



# The Status of 'Limburgish' as a Regional Language in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages:

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A study on language policy, beliefs, and practices in Roermond

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## Abstract

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This thesis deals with the implementation of The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) regarding Limburgish in the city of Roermond. In 1996, the dialect of Limburgish was accepted into, and recognized under part II of the ECRML.

The Charter explicitly states that dialects of the majority language should not be considered. Limburgish however, through the ECRML gained the status of a Regional Language. To investigate the consequences of Limburgish being part of the ECRML, the focus of this thesis was narrowed down to the city of Roermond in Central-Limburg. The research question that guides this investigation runs as follows:

*“How did the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages materialize in the city of Roermond regarding the city’s actual language policies and practices and its inhabitants’ beliefs with respect to Limburgish?”*

The goal of the research was to investigate the policy regarding Limburgish at three different levels: as text, i.e. the ECRML as a policy document, as beliefs, i.e. the opinions and attitudes of inhabitants of Roermond regarding the ECRML, and as practices, i.e. the actual implementation of the ECRML in Roermond. Data collection included (1) a study of the ECRML as a document as well as journal articles, books, and other texts specifically related to the ECRML; (2) three interviews with key informants in the domains of administrative authorities and public services & cultural activities and facilities, education, and media in Roermond; (3) an online survey among more than 100 inhabitants of Roermond dealing with their attitudes and practices regarding Limburgish. Interviews were recorded and analyzed through content analysis. Survey results were analyzed through Excel and SPSS.

After combining the three levels of research, the conclusion was reached that the influence of the ECRML regarding Limburgish in the city of Roermond was minimal. There are no concrete measures taken by the state to stimulate Limburgish. However, Limburgish is still very vital and spoken often by people in Roermond. Limburgish orthography is not standardized and the language is barely used in writing. Furthermore, the study shows that people in Roermond do not feel that Limburgish is of equal worth as standard Dutch. In conclusion, the connection between the ECRML and Limburgish has yet to be seen in practice.

**Keywords** European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;  
Language Policy, Attitudes, Practices; Limburgish; Roermond

**Word count** 13,970 (excluding appendices)

## Preface

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After finishing my bachelor's degree in International Business and Languages at Zuyd University of applied sciences in Maastricht, I knew that my career as a student was not over yet. I was looking for a new challenge and found the pre-master 'Management of Cultural Diversity' at Tilburg University. Besides looking for a new subject to study, I also wanted to find another challenging environment to live in. This resulted in finding a room in a house with 10(!) other students. Coming from my own studio apartment in Maastricht, the shared living spaces and constant distractions were something I knew I would have to get used to.

When I started studying MCD at Tilburg University I was interested in many of the subjects. My experience of doing an internship abroad in Mauritius, which is a very culturally diverse country, had triggered my interest to find out how cultural diversity could be managed. Unfortunately, I did not pass my pre-master year on the first try, but having passed most classes and keeping my credits, I was able to enjoy my social life a lot during the second year of the pre-master. After finishing the first step, I enrolled for the MCD master and was able to pass the group projects and written exams within the allocated time. However, after failing to meet a deadline for the thesis I found myself having to sit out the rest of the year and wait for another opportunity to finish my studies.

On the next try, I found myself under the supervision of prof. dr. Sjaak Kroon, who had a similar vision towards my thesis: to find an interesting, but feasible research topic. As a fellow Limburger, he pointed me towards Limburgish and while hesitant at first, we found a topic that combined policy analysis with people's attitudes and actual practices regarding Limburgish. As language policy is closely related to management of cultural diversity, the topic was approved and the thesis process began. I have to say I enjoyed my time being supervised by Sjaak. He gave very clear feedback and was able to help me when my focus drifted away from the intended research direction. Also, the approach he took by communicating with me on an informal level resulted in a very pleasant experience. Finally, I would like to thank my key informants for the interviews and everyone who responded to my survey.

I wish you a pleasant and inspired reading.

Huub Ramakers

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## 1. Introduction

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Chapter one consists of four main sections. The first section connects the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (henceforth ECRML) to the subject of language policy. This policy document concerning the status of specific languages within member states of the Council of Europe will be analyzed in detail in chapter three. The second section consists of an overview of relevant literature on language policy and covers the development of the current language policy discourse. The third section focuses on how language policies can be analyzed according to certain approaches. The fourth section shows the analytical framework that will be used in this thesis for analyzing the implementation process of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Roermond. Finally, section 1.5 introduces the ECRML as a case of management of cultural diversity.

### **1.1. The ECRML as a case of language policy**

The ECRML is a treaty that was established in 1992 by the Council of Europe. Simply put, it focuses on the protection and promotion of certain regional or minority languages. A very detailed description of the content of the ECRML and the process of its implementation can be found in chapter three. In the following chapters, the relevance of the document, the discourse on language policy, and the practical implementation of this example of language policy are discussed.

### **1.2. Language policy**

In order to connect the ECRML to language policy, a deeper explanation on the concept of ‘language policy’ is needed. First, the term consists of the word ‘language’, which in general is seen as a means of communication between people. Second, the term consists of the word ‘policy’, which in general can be seen as the answer to a (foreseen) problem, i.e. a proposal to prevent or solve this problem. Combining these two, the idea behind a language policy should be to prevent or solve an expected or existing language problem.

This general approach is a good starting point, but there are more levels to look at when studying language policy. Many different studies regarding the subject have taken place in the (recent) past. It is an established field of work and overviews of these studies have been gathered in several handbooks, ranging from Haugen (1972), whose research focused on language ecology, to Kloss (1969) who discusses two separate concepts of language policy: status planning (i.e. giving certain functions to a language) and corpus planning (i.e. deciding about the linguistic form of a language). Cooper (1989) added acquisition planning (i.e.

increasing the number of speakers of a language through language teaching). Furthermore, Kaplan & Baldauf (1997) describe the cultural, educational, historical, demographical, political, and social processes that go together with language policies. This touches on how complicated the process of creating and implementing a language policy can be. Moreover, Ricento (2000) argues that the emphasis in language policy has shifted from the power of one standard language towards an appreciation of language rights and diversity (see for a further elaboration also Cassels Johnson, 2013). This is very much what the ECRML is about.

Besides extensive studies covering the field of language policy as such, there are also several publications on the ECRML as a language policy document, regarding its legitimacy, flaws and best practices. The most prominent here is Jeroen Darquennes's work (e.g. 2011; 2012; 2013a; 2013b), in which he discusses the Charter as a legal tool of the Council of Europe aiming at the preservation and promotion of linguistic diversity. He also discusses the relationship between language policy and sociolinguistics, having done case studies on the implementation of the ECRML (for example with respect to German in Belgium and the Basque language in Spain). Darquennes' work moreover provides a rich source for other publications dealing with different aspects of the ECRML.

Even more specific, Grin (2003) has written a volume on language policy and the ECRML, combining concepts from sociolinguistics, language law, and policy analysis in order to provide insight on the implementation of minority language policies. Having worked as a vice-director for the European Centre for Minority Issues, Grin provides extensive knowhow on the Charter and policies regarding minorities.

### **1.3. What is language policy analysis?**

There is an extensive literature in the field of policy making. This section introduces two different approaches which can be the basis for an analytical framework. The first approach considers policy as an institutionally manufactured and cyclical process that follows certain predefined steps and rules. The policy cycle has been examined by Van de Graaf & Hoppe (1992) and Hoogerwerf (1993) who elaborated on different consecutive stages, which were further elaborated by Kroon (2000). As a result, an eight-step cycle was formed: (1) Ideology formation, (2) Agenda setting, (3) Policy preparation, (4) Policy formation, (5) Policy implementation, (6) Evaluation / monitoring, (7) Feedback, (8) Policy termination.

The second approach to policy is to see it as never only a step-by-step process. All different 'stages' are considered to be intertwined and constantly influencing the process as a whole. This critical approach as described by Hill (2005) reviews policy as a complex, multi-layered

phenomenon, embedded in a specific time and context and related to a variety of different actors, all having their own specific perspectives and influences. Consequently, policy making has to be considered from a top-down and bottom-up perspective at the same time.

#### **1.4. An analytical framework**

In order to create an analytical framework for this study, several previously mentioned sources will be used. First, the three levels of language planning according to Cooper (1989). Of all three levels, only status planning is applied to the ECRML when regarding Limburgish, as is the case in this thesis. Corpus planning and acquisition planning are the responsibilities of each member state, if desired. As a result, the ECRML will be approached and analyzed as a document which establishes the appropriate function for certain language varieties.

Second, the policy cycle as described in Kroon (2000) will serve as an analytical tool for the implementation process of the ECRML. The document will be viewed through all eight steps of the policy cycle process, from ideology formation to policy termination. Finally, the three levels of policy as described by Spolsky (2004) will serve as the backbone for this research. Policy as text will be analyzed through a summary of the ECRML and an interpretation of its content. Also, the opinions and attitudes of inhabitants of Roermond will be researched through interviews with key informants and an online survey. Finally, the actual practices regarding the ECRML and Limburgish on a municipal level will be found out through the interviews and the survey as well.

#### **1.5. The ECRML as a case of management of cultural diversity**

To conclude this chapter, I want to go briefly into the relationship between the ECRML and the more general perspective of management of cultural diversity (MCD). It almost goes without saying that the field of language is a central aspect of the way in which (groups of) people differ. Next to ethnicity, culture, religion and the like, language is a central characteristic of people's identity. Given the fact that language diversity at a personal as well as at a societal level can lead to all kinds of expected and unexpected problems, dealing with language diversity is a central domain of MCD. Dealing with language diversity from a policy perspective in many cases includes the establishment of language policies. These policies can be found at different levels: local, regional, national, international. The ECRML that is central in this thesis is an example of an international language policy that intends to "manage" language diversity in the Council's member states as far as the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages are concerned.



