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## Manifesto for languages

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## Manifesto for languages<sup>6</sup>

### All-Party Parliamentary Group on modern languages<sup>7</sup>

English is an important world language, but the latest cutting-edge research shows that, in the 21st century, speaking **only** English is as much of a disadvantage as speaking **no** English.

Knowledge of other languages – and of other cultures – is important for education and skills, the economy, international engagement, defence and security, and community relations.

The 2015 General Election provides an ideal opportunity to make some milestone commitments – for the short, medium and long term – to making a step change in the UK's national capacity in modern languages.

Without this step change:

- our economy will suffer as British firms are held back from trading across the world,
- our young people will suffer as they lose out in a global jobs market,
- our international reputation and capacity for global influence will suffer,
- our defence and security interests abroad will be damaged, and
- our cultural capital at home will be impoverished.

We need sustained action across the UK to revive national competence in languages and to arrest the growing tendency for language learning to be the preserve of an intellectual or affluent élite.

All children, not just the 7% in private education, should have a high quality language education to equip them to play their part in a globalised world.

The APPG is leading a call to all political parties to support a **Framework for National Recovery in Language Learning** in their 2015 General Election manifestos:

- A long term commitment to transforming the reputation of UK citizens as poor linguists, reluctant to value languages other than English.

6. This Manifesto was published on 14 July 2014 by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Languages, a cross-party committee of the UK Houses of Parliament. It is available at <http://blog.britishcouncil.org/appg-modernlanguages/files/2014/07/APPGManifestoForLangs-EmbargoTo14July-b4.pdf> [accessed: 16 July 2014].

7. Chair: Baroness Coussins (Crossbench); Vice Chairs: Paul Maynard MP (Conservative), Nia Griffith MP (Labour), Baroness Sharp of Guildford (Liberal Democrat).

Languages are as important for our future as STEM subjects. Leadership is needed to ensure they are given similar recognition.

- High quality language learning for all children throughout the UK from age 7. Support for teachers and trainers to develop their linguistic and professional skills and lead the recovery.
- A goal for every child to have a high quality language qualification by the end of secondary education. The reform of GCSEs and A-levels must encourage and reward progression to higher levels.
- Active encouragement for business and employers to get involved in tackling the crisis. Support for schools and employers to work together. Tax breaks and other incentives for business to train and recruit home-grown linguists.
- A commitment to maintaining and developing UK expertise in modern languages and cultures in university language departments. Maintain the status of languages as 'strategically important and vulnerable' subjects and continued support for the Year Abroad.

The Framework for National Recovery in Language Learning is supported by over 100 businesses, organisations and leaders.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> A list of supporters is included. The full & updated list of supporters is available at: <http://blog.britishcouncil.org/appg-modernlanguages/> [accessed: 16 June 2014].