, an autonomous region of Italy. The language is also spoken, as I said before, in Alpine valleys in the province of Turin, two isolated towns in Foggia, and rural areas of the Romandie region of Switzerland. It is one of the three Gallo-Romance language families of France and is officially recognized as a regional language of France, but its use is marginal. However, Franco-Provençal is distinguished by a comparison to French, and so it is characterized as "conservative".

The number of speakers of Franco-Provençal has been declining significantly. According to UNESCO (1995), Franco-Provençal is a "potentially endangered language" in Italy and an "endangered language" in Switzerland and France.

The Aosta Valley is an autonomous region, that means it has special powers in taking decisions. The different development of the Valle d'Aosta and the Province of Turin can be explained by recent history: until the Second World War, there were very few differences between the two regions which both sustained agricultural and economic problems. After the Second World War, the Valle d'Aosta ensured its autonomy: the promotion of tourism, commerce and industry was managed locally. On the contrary, in Piedmont, there were enduring difficulties, and this was reflected in cultural and economic poverty.

Franco-Provençal is now protected by an Italian presidential decree and a federal law. In addition, a regional law accepted by the government in Aosta demands educators to promote knowledge of Franco-Provençal language and culture in the school curriculum.

The Franco-Provençal dialect with the greatest population of active speakers is Valdôtain. The linguistic situation is the follow up: approximately 68,000 people speak the language in the Aosta Valley region of Italy according to reports conducted after the 1981 census. The alpine valleys of the province of Turin have around 22,000 speakers. The Faetar and Cigliàje dialect is spoken by just 1,400 speakers who live in an isolated area of the province of Foggia in the southern Italian Apulia region.

In the Province of Turin Franco-Provençal speakers are less than 15% of the population. The language's decline has been caused by the lack of jobs, that has conducted to migration out of the Piedmont's alpine valleys.

Switzerland does not recognize Franco-Provençal as one of its official languages.

Furthermore, Franco-Provençal has had a decline in France. According to the Article 2 of the Constitution of France the official language of the French Republic is French. The French government officially recognizes Franco-Provençal as one of the "languages of France," but it is forbidden to validate the 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages that would guarantee it certain rights. Consequently, Franco-Provençal has almost no political support.

Until the mid-19th century, Franco-Provençal dialects were the most spoken language in their domain in France. Today the linguistic situation is completely changed because this language's extension is limited to a small number of speakers. In 2002 a report estimated by the INED (*Institut national d'études démographiques*) claimed that this language have had a loss from time to time. The report estimated that fewer than 15,000 speakers in France passed on some knowledge of Franco-Provençal to their children.

A brief overview on some language characteristics of this language:

Morphology: This language has a grammar similar to that of other Roman Languages.

Phonology: Franco-Provençal words take stress on the last syllable, as in French, or on the penultimate syllable, unlike French.

Orthography: The language hasn't a standard orthography but it uses the Latin script and four diacritics: acute accent, grave accent, circumflex and diaeresis.

Literature: Except for some religious act and the thirteenth century, literature Franco emerges quite late, namely in the Middle Ages.

In Aosta Valle, the Abbé Jean - Baptiste Cerlogne, poet and creator of a spelling system and a dictionary that will inspire many writers of his region, can be considered the founder of literature of Aosta Valley. A lot of writers were so inspired by his works that they chose to make their own works of prose, poetry and theater in Franco-Provençal. The first Franco-Provençal's manuscript dated back to the 12th century.

A long tradition exists: a 12th century fragment containing 105 verses from a poem about Alexander the Great could be the earliest work. The *Centre d'études franco-provençales* (Centre for Franco-Provençal Studies) published poetry and anthologies of poetry in Franco-Provençal. A grammar and a dictionary also exist:

Cerlogne's *Première grammaire des patois valdôtains* (First grammar of Valle d'Aosta patois), which was published in 1907, and his *Dictionnaire de JBC*, plus Chenal and Vautherin's major *Vocabulaire des patois valdôtains* (Vocabulary of Valle d'Aosta patois), of 1962-1982, and their *Vocabulaire bilingue français-patois* (Bilingual vocabulary of French and patois) of 1984.