## 2. Research questions and methodology

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Chapter two consists of three main sections. The first section will discuss the methodological approach to the research in this study. The following section contains the main research question and states the sub questions that have been created to find the best possible answer to the main research question. The third section contains a detailed explanation of the types of research that have taken place during the trajectory of this thesis.

### **2.1. Methodological approach**

The starting point for the study is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. As this document is an example of language policy, the first course of action was to study handbooks and articles on the subject. In order to come up with a strategic approach, a certain framework for the research had to be found. After investigating the topic of language policy for some time, the approach as proposed by Spolsky (2004) was taken as a starting point. Spolsky sees (language) policy as a process containing three different levels: policy as text, as attitudes and as practice (what is written down about language, what people think about language and what people do with language). In this thesis, these three levels will be covered.

First, the ECRML text and history will be analyzed. Second, the attitudes of key informants in the relevant ECRML domains will be obtained through interviews. Moreover, the attitudes of regular citizens will be captured through a survey. Third, the actual practice of the ECRML will be analyzed through interviews with key informants as well as the survey among inhabitants of Roermond. As a result, this thesis is a combination of literature research, the ECRML document analysis, and a specific case study in Roermond (interviews and survey). The following section contains the elaboration of this approach into the main research question and relevant sub-questions.

### **2.2. Research questions**

In order to construct a research question for this thesis, several components had to be gathered and blended. The first component is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the starting point of the research. The second component is the study on language policy, necessary to analyze the ECRML document. The third component is the region in which the effect of the ECRML can be measured. The fourth component is the regional or minority language chosen for this research. The final component concerns the people who are affected by the ECRML. After considering all elements, the following research question was created:

How did the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages materialize in the city of Roermond regarding the city's actual language policies and practices and its inhabitants' beliefs with respect to Limburgish?

This question contains every important element of the research, but has to be made operational. In order to do so, sub questions in three different areas were formed:

*About the policy document*

1. What is the ECRML?
  - a. What is the policy cycle of the ECRML?
  - b. What does the ECRML mean for The Netherlands?
  - c. What does the ECRML mean for Limburgish (in Roermond)?

*About institutions & key informants*

2. Who are (important) actors and what are their roles?
3. What are institutional attitudes/beliefs regarding the ECRML?
4. What are institutional practices regarding the ECRML?
5. What are important implementation areas/domains?

*About Roermond citizens*

6. What are the citizens' attitudes/beliefs regarding Limburgish?
7. What are the citizens' practices regarding Limburgish?

## **2.3. Methods**

The methodology of obtaining the answers to the main research question and the sub questions is explained in this section. The answers to the sub questions should lead to the final answer to the main research question. The research method consists of three separate ways of information gathering: document analysis, interviews, and a survey.

### *2.3.1. Document analysis*

The analysis of the ECRML is twofold. First, the ECRML text, related documents, and historical facts concerning the ECRML will be collected and the text will be summarized. Second, the document will be analyzed through the analytical framework of the policy cycle.

This eight-step process is used in order to give an insight in the process of what happens when a language policy is made. Chapter three contains the history, text analysis and policy cycle of the ECRML.

### *2.3.2. Interviews*

In order to report on the materialization of the ECRML in Roermond, key informants were selected for interviews. To find the most suitable people, the implementation domains of the ECRML were taken into consideration. Of the possible seven domains, four were selected. The three domains that were not selected are: judicial authorities, economic and social life, and transfrontier exchanges. These domains were not considered to be as close to the average Roermond inhabitant as the other four.

The first interviewee was Mr. B. van Cann, a policy officer for the department of Culture & Sports for the Roermond municipality. He represents the ‘Administrative authorities and public services’ domain as well as the ‘Cultural activities and facilities’. The municipality did not have a specific department focused on ‘Limburgish’, therefore a policy officer within the department for culture was selected.

The second interviewee was Ms. T. Boots, who teaches Dutch at Niekée secondary school in Roermond. She represents the ‘Education’ domain. As a language teacher and more specifically, the national language of instruction for education, she knows the importance of learning languages and language use.

The final interviewee was Mr. O. Simons. He represents the ‘Media’ domain. As the director of regional television channel TV Ellef, which broadcasts almost solely in Limburgish, he can add very specific practical knowledge to the discussion.

The interview approach was to collect information from people who are connected to the different ECRML domains in a certain way. The goal was to find out the practices concerning the ECRML in their domains, but also get an insight into their personal attitudes and beliefs regarding Limburgish. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that certain key questions and themes were prepared by the interviewer, but space was given for an open discussion and additions by the interviewee. In order to guarantee that no information was lost, the interviews were recorded (audio only) after obtaining the consent of the interviewee. After finalizing the interviews, the audio document was analyzed and key remarks concerning the research question and sub questions were written down. All interviews were authorized by the interviewees and all agreed to appear in this thesis with their real names. The results of the interviews will be presented in chapter four.

Additionally, several other knowledgeable informants concerning Limburgish, the ECRML, or language policy were contacted. The purpose was gathering information and establishing contacts in the research domain. The regional language officer of Limburgish, Ton van de Wijngaard was approached via e-mail and later spoken to face to face. Moreover, I approached the *Nederlandse Taalunie* by e-mail with several questions. Response was given by Kevin de Coninck, head of their department of language policy. Furthermore, I tried to establish contact with several others who could provide insight in either the ECRML or Limburgish. Appendix A shows the people who had been approached.

### 2.3.3. Survey

In order to report on the materialization of the ECRML in Roermond, it was necessary to collect information from its inhabitants. Only people currently residing in the municipality were approached to take part in the survey. The survey was designed as a written questionnaire that was later posted online, in order to quickly and easily reach informants. Every participant was approached via one of two ways: a personal message through Facebook chat or a personal e-mail message. This approach guaranteed that no time was wasted and only suitable respondents were selected.

The survey was created through *Thesistools*, a website that allows users to create surveys for free, as long as no more than 500 respondents are needed. The survey consisted of 46 questions that could almost all be answered by selecting an option between a number of possible answers. Open questions were avoided, in order to facilitate completing the form, as well as the data analysis. The survey was made public on April 29, and closed on May 31, 2016. In practice, approximately 150 potential respondents were approached, of which 118 opened the web link to the survey. Of these 118, there were 115 people who filled in the first question. Of the 115 people who started the survey, 106 completed every question. The website automatically collects all data and creates two files (Word and Excel) containing the answers per respondent as well as an overview per question. Analysis of the survey has taken place through Excel and SPSS. The information that has been gathered will be presented in text, tables, and graphs. These results can be found in chapter four.

### 3. The European Charter as a policy document

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Chapter three consists of four main sections. The first section offers historic insight in the creation of the ECRML by the Council of Europe and states facts and figures concerning the document. The second section consists of a detailed analysis of the ECRML as a policy document. The preamble and the following five parts of the text will be summarized and analyzed. The third section focuses on facts and figures concerning the ECRML in The Netherlands. Finally, the policy cycle as stated by Kroon (2000) regarding the ECRML in The Netherlands is described.

#### **3.1. History and development of the ECRML**

##### *3.1.1. Council of Europe*

The Council of Europe was established on May 5, 1949. Ten Western-European countries were responsible for this ‘Treaty of London’: Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It is not to be confused with the European Council or the Council of the European Union, which are both a part of the European Union. The Council of Europe is not a part of the EU and consists of two statutory bodies: the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. The Committee of Ministers is formed by the ministers of foreign affairs of member countries, while the Parliamentary Assembly is formed by members of national parliaments. In the year 2016, the Council of Europe consists of 47 member states, covering over 820 million citizens. Belarus, Kazakhstan (largely Asia), Kosovo and Vatican City are the only European countries/states that are not a member of the Council.

The Council was formed in order to create unity concerning democracy and human rights. It monitors each member state separately and measures its progress in designated areas. Also, recommendations are made through monitoring bodies that consist of independent experts. The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), better known as the European Convention on Human Rights is one of the pillars on which the Council concluded in order to reach its objectives. The creation of further international conventions helped to explain and implement policies. One of these conventions is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the main document to be analyzed in the following sections.

### *3.1.2. The ECRML*

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is a document created by the Council of Europe. The intentions behind the creation of the ECRML are twofold: Firstly, the official protection and promotion of regional or minority languages from the viewpoint of cultural heritage. Secondly, the document focuses on active stimulation of usage of these languages by minorities. The ECRML does not challenge national sovereignty or territorial integrity. It clearly stays away from putting minority and majority languages in an environment of competition or antagonism. The ECRML wants to take into account the cultural and social reality of each state that has signed the document.

### *3.1.3. Facts and Figures*

The ECRML was established on November 5, 1992 in Strasbourg. Ten countries immediately signed the treaty, one of which was The Netherlands. Only Finland, Hungary, and Norway had already ratified the document before The Netherlands was the fourth country to do so in 1996. The treaty went into force March 1, 1998. Currently, the Council of Europe has 47 member states. Of these 47 states, 33 have signed the ECMRL. Of these 33, only eight states have not ratified the ECRML yet, leaving 25 countries which have both signed and ratified the Charter as of June 2016. The fourteen member states that have not signed the treaty are: Albania, Andorra, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Monaco, Portugal, San Marino, and Turkey. The current status of the ECRML in each member state can be found in Appendix B.

### *3.1.4. Responsibilities*

The countries that have ratified the ECRML are obliged to follow the general intentions as described by the Council. The text contains a series of general and specific measures pointed towards the encouragement of using the regional or minority language in public life. When a member state has ratified the ECRML, it commits itself to evaluating the process regarding the implementation of the treaty. In order to do so, each country is obliged to regularly write a report on its progress. The first report has to be written within one year after entering into force, followed by one report every three years. These reports are evaluated by the Committee of Experts, which consists of one independent expert per member state. These experts are appointed for a period of six years and are eligible to be re-elected. As a result of these

evaluations, recommendations are written in a report on how to continue undertakings regarding the ECRML in the future.

