

## Preface

This volume presents the contributions from the 16th annual conference of the European Federation of National Institutions for Language (EFNIL). The conference was hosted by the “Nederlandse Taalunie” (Union for the Dutch Language) in The Hague and the “Instituut voor de Nederlandse Taal” (Dutch Language Institute) in Leiden. The conference took place in Amsterdam (Netherlands) in the Flemish House of Culture “De Brakke Grond” on 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

The main theme of the conference was *Language variation: a factor of increasing language complexity and a challenge for language policy within Europe*, which is also the title of this book. This main theme was divided into three subtopics: ‘Variation from a general perspective’, ‘Variation from a language perspective’ and ‘Variation from a national perspective’, which led to a broad and interesting overview of policies on and practices in language variation all over Europe.

Unfortunately, not all of the presentations at the conference are fully represented in these proceedings. It was a pity that Mareks Kovalevskis could not find the time to rework his presentation on Latvian into a full contribution, which is why the decision was made to publish his abstract at least. The slides of his presentation can be found on the EFNIL website ([www.efnil.org/conferences/amsterdam-2018](http://www.efnil.org/conferences/amsterdam-2018)), together with the slides of all of the other presentations.

Furthermore, shortly after the conference, it was with great sadness that we learned that Ulrich Ammon was facing serious health problems and, therefore, was unable to convert his interesting presentation on linguistic variation in the German-speaking regions into a contribution to this volume. We were informed that he passed away on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019. His abstract and the slides of his presentation clearly show that we have lost an eminent linguist, which is also stressed in the obituary written by Gerhard Stickel. With Ulrich, EFNIL lost a dear friend who was with us at various conferences over the last fifteen years.

2018 was also the year that Gerhard Stickel decided not to stand again, after a period of 15 years as the president of EFNIL. In his contribution “Collaboration makes us all stronger”, his successor, Johan Van Hoorde, gives us an overview of the EFNIL era under the guidance of Gerhard and of the legacy he has left us.

We would like to thank all of the authors for their contributions, Helen Heaney and John Simpson for proofreading the texts, and Joachim Hohwieler, Gerd Piroth, Tamás Varadi and Réka Dodé for their help in preparing this volume. Without their active support, the task of the editors would have been a lot more difficult.

**Bibliographical information**

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The electronic PDF version of the text is accessible through the EFNIL website at:

<http://www.efnil.org>