Recently, the Italian Parliament has argued the adoption of a law to protect minority languages. The Law to protect minority languages in Italy is “*Legge per la tutela delle minoranze linguistiche in Italia*”. Unfortunately, the law wasn’t approved because of the dissolution of Parliament. Franco-Provençal is relatively well protected under the 1979 Autonomous Statute for the Aosta Valley, whereas no protection is provided in the Province of Turin. The population and citizens know that the Government is aware of the cultural contribute of Franco Provençal, but at the same time the State doesn’t provide any political support or encouragement. In general, people feel that the State is not providing any support and is not offering any encouragement. On the other side, The Valle d’Aosta regional authorities are now encouraging a degree of awareness of the individuality and unique linguistic features of Franco-Provençal.

The current Franco-Provençal’s situation is changeable because it is already part of the school curriculum in Aosta Valley, but the same cannot be said of the other valleys.

In the education system, Franco-Provençal shows an homogeneous situation: it does exist as a subject in pre-school education, in primary and secondary school as well. Although it is not part of primary education, teachers try to conduct project on cultural traditions.

It is not used in advertisements.

The texts of laws are occasionally available in Franco-Provençal but it is never used before the courts, by the central government and by Piedmont regional authorities. Actually, in the Valley d'Aosta it is used unofficially between regional authority offices and public and for formal conversations.

There are bilingual signs in Italian and French in hospitals; in all the other services, however, Italian monolingualism is predominant.

Notices and signs are in Italian only in Piedmont, on the contrary in Aosta Valley bilingual signs are provided. The reason why it is not used in public services in Aosta Valley could be explained by the large number of foreigners and tourists; obviously the most common alternative is to use French.

The use of Franco-Provençal is not authorized in the media, apart from its use on the radio and on television. In addition, there are no daily newspapers in Franco-Provençal. *Le peuple Valdôtain*, *La ville d'Aosta* and *Rassemblement valdôtain* are periodical and the organs of local political groups. In *La Vallado* it is sometimes possible to find articles on Franco-Provençal. The RAI (THE ITALIAN RADIO STATION) broadcasts for about 15 minutes a day, but the language used is not exactly Franco-Provençal, it is closer to French than Franco-Provençal. Notwithstanding some programmes in Franco-Provençal are transmitted on the public channels, they are sporadic. Completely different is the situation in private station because of the low interest in this language clearly for economic reasons. To sum up it is clear that there isn't an successful integration of this language because, probably, of the low general interest.

Franco-Provençal cannot be input into a computer, because the keyboards are not available for the local varieties of phonemes.

We could take a look to other fields like music and find out that there are no Franco-Provençal folk or modern music groups; there aren't any films that could be described as Franco-Provençal. On the contrary and surprisingly there are some theatre groups producing plays in Franco-Provençal, the most well-known is Charaban d'Aoste.

If we focus just on the Aosta Valley, we can claim that the *Concours Cerlogne* is considered to be a cultural event: a school competition organized by the region once a year. It consists of an exhibition of the school projects that pupils have accomplished during the year on the local environment, technologies and culture. The *Centre d'études franco-provençale*, set up more than 20 years ago, also coordinates some activities in Saint-Nicholas and Aosta. Apparently, a general interest in cultural activities is shown and the people participation in these events increases the use of patois.

In the Aosta Valley, the regional government is active and it is shown by the establishing and managing the *Bureau régional pour la linguistique et l'ethnographie* (Regional language and ethnography office). In Piedmont, we should mention the fact that there is a scientific research in connection with the *Atlante linguistico ed etnografico del Piemonte Occidentale* (ALEPO - Linguistic and ethnographic atlas of West Piedmont).

The situation is completely different in the other valleys where there are few surveys and where there is less sensitivity to linguistics and cultural differences. If we want to talk about the area of cultural policy, events don't receive enough support because there are few people in the government who are aware of ancient traditions and customs.

We also can declare that Franco-Provençal is not used at all between parents and their children. In the 1940s families taught the patois and, consequently, children were able to understand and speak it and in 1950s it was still being used in rural areas. In the past there was a linguistic difference between women and men: young women tended to use patois while young men used more Piedmontese because of their work. The situation changed between the 1940s and 1960s, because the patois was replaced by Piedmontese or Gallo-Italic; since the 1960s, it has been replaced by Italian.

Today we see a upswing of patois: the action of the Regional Administration, and in this case *Assessorato of Education and Culture* has, in this context, a central role in helping to safeguard, to the development and spread this language, often called "minority". Even if you have to consider the statistics carefully, according to the results of an investigation carried out by the Fondation sociolinguistics Chanoux in 2003, in Valle d' Aosta 67.4 % of the population knows the Franco in its different forms; 30, 2 % say they do not know, 81.8 % understand it and 45.8 % speak it. Based on the criteria established by UNESCO, the Franco- valdostano manifest, in view of these data, a discrete vitality.