### **3.2. The ECRML as a policy text**

The European Charter for regional or Minority Languages is a document that spans fourteen pages. It contains a preamble, followed by five parts (I-V) which are subdivided in a total of 23 articles.

#### *3.2.1. Preamble*

The ECRML starts with a preamble, containing several statements about the document and the acceptance of these statements by the signing party. First, the aim of the Council of Europe is mentioned: achieving greater unity between members, especially considering ideals and principals of common heritage. Also, it is stated that the protection of regional or minority languages contributes to the cultural wealth and traditions of Europe. The ECRML tries to prevent the extinction of such languages. Furthermore, several other conventions are mentioned which are connected to the ECRML and stress the value of interculturalism and multilingualism. Finally, building on principles of democracy and cultural diversity is mentioned while respecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

#### *3.2.2. Part I*

The first part of the ECRML is entitled ‘General Provisions’ and contains the first six articles of the document. Article 1a states that for the purposes of the document, regional or minority languages are:

Languages 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; they are different from the official language(s) of that state, and they include neither dialects of the official language(s) of the state nor the languages of migrants. (Council of Europe, 1992a: 2)

According to article 1b, the ECRML also applies to the geographical area in which the regional or minority language is spoken and where measures are taken. Also, article 1c mentions non-territorial languages, which are spoken within the borders of the State, but cannot be pinpointed to a certain geographical area.

Article 2 states that the signing State has to apply the provisions set forth in Part II of the document on regional or minority languages within its borders. The selected languages should comply with the definition as stated in article 1. Furthermore, in accordance with article 3, at least 35 sections or sub-sections among a selection of 98 possibilities in Part III are to be applied to the languages that are acknowledged under Part III. A minimum of three provisions should be selected from articles 8 and 12 and at least one from articles 9, 10, 11 and 13. Later in this chapter, both Part II and Part III will be explained in further detail.

Articles 3-6 contain practical arrangements and factual statements on the ECRML. These statements point to obligations of States that have signed the document, the process of signing, ratifying and entering into force. Furthermore, other conventions which are not to be limited or derogated are mentioned. Finally, article 6 states that all authorities, organizations and people concerned should be informed of the rights and duties following the ECRML.

### *3.2.3. Part II*

The second part of the ECRML is entitled ‘Objectives and principles’ and only contains article 7, which consists of 5 sub-parts. The first and most important sub-part indicates how parties should construct their policies, legislation and practice. The nine statements that should be followed are (Council of Europe, 1992b:, 3):

- a. the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth;
- b. 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;
- c. the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them;
- d. the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;
- e. 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;
- f. the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;



- g. 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;
- h. the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions;
- i. 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.

The other four sub-parts of article 7 can be characterized as more generic objectives. Sub-part 2 states that all types of distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the regional or minority language should be discouraged. Sub-part 3 states that mutual understanding between linguistic groups should be promoted. Also, within the realms of education and media, measure should be taken to promote respect, understanding and tolerance. Sub-part 4 states that parties have to consider the users of regional or minority languages and should encourage the establishment of bodies to advise authorities on matters which concern them. The final sub-part states that parties also have to apply sub-parts 1-4 to non-territorial languages.

These general objectives and principles apply to all languages that are a part of the ECRML. However, there is a difference between languages that are solely acknowledged under Part II and languages that are considered in Part III. The ones acknowledged in Part III apply for this higher degree of protection to their State and when accepted, more concrete measures are taken in specific domains.

#### *3.2.4. Part III*

The third part of the ECRML is entitled 'Measures to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life' and contains articles 8-14. These articles contain seven different domains: Education, Judicial authorities, Administrative authorities and public services, Media, Cultural activities and facilities, Economic and social life, and Transfrontier exchanges. Divided between these articles are 98 specific measures from which parties have to choose at least 35 for each language acknowledged under Part III of the ECRML. As mentioned before, at least three measures from articles 8 and 12 and at least one from articles 9, 10, and 13 have to be selected. As a result, Article 14: Transfrontier exchanges does not have to be included in the 35 selected measures. In order to provide an overview of Part III, all seven domains are summarized below.

Article 8 contains measures focused on education. These measures can be divided into plans for elementary schools, secondary schools, and higher education purposes. More specifically, the measures consider the use of the regional or minority language in education, the possibility to learn the specific language and doing research on the regional or minority language.

Article 9 contains measures focused on Judicial authorities. In practice, this means the use of speech and writing of the regional or minority language in certain judicial procedures. For example, a concerned party can demand a procedure is executed in their preferred language and it should be possible to access documents in the regional or minority language.

Article 10 contains measures focused on Administrative authorities and public services. This article is about government documents, oral or written communication by people with public institutions, and internal communication within these organizations. Several practical examples are mentioned in this article.

Article 11 contains measures focused on Media. Among the media, the categories of television, radio, and newspapers are distinguished. The possibilities extend from broadcasting television shows in the regional or minority language to establishing a network or newspaper only available in the preferred regional or minority language.

Article 12 contains measures focused on Cultural activities and facilities. Cultural centers, libraries and museums fall under this category. A state can choose to encourage cultural activities connected to the regional or minority language or create a platform for initiatives and art.

Article 13 contains measures focused on Economic and social life. In practice, this means on the work floor, in financial services and in healthcare. Some examples concern the facilitation of documents in the regional or minority language, while others stress the possibility to communicate with professionals in the preferred language.

Article 14 contains measures focused on Transfrontier exchanges. This mostly concerns neighboring countries in which the same type of regional or minority language is used. Languages acknowledged under Part III of the ECRML fall under article 14. The objective is to improve the contact between similar groups across borders.

### *3.2.5. Part IV & V*

The fourth part of the ECRML is entitled ‘Application of the Charter’ and contains articles 15-17. In these articles, the periodical reports that each state has to produce are mentioned as well the necessity to make these reports publicly available. Article 16 discusses the

examination of the reports, which is to be done by the Committee of Experts, as mentioned in section 3.1.4 of this thesis. Part V, entitled ‘Final provisions’ consists of articles 18 to 23 and contains clauses which are based on the model for conventions and agreements as is used within the Council of Europe. The document is finalized by a statement that concludes the signing of the ECRML.

### **3.3. The ECRML in the Netherlands**

#### *3.3.1. Signing, ratification, and entry into force*

After establishing the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Strasbourg in 1992, it was opened to signing by member states of the Council of Europe. Eleven countries immediately wrote their signature and The Netherlands was one of them. The next step towards putting the ECRML into practice was ratification. This means that the state formally and completely accepts the content of the agreement. The process between signing and ratifying the document mostly consisted of discussions about the addition of other languages than Frisian and took until May 2, 1996, when The Netherlands was the fourth country to ratify the ECRML after Norway (1993), Finland (1994) and Hungary (1995). The ECRML entered into force in The Netherlands on March 1, 1998, being among the first countries to do so (concurrently with five others).

#### *3.3.2. Dutch Regional or Minority Languages in the ECRML*

Currently, there are three regional languages that are acknowledged by The Netherlands with respect to the ECRML: Frisian, Lower Saxon, and Limburgish. Furthermore, there are two non-territorial minority languages that are acknowledged: Romani and Yiddish. Besides these languages, there are many more regional or minority languages in The Netherlands that have not been acknowledged in the ECRM, such as *Zeeuws* and *Brabants*, the minority languages or dialects spoken in the provinces of Zeeland and Noord-Brabant respectively. The languages present in the ECRML will be discussed below.

The case of Frisian is different from Lower Saxon and Limburgish, because Frisian was considered an official language of The Netherlands long before the ECRML even existed. Policies concerning the use and or promotion of Frisian were already present and did not have to be established on the grounds of this European document. Frisian is acknowledged under Part II and Part III of the ECRML.

The other regional language that was also added at the same time (1996) was Lower Saxon. This language is spoken in the North-East of The Netherlands in the provinces Groningen, Drenthe, Overijssel, Friesland, and the Veluwe region in Gelderland. This territory consists of approximately three million inhabitants of whom about 71% spoke Lower Saxon in 2008 (Bloemhoff, 2008: 305). Lower Saxon is acknowledged under Part II of the ECRML.

The two minority languages that were present during ratification were Romani and Yiddish. Both these languages cannot be specified as belonging to a certain territory in The Netherlands, but are not considered immigrant languages or dialects either and therefore were agreed upon as deserving protection as non-territorial minority languages under Part II of the ECRML. The Dutch government decided on February 14, 1997 to include Limburgish in the ECRML under Part II. On March 18, 1997 the secretary-general of the Council of Europe was informed, formally acknowledging Limburgish as a regional language. Further elaboration on this matter can be found in chapter four.

### **3.4 Policy cycle analysis**

From a policy perspective, the ECRML is an interesting case study. As mentioned in the literature section (chapter one) of this thesis, there are several theories which can be used to clarify and further explain what happens when creating a policy, specifically a language policy.

In order to provide insight in the process of creating the ECRML, the policy cycle as stated by Kroon (2000) will be used. This cycle consists of eight steps, which are to be considered separately, but in practice are often intertwined. The first step is ideology formation. Its main purpose is to reach agreement with respect to the way in which a community thinks about certain problems and the way in which they can be solved through policy making. In the case of the ECRML this meant establishing a common perspective on the issue at hand, i.e. regional or minority languages, also taking notice of earlier conventions created by the Council of Europe, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the document of the Copenhagen Meeting of 1990. The protection of regional or minority languages from a perspective of European heritage was chosen as the communities' common ideology. This is an obvious case of one of three types of language planning as stated by Cooper (1989): status planning. Status planning allows languages to take a certain position in society. By being a part of the ECRML, a language's status is solidified. In the case of Limburg, the other two

types, corpus and acquisition planning have no place, mostly because Limburgish is not taught in education and it is not an official written language.

Step two is agenda formation. This is a process through which the issue is brought to the attention of the public and policy makers. Raising awareness is a key objective here, because without enough support or knowledge among the people, the ideology can be lost and no policy will be made. This step took place within the Council of Europe before creating the ECRML and the member states agreed that this was an issue that needed to be attacked.

The third step is policy preparation. This contains the gathering and analysis of information. As a result, the formulation of the issue can be specified. In the case of the ECRML, it became clear that there were many different regional or minority languages that were declining in use and were on the verge of extinction.

Following step three, the next logical step is policy formation. This fourth step consists of making the final decisions on the content of the policy plan. In the case of the ECRML, this meant the establishment of the two parts (Part 2 and Part 3 of the ECRML) under which languages could be protected or stimulated, and the specification of the eight domains as mentioned before under Part 3. As stated on the website of the Council of Europe: (2014)“The ECRML was created on the basis of a text put forward by the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.”

The fifth step is the actual implementation of the policy, i.e. the agreed upon means in order to reach the objective have to be carried out. A clear vision on these means, stated in a policy increases the chances of success. The ECRML was adopted as a convention on 25 June 1992 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and was opened for signature in Strasbourg on 5 November 1992. It entered into force on 1 March 1998.

Step six is policy evaluation. This mean evaluating the content of the policy, its implementation process, and measuring the effects of the policy on certain criteria. In the case of the ECRML, every member state that has signed the treaty obliges itself to provide periodical evaluation reports regarding the state of the regional or minority languages in its own country. Also, these reports are to be made public. The reports have to be presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and are examined by the Committee of Experts.

Step seven is feedback. This crucial part is a logical consequence of policy evaluation as it is needed to discuss what went wrong or right. In this case, the policy evaluation is very much intertwined with the feedback stage, because both member states and the Council itself

provide information on the process of the ECRML. Both parties have the ability to make changes.

The final step is policy termination. This usually happens when the policy receives negative feedback or when the policy was successful within the scheduled time. However, many policies are not terminated. In the case of the ECRML, no specific time was set in which to reach the objective. Also, member states are still open to sign the convention. Moreover, step six and seven happen every three years between treaty members and the Council of Europe. The ECRML has not gone through the final step yet.

The policy process for The Netherlands in general is the same as for all members of the ECRML. According to the ECRML, the first periodical report is to be presented within the year following the entry into force. After, the periodical reports have to be delivered every three years. In practice, The Netherlands did not meet every deadline. The first was met in 1999, but every report since has taken four years to hand in (2003, 2007, 2011, 2015). This is however not an exception, as many member states do not hand in their reports on time.

After considering the periodical reports as provided by The Netherlands, evaluation reports were written by the Committee of Experts in 2001, 2004, 2008, and 2012. These reports contain information on how The Netherlands is judged according to the criteria of the ECRML and provide recommendations for future practices. The feedback which is provided will be measured and judged in the following evaluation. In the case of The Netherlands, most paperwork concerns Frisian, as it is the only language acknowledged under part III of the ECRML. A more detailed analysis of Limburgish in the periodical reports, the evaluation reports and the recommendations given by the Committee of Experts can be found in the following chapter.

## 4. The ECRML and Limburgish in Roermond

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Chapter four consists of four main sections. The first section introduces facts and figures concerning the Province of Limburg, Limburgish, and the city of Roermond. The second section describes the implementation process of the ECRML from a European level all the way towards a municipal level in Roermond. The third section showcases the information regarding the attitudes and practices of the inhabitants of Roermond, as gathered through the online survey. The final section summarizes the actual practices in Roermond as a result of the ECRML. The results come from the analysis of periodical reports and evaluations as well as from the interviews with key informants in the ECRML domains.

### 4.1. Facts and figures

#### 4.1.1. *Limburg*

First, it has to be mentioned that there are two Limburg provinces that border each other. One in Belgium and one in The Netherlands. The Dutch Province of Limburg is located in the south-east of the country and borders Belgium and Germany. As of 1-6-2016, Limburg (NL) has 1,116,260 inhabitants (CBS, 2016). The Belgian Province of Limburg is not considered in this research. As mentioned above, Belgium has not signed the ECRML.

#### 4.1.2. *Limburgish*

Within the borders of the Dutch Province of Limburg, Limburgish is spoken. It is widely considered to be a dialect of Dutch. The Province has created the website [www.limburgsedialecten.nl](http://www.limburgsedialecten.nl) in cooperation with several cultural and dialect organizations from Limburg. However, in the case of the ECRML, Limburgish is regarded as a regional language. Limburgish is however not a single homogeneous language, but consists of six different varieties that by Dutch dialectologists are generally referred to as, from North to South: Kleverlands, Mich-kwartier, Centraal-Limburgs, Oost-Limburgs, Ripuarische overgangsdialecten & Ripuarisch (Limburgse Dialecten, 2016a). The map of the varieties of Limburgish, a short explanation on their history and where they are spoken can be found in Appendix C. The oldest historic occurrence of Limburgish hails from around 1170, when the poet Hendrik van Veldeke put it into writing, which was used as an argument by the advocates of considering Limburgish as a regional minority language and not as a dialect. Of all current Limburg inhabitants, roughly 750,000 speak Limburgish on a regular basis

(67.2%), while 99% of all inhabitants are able to understand Limburgish (Limburgse Dialecten, 2016b).

#### *4.1.3. Roermond*

Narrowing the focus from the provincial down to the municipal level, the city of Roermond is taken as the case study for this research. Roermond is located in the center of the Province of Limburg, and is home to the variety of East-Limburgish, which is spoken in roughly 40% of the territory of the Province. Furthermore, Roermond has 57,014 inhabitants as of 1-1-2016 (Gemeente Roermond, 2016). Among these inhabitants, 42,864 people have their roots in The Netherlands (75.2%). The largest groups besides the Dutch are inhabitants of German (2,957), Turkish (1,810), Moroccan (1,559) and Indonesian (1,202) descent.

## **4.2. Implementation of the ECRML regarding Limburgish**

Building further on the general policy cycle analysis mentioned in section 3.4, this section contains more detailed information concerning Limburgish. As mentioned before, the ECRML is a European policy document that, in order to work, has to be signed and ratified by a member state. In the case of The Netherlands, this took place in 1996. Shortly after, the treaty entered into force in 1998. This section will provide an overview of what happened after the European document was created, signed by The Netherlands, and focuses more specifically on the Province of Limburg and Limburgish.

### *4.2.1. Limburgish acknowledgement process*

Different from the other languages acknowledged by The Netherlands in the ECRML, Limburgish was not a part of the ECRML during ratification in 1996. The interest in Limburg only started in 1995, when news broke about the inclusion of Lower Saxon in the ECRML. According to Belemans (2009: 126), the addition of Lower Saxon in the ECRML was seen as a development that could ease the future inclusion of Limburgish as a regional language. A political party called 'Partij Nieuw Limburg' (Party New Limburg) joined forces with the provincial cultural organization Veldeke in order to reach the goal of including Limburgish into the ECRML. During this process, a taskforce was created with the purpose of getting Limburgish acknowledged under Part II & III of the ECRML.

As mentioned in article 1a of the ECRML, dialects of the official language of a state are not allowed to be included in the ECRML. This is however countered by point 34 of the ECRML's Explanatory report (1992) in which it is stated that the countries themselves are



allowed to decide whether something is to be considered a dialect or a language. In the case of Limburgish, it was decided that the dialect-barrier was not applicable.

The Dutch government decided on February 14, 1997 to include the collection of Limburg dialects in the ECRML under Part II as Limburgish. On March 18, 1997 the secretary-general of the Council of Europe was informed, formally acknowledging Limburgish as a regional language.

#### *4.2.2. After acknowledgement*

In order to provide some insight on what happened during and after instating Limburgish as a regional language, the *Nederlandse Taalunie* (NTU) has to be mentioned here. The NTU is a treaty between The Netherlands, Flanders and Surinam and it is among other things a key organization for the maintenance and protection of the Dutch language. It was however not invited to the discussion table during the above decision making process on the inclusion of Limburgish in the ECRML in The Netherlands. The NTU concerns itself with the use of Dutch in The Netherlands, Belgium and Suriname. After the acknowledgement of Limburgish in The Netherlands, people from Belgian-Limburg also wanted to have their language included in the ECRML. According to a treaty signed by both countries during establishment of the NTU, all matters concerning Dutch language with regards to international institutions were to be discussed between Belgium and The Netherlands. The Dutch government apologized for this course of action in 1997, but both countries agreed that in the future this treaty was to be followed (Belemans, 2009: 222).

In April 1999, the Province of Belgian-Limburg wrote a letter to their national government with the request to sign and ratify the ECRML. As a result, Limburgish would gain the same status as in The Netherlands. The Secretary General of the NTU at the time, Koen Jaspert, advised against the acknowledgement of Limburgish in July 1999. This position was supported by the *Raad voor de Nederlandse Taal en Letteren* (Advisory Council for Dutch language and Literature). (The council later also issued a negative advice regarding the inclusion of the *Zeeuws* dialect in the ECRML.) Currently in 2016, the Belgian government still has not signed the ECRML and therefore Limburgish (in Belgium) is not considered to be a regional language according to ECRML standards there.

### 4.3. Case study results: Roermond

#### 4.3.1. Introduction

In order to find out how the people in Roermond feel about Limburgish, data collection consisting of two separate methods took place. First, interviews were scheduled with key informants. These key informants have a special connection to the domains of the ECRML and Limburgish. Second, the people of Roermond were approached through an online survey. This was done to capture their thoughts on Limburgish and to find out if they knew about the ECRML or the consequences it could have for their city.

As mentioned in chapter two, interviewees were selected on their connection to the ECRML domains, their knowledge on the subject of (language) policy, and their connection to Limburgish. This resulted in interviews with key informants in three separate ECRML domains: Administrative authorities and public services, Media, and Education. More information in chapter 4.4 and Appendix D.