In conclusion, speakers and non- speakers as well are convinced about the disappearance of their language over the next generation. The main reason could be the loss and, consequently, the lack of knowledge of their language. Linguistic awareness is so little developed in some cases that some Franco-Provençal-speakers think they are speaking Piedmontese. Young people use Franco-Provençal very little, but in some rural areas, however, young people between the ages of 15 and 20 have learned the language so that they can use it as a secret code. Franco-Provençal does not have any status that might guarantee its protection in Italy. Nonetheless, its situation in the Aosta Valley is different because of its autonomy: the regional institutions have special powers to protect the minority language. Paradoxically, the Special Statute in Aosta Valley, permits Italian-French bilingualism, but it gives preference to the standard form of French, Franco-Provençal's use in fact is only in unofficial and informal initiatives. Franco-Provençal is used within family and community, but with a very limited relevance of education. On the other hand, even though there is an awareness of the relevance of language for social mobility it seems that it doesn't have reached an high level both practical and ideological matters.

Language Vitality and Endangerment

Language Vitality Assessment:

Six main factors are identified to evaluate the language's vitality. Other two factors are added to assess language attitudes and one to evaluate the urgency of the need for documentation. It is possible to put them together to have an overview of the Franco-Provençal sociolinguistic situation.

1) Intergenerational Language Transmission → Definitely endangered 3: “The language is used mostly by the parental generation and up.

The language is no longer being learned as the mother tongue by children in the home. The youngest speakers are thus of the parental generation. At this stage, parents may still speak the language to their children, but their children do not typically respond in the language”.

2) Absolute Number of Speakers: 161,400 speakers, includes 70,000 in France and 91,400 in Italy (Ethnologue).

3) Proportion of speakers within the total population: - → Severely endangered 2: A minority speak the language.

4) Shifts in Domains of Language Use : - → “Limited or formal domains 2

“The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions. The non-dominant language is used only in highly formal domains, as especially in ritual and administration. The language may also still be used at the community centre, at festivals and at ceremonial occasions where older members of the community have a chance to meet. The limited domain may also include homes where grandparents and other older extended family members reside and other traditional gathering places of the elderly. Many people can understand the language but cannot speak it”

5) Response to New Domains and Media: - → Coping 2 “The language is used in some new domains”.

6) Availability of Materials for Language Education and Literacy: - → 2 “Written materials exist, but they may only be useful for some members of the community; for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum”.

7) Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use: - → Passive assimilation 3:

“No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain”.

“The dominant group is indifferent as to whether or not

minority languages are spoken, as long as the dominant group's language is the language of interaction. Though this is not an explicit language policy, the dominant group's language is the de facto official language. Most domains of non-dominant language use do not enjoy high prestige”.

8) Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Own Language:- → 2- “ Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss”.

9) Type and Quality of Documentation:-- → Fragmentary 2:

“There are some grammatical sketches, word-lists and texts useful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings of varying quality, with or without any annotation, may exist”.

To sum up, we definitely could claim that this minority language is in danger and it could disappear in a short period of time if no one thinks an active policy to save and protect it. For this reason it is necessary, first of all, to focus on the family: within the family it should be necessary spread more love for the language of the heart, pride to speak it and the awareness of the importance of its cultural heritage. Consequently, the family can become a center of radiating linguistic privileged, able to create, with the support of official bodies and the entire community, a fertile and receptive linguistic area. In conclusion, we must speak the patois and speak it better.

It goes without saying that a living language is not static, it is dynamic and must be continuously updated; similarly, the patois can no longer be a language exclusively rural expression of the traditional agricultural and pastoral society, but it must be modern, a functional communication and it should be close to the needs of contemporary society. While postponing bearer of tradition, The patois should undergo a transformation and evolution in order to have all the features that make it competitive against languages that have a more prestigious status.