The online survey that had been created to capture the attitudes and feelings of the inhabitants of Roermond was opened on 29-4-2016, and closed on 31-5-2016. A total of 118 people opened the link to the survey, while 115 people answered the first question. In the end, 106 participants completed all questions. The full overview of survey results can be found in Appendix E. First, some general facts on the survey participants are provided. The male to female ratio was 62.6% male and 37.4% female. The participants were all between 18 and 72 years old, with an average age of 29.4 years. Of all participants, 22 were aged 28, which is the modus of the group. Furthermore, 80.7% of all participants were born in Roermond, while only 5.3% were born outside of The Netherlands:

Table 1  
*Place of birth (request to select most specifically correct option)*

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Roermond	92	(80.7 %)
Limburg	7	(6.1 %)
Netherlands	9	(7.9 %)
Other:	6	(5.3 %)

Of all participants, 56.6% have been living in Roermond their whole lives, while 87.7% of all participants have been living in Roermond for at least ten years. The highest finished education level of the participants was mostly HBO (bachelor), followed by MBO and

University (master). Only 11.2% had not (yet) completed a study after secondary school. Finally, 80.2% stated that they had never heard of the ECRML before the survey, while 19.8% stated that they had heard about it.

4.3.2. Use of Limburgish

The questionnaire asked to indicate the self-reported proficiency of Limburgish of the participants. Overall, the participants scored their ability to understand Limburgish a 4.7 on a scale of 5. Only 3.6% stated that their ability to understand Limburgish is average. All others (96.4%) rated their ability as either good or very good. However, when asking participants on their ability to speak Limburgish, the numbers were lower:

Table 2  
*Ability to speak Limburgish*

	N	%
Very poorly	7	(6.3 %)
Poorly	8	(7.2 %)
Not good / not bad	24	(21.6 %)
Good	23	(20.7 %)
Very well	49	(44.1 %)

The average score for speaking ability was 3.9 out of 5, with 13.5% of the participants rating their ability as poor or very poor and 21.6% as average. Still, 64.9% rated their speaking ability with at least 4 out of 5 (good or very good). The difference between passive understanding and active speaking skills is clear.

The survey also investigated the use of Limburgish in everyday life of the survey participants. They were asked to rate their use of Limburgish on a 5-point scale from never (1) to always (5), with the extra option of N/A (non-applicable). The question was: “*How often do you speak Limburgish at...?*” The categories were: Home, Work, School, Store, Government facilities, On the phone. In at least 30% of all cases, the answer was ‘never’. However, there was a large difference between categories regarding the answer ‘always’. At home it was 34.2% of the participants, while at school, work or in government facilities it was less than 1%. This large difference shows that the setting (informal vs formal) has great influence on what language people choose to speak.

Another question concerning Limburgish was: “*How often do you write / type in Limburgish?*” Considering four different categories (letters, e-mail, SMS, and chat), the answers to this question illustrate that a majority of people does not use a written version of Limburgish. In letters or e-mail, the response was at least 90% ‘never’ or ‘almost never’, while the option ‘always’ was not selected in either case. This changed when speaking about SMS or chat, where ‘never’ or ‘almost never’ were still a majority (>53%), but the options ‘almost always’ was the pick of at least 10% of the participants. Again, this shows a difference between what language is used for formal and informal communication, as well as a large difference between the use of written and spoken Limburgish in the sense that written Limburgish is used considerably less.

Moreover, when asking how often the participants hear other people speak Limburgish in the streets of Roermond, nobody stated that they ‘never’ or ‘hardly ever’ hear it. Of all participants, 36.9% stated they ‘sometimes’ hear it, while 59.5% stated that they ‘almost always’ hear people speaking Limburgish. This shows the vitality of Limburgish:

Table 3

*Limburgish on the streets of Roermond*

	N	%
Never	0	(0 %)
Hardly ever	0	(0 %)
Sometimes	41	(36.9 %)
Almost always	66	(59.5 %)
<u>Always</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>(3.6 %)</u>

The participants were also asked three questions concerning their preference and language capabilities. First; “*Which language do you prefer using?*” Three options were given: Limburgish, Dutch, and Other: A majority selected Dutch (60.2%), while 37.0% selected Limburgish. Only three people selected Other, mentioning English or Turkish as their preferred language. The next question was: “*Which language do you speak best?*” Only 4.6% stated that Limburgish is their best language, while 31.5% said they speak both languages equally well. The next question was about their language use: “*Which language do you use the most?*” Only 16.4% people stated they use Limburgish most of the time, while 60% uses

Dutch most of the time. The rest (23.6%) claimed that Dutch and Limburgish are used an equal amount of time.

#### 4.3.3. Attitudes regarding Limburgish

While the previous section discussed the use of Limburgish, this section shows the attitudes of the participants regarding Limburgish. A majority of participants (58.3%) agreed that Limburgish is a language to be proud of. On the contrary, only 11.1% stated they do not feel Limburgish is something to be proud of. The other 30.6% feels neutrally towards Limburgish. When asked whether they feel that Limburgish is an important part of the identity of Limburg, 78.2% agreed. Only 10% disagreed. Furthermore, people were asked if they think that the regional language of Limburgish should be preserved. Only 1 person did not want it to be preserved, while 83.5% spoke in favor of its preservation. Finally, a question was posed if they feel proud to be a Limburger. A minority of 7.3% did not feel proud, while 30% felt neutral and a majority of 62.7% was definitely proud to be a Limburger. The answers to these questions illustrate a feeling of togetherness among speakers of Limburgish and belonging to the Province of Limburg.

Also, the participants were asked on their attitudes towards Limburgish, in comparison to Dutch. Almost 50% stated they do not prefer using Limburgish over Dutch, while only 15.6% claimed they do prefer using Limburgish over Dutch. The others did not feel strongly either way. Moreover, the participants were asked to respond to the following statement: *“Limburgish is of equal value as Dutch.”* Again, more people disagreed (44.6%) with this statement than agreed (30.9%). One in every four participants did not speak out either way. Compared to the fact that people claimed they do feel proud of Limburgish and stated it to be an important part of living in Limburg, these results show that Limburgish cannot compete against Dutch.

Besides their attitudes towards the language, participants were also asked on how they feel about financial support towards Limburgish. Two statements were made, one concerning financial support from the Roermond municipality, the other from the Province of Limburg. While neither statement received a majority of supporting participants, there was an obvious difference. Only 33.9% wants the municipality to provide financial support, while 42.6% wants the Province to provide support. The same goes for the opposition, which is stronger on a municipal level (38.5%) than on a provincial level (29.6%).

#### 4.3.4 Limburgish and the ECRML

The final part of the survey consisted of 23 statements regarding Limburgish in relation to the domains of the ECRML in order to be able to compare the preferences of participants in each domain. Participants were asked to select an answer on a 5-point scale, ranging from fully disagree (1) to fully agree (5). Three statements regarding the domain of 'Education' were presented, each divided into primary and secondary school. First: *"I want Limburgish to be a language of instruction."* In primary as well as secondary education, at least 75% of participants did not agree. Second: *"I want Limburgish to be taught as a subject."* Again, in both cases a majority of at least 68% disagreed with this statement.

Third: *"I want the history of Limburg and Limburgish to be taught to the children."* In this, opinions were quite divided, as is shown in table 4 and 5:

Table 4

*History of Limburg and Limburgish in elementary school.*

	N	%
1-Fully disagree	12	(10.9 %)
2-Disagree	31	(28.2 %)
3-Neutral	25	(22.7 %)
4-Agree	38	(34.6 %)
5-Fully agree	4	(3.6 %)

Table 5

*History of Limburg and Limburgish in secondary school.*

	N	%
1-Fully disagree	11	(10.1 %)
2-Disagree	23	(21.1 %)
3-Neutral	29	(26.6 %)
4-Agree	42	(38.5 %)
5-Fully agree	4	(3.7 %)

In the case of elementary school, more people were in favor than opposed. In the case of secondary school, 1% more people were opposed than in favor. However, in both cases there is no significant winner. When measured against the answers regarding education, this shows that Limburgish as a language according to the participants does not deserve a place in the education system, whereas paying attention to its history, use and importance brings forward a more lively discussion.

The next domain for which statements were presented was 'Judicial Authorities.' In this case, only two statements were considered. First: *"In the Roermond court, people should*

*always speak Limburgish.*” To this statement, zero participants reacted positively. In total, 94.5% disagreed and only 5.5% did not feel strongly either way. The other statement: *“In the Roermond court, the option to speak Limburgish should be available,”* was met with less overwhelming opposition. In this case, 60.9% chose to disagree, with another 21.8% felt neutral and 17.3% of all participants agreed that this should be possible when requested. As a result one can conclude that forcing everyone to use Limburgish in Judicial authorities is completely unwanted, while only a small minority feels it should be possible to speak Limburgish if one prefers to.

Administrative authorities and public services is the next domain on which statements were presented. Again, two statements were provided. First: *“Oral communication between municipality/province and myself should be possible in Limburgish.”* This statement was disagreed upon by 46.8% of the participants, while 23.8% agreed with the statement. The other 29.4% did not feel strongly either way. The other statement: *“Written information of the municipality/province should be made available in Limburgish.”* was met with a large resistance. A vast majority of 81.7% did not agree, while only 6.4% of all people agreed with the statement. Again, Limburgish is not seen as very important in communication with the administrative authorities, like for example the municipality. Also, written Limburgish once more proves to be much less desirable than oral communication in Limburgish.

The next domain to be considered is ‘Media’. Statements were presented on three different areas: television, radio, and newspapers. This was done to find out if there is a large difference in participants’ preference concerning Limburgish on video, audio, or on paper. For each area, the same three statements were given:

- 1. Regional TV/radio/newspapers should be 100% in Limburgish .*
- 2. Regional TV/radio/newspapers should be 100% in Dutch.*
- 3. Regional TV/radio/newspapers should be in a mix of Dutch and Limburgish.*

In all three areas, the first statement was not met with a positive majority vote. The number of participants in favor of a completely Limburgish media channel was very low: Television 9.3%, Radio 10.3%, and Newspapers only 0.9%. Similar numbers could be found for television (11.1%) and radio (8.4%) regarding statement number two. However, when discussing newspapers, 42.1% of all participants agreed to want their regional newspapers completely in Dutch. Again, this illustrates the weakness of Limburgish as a written language compared to Dutch. The final statement was considered to be more favorable than the other

two options in the case of television and radio, both being agreed to by more than 50% of the participants. Once more, written media is the odd one out, only desired to be a mix of Dutch and Limburgish by 24.1% of all participants. In conclusion, radio and television are seen as media in which a place can be found for Dutch as well as Limburgish, while the participants strongly show that they would rather see their newspapers in Dutch than in Limburgish. Again, this illustrates the difference in attitudes towards spoken or written Limburgish.

The final two domains are ‘Cultural activities and facilities’ and ‘Economic and social life.’ The former domain contains libraries, museums, theatres, festivals and more. The statement that was presented for this domain was: *“All cultural expressions in Roermond should be in Limburgish.”* Respondents did not feel in favor of this statement. Only 6.5% stated they agreed, while a majority of 64.5% did not feel that all cultural expressions in Roermond should be in Limburgish. The other 29.0% had no preference either way. Again, having Limburgish as the only option is not what people want. The domain of ‘Economic and social life’ was provided with three statements.

1. *Regional companies should provide contracts in Limburgish.*
2. *Regional companies should provide manuals/instructions in Limburgish.*
3. *Regional companies should stimulate the use of Limburgish on the work floor.*

The first two statements were met with a large opposition (above 85%), again attesting to the lack of preference for written Limburgish. The final statement was still disagreed upon by a majority of participants, but the number was much lower (56.6%).

#### 4.3.5. *Comparison between groups: Age, Gender, Origin*

The first groups to compare are divided by age. Group 1: under 30, Group 2: 30 and up. Group one consisted of 82 and group 2 of 29 participants in this survey. According to several recent newspapers articles, younger people use dialect less frequently (Cornips, 2016; Simoen, 2016; Urlings, 2016) On the subject of how well the participants speak Limburgish, participants under 30 scored their ability to speak Limburgish with a mean of 3.82 out of 5, while participants aged 30 and up scored their skills a 4.18 out of 5. According to an independent sample t-test, these results do not have a significant difference ( $p=,391$ ). Also, the participants were asked in how much they find that Limburgish is of equal worth as standard Dutch. The younger group scored a 2.74 out of 5, while the older group had a more positive feeling towards Limburgish: 3.11 out of 5. According to an independent sample t-test the difference is not to be considered significant ( $p=,157$ ), following the standard significance



level of  $p < .05$ . This level will be maintained throughout all tests. Even though statistically the differences are not treated as significant, the actual scores are in line with the research literature on dialect regarding younger and older generations.

The same questions as in the paragraph above were analyzed between men and women. According to the literature, women are more inclined to use standard language (Brouwer & Van Hout, 1992; Romaine, 2008: 102). The group of participants who answered these questions consisted of 68 men and 48 women. The question regarding the ability to speak Limburgish resulted in a score of 4.03 for men and a score of 3.67 for women. Analysis through an independent sample t-test shows that this difference is significant ( $p = .018$ ;  $< p .05$ ). For the question regarding their opinions if Limburgish is of the same value as standard Dutch, the men scored 2.97, while the women scored 2.62. Analysis showed that this difference is not significant ( $p = .851$ ). Furthermore, the participants were asked if they like using Limburgish as much standard Dutch. Neither men nor women responded positively, but men scored higher with 2.60 out of 5, compared to the 2.29 scored by women. Statistically, the difference was not significant ( $p = .360$ ).

Another interesting comparison took place between people who are from Limburg, and other participants who are non-Limburgish. In the case of this survey however, the group of non-Limburgish people only contains 15 people, compared to 95 people from Limburg so the comparison between group means would not be balanced. The results differ strongly, while both are on the negative side of the 1-5 scale: When asked if Limburgish is worth as much as standard Dutch, people from Limburg scored higher (2.95 out of 5). Non-Limburgish people scored 2.13 out of 5. Furthermore, participants were asked how well they speak Limburgish. According to expectations, Limburgers scored much higher (4.16) than non-Limburgers (2.47)

## **4.4 ECRML practices**

### *4.4.1. Periodical Reports and Evaluation Reports on Limburgish*

As mentioned in chapter 3.4, several periodical reports were written by The Netherlands and evaluation reports were created by the Committee of Experts commissioned by the Council of Europe. The periodical reports show what The Netherlands has done concerning the ECRML, while the evaluation reports show whether or not this was to the satisfaction of the Committee of Experts. Most of the information given concerns Frisian, but there is some information regarding Limburgish as well. The first periodical report (1999) did not contain anything on

Limburgish, or any other language besides Frisian. The first evaluation report (2001) states that the level of resolute action towards Limburgish is not yet satisfactory.

The second periodical report (2003) contained eight pages regarding Limburgish and stressed that the Province of Limburg was handle all matters concerning Limburgish. The reason for this was that the Province was considered to have more expertise on the matter. Furthermore, several measures focused on protecting and maintaining the use of Limburgish were written, such as the installment of a regional language officer (dr. T. van de Wijngaard) and carrying out a survey among the people of Limburg. The second evaluation report (2004) states that the Province of Limburg has taken considerable action to promote Limburgish. However, this does not mean that the state has fulfilled its obligations.

The third periodical report (2007) contained eighteen pages on Limburgish. This periodical report states four pages on the application of article 7 of the ECRML and mentions projects on the maintenance and development of Limburgish, as well as subsidies that were needed. The third evaluation report (2008) shows that the central Dutch government has taken action and provided monetary assistance for the Province (page 7). However, the Committee of Experts stresses that there is still a lack of a national language policy concerning Limburgish.

The fourth periodical report (2011) contained two pages on Limburgish and Lower-Saxon combined. This was expanded by several appendices, containing the provincial policy on Limburgish for 2008-2011. Examples are: a campaign to signal the benefits of raising children in a bilingual environment, or creating a regional network to bring speakers of different dialects together. The fourth evaluation report (2012) shows that the recommendation concerning a national language policy for Limburgish has not been fulfilled. The effort towards Limburgish is acknowledged. However, the Committee of Experts still feels that a more structured approach is needed.

The fifth periodical report (2015) contained only seventeen pages, with approximately half a page focused on Limburgish. The document states that a special professor was appointed at Maastricht University (prof. dr. L. Cornips) and also claims that the language policy of the Province has contributed towards an increase of appreciation among the population. No budget analysis or analysis on the projects of the years before is given. No evaluation report is available concerning the periodical report of 2015. (as of June 2016)

In conclusion, the information shows that there is a large gap between the intention of the ECRML, the execution by The Netherlands and the evaluation as done by the Committee of Experts. There is a lack of concrete plans and a lack of putting matters into practice.

#### *4.4.2. ECRML practices in Roermond*

This section is focused on the actual practices regarding the ECRML and Limburgish in Roermond. Information was gathered through interviews with key informants considering the ECRML domains. Information from the literature and results from the survey are connected to the most striking quotes as gathered through the interviews.

#### **The lack of status of Limburgish on an institutional level:**

*“Dialect is geen item binnen de gemeente.”*

- interviewee B. van Cann

*“Het geven van Limburgs als vak is nooit ter sprake gekomen.”*

- interviewee T. Boots

*“De politiewoordvoerder mag alleen Nederlands tegen ons praten.”*

- interviewee O. Simons

As stated in the previous section, the evaluation reports show that practices concerning Limburgish are slim to none. The three quotes by the key informants put at the head of this section illustrate a similar trend. Civil servant Mr. Van Cann says that the municipality does not concern itself with Limburgish. Teacher Ms. Boots claims that she had never heard about a push to teach Limburgish as a subject. Mr. Simons, owner of Limburgish television channel TV Ellef states that the spokesman for the Roermond police always has to speak Dutch, even when they interview him in Limburgish.

According to the evaluation reports, The Netherlands is not doing enough yet to fulfil their ECRML obligations regarding Limburgish. The state is leaving the responsibility to the Province of Limburg because of its larger expertise on the subject. Grin (2003: 196) states that language policies are becoming a significant field of government intervention, but claims that ‘authorities are usually ill-equipped to deal with the questions that arise in the course of such management.’ Furthermore, Christiansen (2006) criticizes the Charter and argues it only offers a scant legal framework for linguistic minorities. In the case of the ECRML, Darquennes (2012: 71) describes that the concreteness of measures is of essential importance,

and that a tailor-made approach per member state and its regional or minority languages is needed. Therefore, the ECRML leaves room for interpretation. In the case of Limburgish, this leaves a large gap between ideology and practical actions, since the acknowledgement under part II lacks any description of concrete measures. According to Mr. Van Cann, the Roermond municipality does not concern itself with language policy towards Limburgish, claiming that the Province is responsible for subsidies. Grin (2003: 40) claims that language issues are considered a minor policy field for most states.

Importantly, there are three conditions that have to be met for a language to thrive. These conditions are capacity, opportunity and desire (Grin 2003: 43). If these are not met people will not speak the language and the vitality will suffer. Capacity refers to speaking the language. This goes for language competence, which is only guaranteed when people have the opportunity to learn the language and speak it on a daily basis. Finally, the desire to speak it is needed. A successful language policy should fulfil these three requirements.