An overview of the Language Vitality of languages we have analysed in this course:

	<i>Franco-Provençal</i>	<i>Rusyn</i>	<i>Sardinian</i>	<i>Mirandese</i>
International language transmission	3	2	3	3+
Absolute number of speakers	161.400	34.000	1 million	15.000
Proportion of speakers within the total population	2	2	-	2
Shifts in Domains of Language Use	2	3	3	3

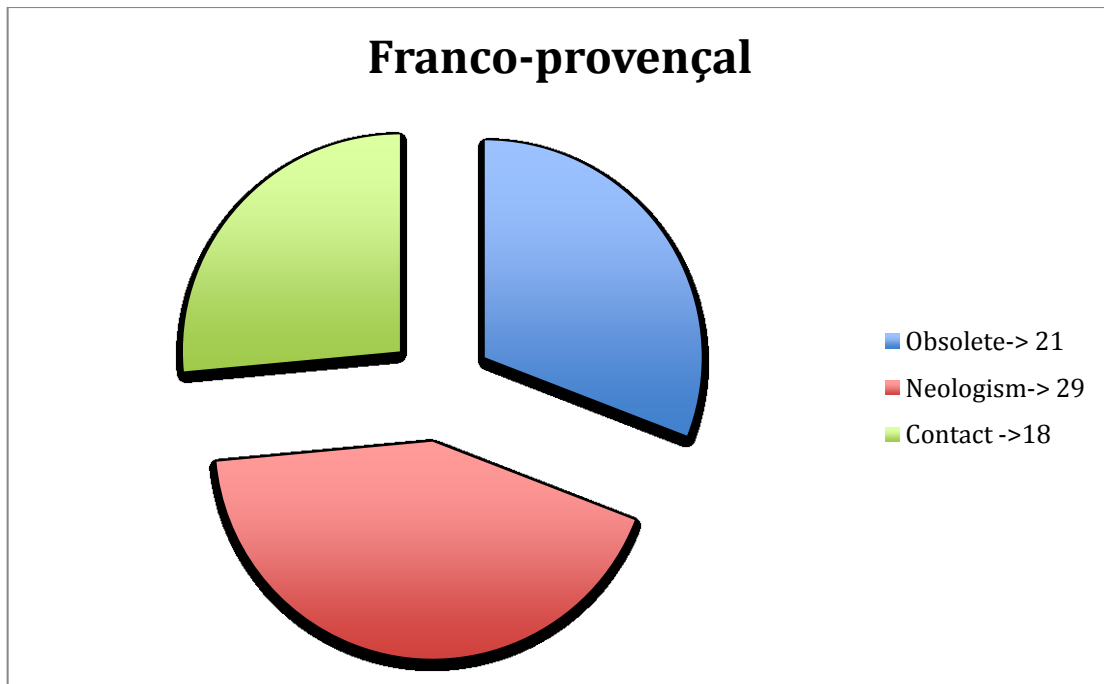
Response to New Domains and Media	2	2	4	2
Availability of Materials for Language Education and Literacy	2	4-	5	3/4
Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use	3	3	3	3
Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Own Language	2-	2	4	2
Type and Quality of Documentation	2	3	4	3+

Linguistic section

The last part of our project is focused on the analysis of the following web site:
<http://www.patoisvda.org/it/index.cfm/francoprovenzale-varianti-linguistiche-valle-d-aosta-bibliografia-patois.html>.

We surely could define it a linguistic- cultural web site also because it is elaborated by the Department of Education and Culture of the autonomous region Aosta Valley “Assessorato Istruzione e Cultura della Regione autonoma Valle D’Aosta”. It is composed by several sectors concerned to language, culture, glossary, linguistic promotion, publications, projects and a detailed section where the user can learn the language, use and improve it. In the Home page two sections related to news and events are provided to get the user involved. Notwithstanding this website is promoted and elaborated by the Italian Regional Government, the user can switch the language, in fact there are three linguistic options: Italian, French and Franco-Provençal.

Within the glossary sector the user can explore and find thousands of words used in the municipalities of the Aosta Valley. I examined 50 Franco-Provençal words related to two different municipalities: Aosta and Courmayeur.



The graphic shows the outcome of our research: 21 words are **Obsolete** (linguistically far from the Italian standard); 29 words are **Neologism** (similar to the standard) and 18 words show **Contact** with the Italian language. We can claim that the majority of neologisms make this language a weak system, according to the weak reaction to the standard (Italian Language). Effectively, we surely prove lots of morphological and phonological similarities.

SOURCES:

European Charter for regional or minority languages

Euromosaic <http://www.uoc.edu/euromosaic/>

Eurominority <http://www.eurominority.eu/version/eng/languages1.asp>

Unesco <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/>

MIUR <http://www.istruzione.it/>

Mercator Research Center <http://www.mercator-research.eu/research-projects/>

Language Vitality and Endangerment

<http://www.patoisvda.org/it/>