#### **Why Limburgish is often not an appropriate option:**

*“De gemeente heeft het beleid om in principe alleen in het Nederlands te communiceren.”*

- interviewee B. van Cann

*“Er bestaan te veel verschillende Limburgse dialecten om er één taalvak van te maken.”*

- interviewee T. Boots

*“Als je in het Limburgs gaat schrijven, dan haken de mensen snel af.”*

- interviewee O. Simons

The Roermond municipality has a clear policy as far as language goes. Mr. Van Cann stated that all written communication is done in Dutch, except for information for tourists. They want all citizens to be able to understand and use Dutch, meaning that an active promotion of Limburgish does not suit their program. Mr. Simons claims that even though almost all audiovisual content is in Limburgish, there is no use for it in written media. He says every person's Limburgish vocabulary is different and he believes that all his viewers and online followers are able to read Dutch. Ms. Boots also feels the same way. She knows about the variance in Limburgish and does not believe teaching it as one 'standardized' subject will be feasible.

Regarding culture, Mr. Van Cann states that Limburgish is something that only concerns a small group of fanatics. As municipality, they oversee the library, which offers a section of ‘Limburgensia,’ meaning works in Limburgish or about the Province or dialect. Furthermore, most cultural activities are planned by the municipality and outsourced to other organizations. He claims that Limburgish is a negligible part of these policies. Mr. Simons adds that Limburgish is seen as accessible, informal and a little less stiff than Dutch. People use it and feel a connection amongst them. Ms. Boots claims that Limburgish is not something to force upon people, it is an organic phenomenon that comes from the speakers.

### **The feeling of closeness when speaking Limburgish:**

*“ Collega’s spreken wel vaker dialect met elkaar, maar nooit in formele setting.”*

- interviewee B. van Cann

*“ Ik stap soms over naar het Limburgs, omdat dat dan vertrouwder voelt voor een leerling.”*

- interviewee T. Boots

*“ Het interviewen in het dialect zorgt ervoor dat mensen weten dat je van hier bent. “*

- interviewee O. Simons

All three interviewees seem to agree that informality is strongly connected to the use of Limburgish. Mr. Van Cann stated that colleagues tend to speak to each other in Limburgish concerning all matters, whether private or work-related, when they know the other speak Limburgish. However, in official situations, Dutch is the only option. Ms. Boots spoke about personal conversations with students when she is functioning as a mentor. She said that sometimes students can express themselves better and feel more familiar when speaking Limburgish. Also, Mr. Simons let me know that most people react positively to him speaking Limburgish, stating that it lets people know that you are from the same place as they are, which immediately creates a bond.

To summarize, the key informants stress the fact that in their specific domains, there is no actual practice concerning the ECRML. However, the subject of Limburgish is definitely something that lives among the people and is used by all three interviewees on daily basis. For Mr. Simons it is a language he uses every day while doing his job, with a thought out perspective to reach people on a personal level. Same goes for Ms. Boots, who uses it to connect to students, but does not use it in her functioning as a teacher of Dutch. Mr. Van Cann

uses it to communicate with his fellow Limburger colleagues and sometimes with citizens, when they prefer to speak Limburgish. The use of Limburgish seems to have a function in informal and personal situations.

## 5. Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

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Chapter five consists of three main parts: First are the conclusions, which are derived from all previous information gathered in this study. Second is the discussion section, which will elaborate on the conclusions and connects the three different types of research against the background of Management of Cultural Diversity. Third, the recommendations section will include information on what could be done in future research, on the ECRML in general and more specifically in Roermond.

### 5.1. Conclusion

Limburgish is acknowledged under part II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. This happened after strong bottom-up initiatives and efforts in the Province of Limburg. Several organizations in Limburg combined their efforts and made sure that Limburgish was added to the ECRML. The average inhabitant of Roermond however, does not know about the ECRML and has no idea that Limburgish is acknowledged and protected by this European language policy document.

Document research has shown that Limburgish is not a priority in the ECRML discussion between the Committee of Experts and The Netherlands. Most attention is given to Frisian, which enjoys a higher level of protection (under part III). The acknowledgement under part II is not connected to specific measures and therefore only seems to have a very general and mainly symbolic meaning regarding the status (Cooper, 1989) of the regional language. Furthermore, the evaluation that is provided by the Committee of Experts regarding Limburgish does not seem to have a direct influence on the actions of the Dutch government.

The interviews with key informants have shown that on an institutional level, the ECRML has not had any influence in the city of Roermond. All three interviewees, who are active in ECRML domains, had not heard about the policy document before. Moreover, they all see Limburgish as a language of the people and not as something that needs a policy or intervention from a governmental level. They clearly distinguished Limburgish from the Dutch standard language and stated that it is mainly used in informal settings and creates a feeling of togetherness. They all feel that Limburgish is very much a vital language as it is used frequently by themselves and other around them. In Roermond, there is no policy on a municipal level towards Limburgish. As the interview with Ms. Boots has shown, there is no sign of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts to create a national language policy regarding Limburgish in education. This is very much connected to the fact that Limburgish is (only) acknowledged under part II.

The survey among inhabitants of Roermond has made several things come to light. First, (almost) everyone has at least a passive understanding of Limburgish, while much less people claimed to be able to speak Limburgish well. Second, people claimed to use Limburgish often in informal situations and hardly ever in formal situations. Third, they distinguished between written and spoken Limburgish. The former barely occurs in everyday communications, while the latter is used frequently. Fourth, they have a positive feeling towards Limburgish and enjoy the language, but not enough to include it as a subject or as a language of instruction in education. However, they do feel it is important to teach children about the history and the language itself.

Combining the conclusions from all three levels, several claims can be made. First and foremost, the ECRML is not an issue among the people of Roermond. Coinciding, the consequences of having Limburgish in the ECRML cannot be seen in the selected ECRML domains according to the interviewees, or the everyday lives of the inhabitants of Roermond. It seems that those involved, i.e. Roermond citizens and policy officers working at the municipal level do not see a real need for the inclusion of Limburgish in the ECRML. Partly this is a result of the language only being acknowledged under part II, but it can also be connected to the fact that people in Roermond do not engage themselves with language policy and use Limburgish whenever they like. An upgrade to part III of the ECRML would mean more concrete measures and practices, but this does not seem realistic.

## **5.2. Discussion**

This study has been carried out for the master Management of Cultural Diversity. The subject concerned language policy regarding a regional language within The Netherlands. This language is not standardized and consists of six different varieties. So the question that needs to be answered is: How can the municipality handle its linguistic diversity? According to the ECRML, the existence of diverse languages within a country can be seen as cultural wealth. In order to translate this into policy, the ECRML tries to establish the value of a language. In practice however, Limburgish is not seen as equal to Dutch by the inhabitants of Roermond. Also, the use of Limburgish is seen as something that comes from the people themselves, not influenced by government policies. Furthermore, the policy comes from Europe to The Netherlands and to Limburgish, which is spoken in the Province of Limburg. In this case study, I have attempted to study the practices regarding the ECRML on a municipal level in the city of Roermond. This study has shown that there is a large gap between policy on paper, people's attitudes, and the practices concerning the ECRML and Limburgish. These three



levels as mentioned by Spolsky (2004) in the case of Limburgish in Roermond do not work as well together as intended.

Similar to other studies, this investigation also has several limitations. First of all, the selection of Roermond in order to investigate the ECRML provided the insight that investigating the ECRML on a municipal level regarding Limburgish does not offer detailed insights of what the consequences of the policy are. It does however illustrate very well that the inclusion of Limburgish in the ECRML under part II does not seem to have many practical consequences.

Another important factor to consider when regarding the survey results is that the participants were approached from a personal perspective, i.e. starting from the researcher's personal network. This meant that the group mostly consisted of people between 25 and 30 years old and that other age groups are not equally represented. Also, approaching participants from this perspective had as a consequence that the education level of the participants was rather high. The approach did however result in a very high return on investment concerning the number of participants who were willing to partake.

The results of this study illustrate what has been said by Kaplan & Baldauf (1997), who describe the cultural, educational, historical, demographical, political, and social processes that go together with language policy making. The political process happened on paper, while the execution of the policy happens within a country and focuses on a specific demographic area (Limburg). The inhabitants and key informants see Limburgish now mainly as a social and cultural phenomenon. The future will show whether or not the language becomes a part of history or that the protection by the ECRML will safeguard the existence of Limburgish. It could also be possible that the people of Limburg, if needed, will protect the language, regardless of the ECRML.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

The final section of this thesis will attempt to formulate some recommendations on the basis of the outcomes of this study. First, directions for future research are stated. Then, statements are made concerning the ECRML itself. Finally, recommendations regarding the case of Limburgish in Roermond are given.

#### *5.3.1. Future research*

Future research could be focused on the whole Province of Limburg instead of on one city only, since Limburgish is a regional language and the region is the Province. Importantly, the

parties concerned are Europe, The Netherlands, and Limburg. The policy could be studied on these three levels, and more focus could be put on finding factual information regarding the ECRML outcomes. In order to provide extra insight, this study can be compared to a language which is acknowledged under part III. As a result, conclusions can be drawn on the difference between these levels of protection.

In future research, the survey sample should be an accurate representation of the inhabitants. Furthermore, comparisons could be made between Limburgish speakers and non-Limburgish speakers. Also, age groups could be compared, since the literature has shown that the use of Limburgish is declining among the younger generation.

### *5.3.2. ECRML*

Measuring actual practices for a language under part II does not provide detailed information. Therefore, part II of the ECRML could be studied and explained in a manner that shows what the actual acknowledgement under this part means (in addition to just symbolic protection).

For further studies focused on the ECRML, it is necessary to establish clear boundaries between what are actual consequences of the ECRML regarding a language, and what are occurrences that have an indirect link to the ECRML. A bottom-up movement is also in place, which has nothing to do with the ECRML, but could influence the situation regarding a language. This grey area needs to be analyzed in order to provide an accurate representation of the impact of the ECRML.

### *5.3.3. Limburgish in Roermond*

There is no specific municipal department in the city of Roermond that deals with matters concerning Limburgish. This will probably never be the case unless Limburgish is acknowledged under part III and specific measures are to be taken. As it seems now, this will not happen and Roermond citizens will keep using Limburgish (independent of its protection under part II of the ECRML). The municipality could however put more effort into promoting and stimulating the use of Limburgish.

Finally, the evaluation reports from the Committee of Experts focus on creating a national language policy regarding Limburgish and pushing it into education. If these measures are going to be taken, teachers of Limburgish will have to be found and room has to be made in the schedules of the students. This will not be too easy and an approach in which schools pay attention to Limburgish and its history might be more successful than an approach in which Limburgish is taught as a language in its own right or is used as a language of instruction.

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Appendices

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## **Appendix A - Informants**

The following people were contacted to gain more insight in the ECRML and/or Limburgish.

### **T. van de Wijngaard**

Works as : Regional language officer for Limburgish  
For : Huis van de Kunsten (department of Province of Limburg)  
Expertise : Limburgish, language policy.

### **E. Cuijpers**

Works as : Account manager culture and education  
For : Cubiss – services for libraries  
Expertise : Organized seminar concerning language and dialects in Limburg.  
“Taalkunstenars in de dop” (19-11-2015)

### **G. Urlings**

Works as : Journalist  
For : Dagblad de Limburger (Newspaper in Limburg)  
Expertise : Limburgish. Was a part of a meeting regarding the ECRML.

### **K. De Coninck**

Works as : Secretary General and Head of language policy  
For : Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch language union)  
Expertise : All matters concerning Dutch and its varieties

### **H. Giesbers**

Works as : Director  
For : Veldeke Roermond (organization for Limburgish)  
Expertise : Limburgish in Roermond

### **J. Leerssen**

Works as : Professor European Studies  
For : University of Amsterdam  
Expertise : Played a role in including Limburgish in ECRML

### **R. Belemans**

Works as : Staff-employee immaterial heritage & Editor in chief.  
For : FARO, organization for Flemish Cultural Heritage.  
Expertise : Wrote dissertation concerning Limburgish

### **L. van Nistelrooij**

Works as : Member of the European Parliament  
For : CDA  
Expertise : Member of the Committee for Regional Development

**Appendix B - Chart of signatures and ratifications of Treaty 148** (Status as of 14/6/2016)

Member State	Signature	Ratification	Entry into Force
Armenia	11/05/2001	25/01/2002	01/05/2002
Austria	05/11/1992	28/06/2001	01/10/2001
Azerbaijan	21/12/2001		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	07/09/2005	21/09/2010	01/01/2011
Croatia	05/11/1997	05/11/1997	01/03/1998
Cyprus	12/11/1992	26/08/2002	01/12/2002
Czech Republic	09/11/2000	15/11/2006	01/03/2007
Denmark	05/11/1992	08/09/2000	01/01/2001
Finland	05/11/1992	09/11/1994	01/03/1998
France	07/05/1999		
Germany	05/11/1992	16/09/1998	01/01/1999
Hungary	05/11/1992	26/04/1995	01/03/1998
Iceland	07/05/1999		
Italy	27/06/2000		
Liechtenstein	05/11/1992	18/11/1997	01/03/1998
Luxembourg	05/11/1992	22/06/2005	01/10/2005
Malta	05/11/1992		
Moldova	11/07/2002		
Montenegro *	22/03/2005	15/02/2006	06/06/2006
Netherlands	05/11/1992	02/05/1996	01/03/1998
Norway	05/11/1992	10/11/1993	01/03/1998
Poland	12/05/2003	12/02/2009	01/06/2009
Romania	17/07/1995	29/01/2008	01/05/2008
Russia	10/05/2001		
Serbia *	22/03/2005	15/02/2006	01/06/2006
Slovakia	20/02/2001	05/09/2001	01/01/2002
Slovenia	03/07/1997	04/10/2000	01/01/2001
Spain	05/11/1992	09/04/2001	01/08/2001
Sweden	09/02/2000	09/02/2000	01/06/2000
Switzerland	08/10/1993	23/12/1997	01/04/1998
The former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	25/07/1996		
Ukraine	02/05/1996	19/09/2005	01/01/2006
United Kingdom	02/03/2000	27/03/2001	01/07/2001

\* Eight countries have signed the ECRML, but have not ratified yet.

\* Serbia and Montenegro was one country during signing and ratification.

Albania, Andorra, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Monaco, Portugal, San Marino, and Turkey.



## Appendix C - Variations of Limburgish

### Kleverlandish

Kleverlandish is spoken in the orange part of the map. Home to the north of Limburg, it is similar to *Brabants* and *Gelders*, which are spoken in the neighboring provinces. Furthermore, it is influenced by German and spoken in parts of Western-Germany.

### Mich-Quarter

The green area around Venlo is considered a transition area between Kleverlandish and East-Limburgish. The name is given because of the fact that people in the green area use the words 'ik' and 'mich' for the English word 'me.'

### East-Limburgish

The red part of the map is home to East-Limburgish. The most striking quality is that people here add a 'j'-sound to the following letter combinations at the beginning of a word: sp-, st-, sl-, sm-, sn- and zw-. Also, this happens at the end of words: miens(j), vös(j), vals(j).

### Central-Limburgish

The blue part in the west of the Province is called Central-Limburgish. Reason for this is that together with the eastern part of Belgian Limburgish, this is the center of the total Limburgish speaking territory. Contrastingly, this area does not use the 'j'-sound for p-, st-, sl-, sm-, sn- and zw-.

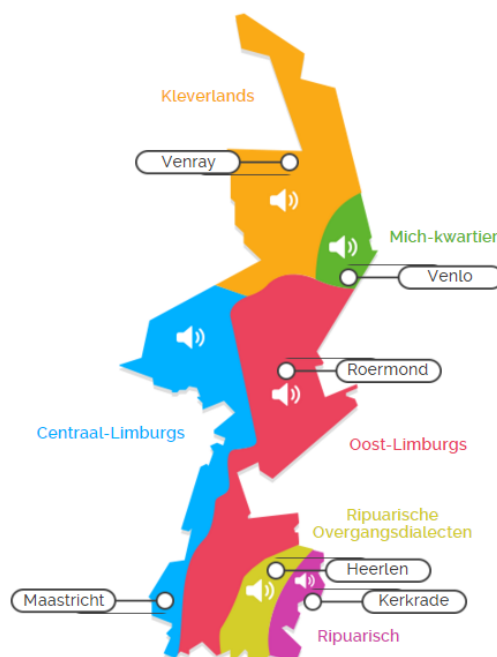
However, they do use it when words start with 'sch': sjoeël ('school')

### Ripuarian

The purple area is home to Ripuarian. This south-eastern area of Limburg borders Germany. For example, people here use the German word 'machen' instead of the Dutch word 'maken.' The western border of this area is called the 'maken-machen'-line

### Transitional Ripuarian dialects

The light green area is home to the Transitional Ripuarian dialects. As the name states, they are influenced by Ripuarian. However, the influence of German is much less than in the neighboring area of the Ripuarian dialect. One important distinctive feature are words that end in -lijk  
Such as: gemekkelig ('gemakkelijk') and ierlig ('eerlijk').



## Appendix D – Interviews

1.

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Interviewee : B. van Cann  
Profession : Policy officer for department of Culture  
Domains : Administrative authorities and public services & Cultural activities and facilities  
Location : Roermond city hall  
Date : 29-04-2016  
Duration : 26 min.

### Summary

Bert van Cann had never heard of the ECRML.  
He stated that the Roermond municipality has no policy towards Limburgish.  
He focused on subsidies, which are extremely minimal on a municipal level.  
The municipality had helped subsidize the ‘Roermonds Dictionary’

2.

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Interviewee : T. Boots  
Profession : Teacher of Dutch  
Domain : Education  
Location : Niekée secondary school, Roermond  
Date : 16-05-2016  
Duration : 32 min

### Summary

Tessa Boots had never heard of the ECRML.  
She stated that Limburgish had never been discussed at her school.  
Teachers use it to communicate with each other (oral)  
Students use it to communicate to each other (oral)

3.

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Interviewee : O. Simons  
Profession : Director of television channel TV Ellef  
Domain : Media  
Location : TV Ellef building, Herten (Roermond municipality)  
Date : 19-05-2016  
Duration : 45 min.

### Summary

Olaf Simons had never heard of the ECRML.  
He considers Limburgish to be the language of the people → informal communication.  
He says a lack of uniformity towards Limburgish is very important (different variations)  
He claims that written Limburgish does not work on television or internet.

## Appendix E – Survey Results





### 1. Age

N = 115  
Mean = 29.4 years

### 2. Sex

Male		72 (62.6 %)
Female		43 (37.4 %)









### 3. Place of birth: select most specifically correct option

Roermond		92 (80.7 %)
Limburg		7 (6.1 %)
Netherlands		9 (7.9 %)
Other:		6 (5.31 %)

### 4. How long have you been living in Roermond?

N = 114  
Mean = 24.2 years




### 5. What is your education level (highest finished)?

vmbo		4 (3.48 %)
havo		8 (6.96 %)
vwo		2 (1.74 %)
mbo		29 (25.22 %)
hbo (bachelor)		47 (40.87 %)
hbo (master)		6 (5.22 %)
university (bachelor)		3 (2.61 %)
university (master)		16 (13.91 %)






### 6. Had you ever heard of the ECRML before this survey?

Yes		22 (19.8 %)
No		89 (80.2 %)

### 7. How well do you understand Limburgish?

Very poorly		0 (0 %)
Poorl		0 (0 %)
Not good / not bad		4 (3.64 %)
Good		24 (21.82 %)
Very well		82 (74.55 %)

### 8. How well do you speak Limburgish?

Very poorly		7 (6.31 %)
Poorl		8 (7.21 %)
Not good / not bad		24 (21.62 %)
Good		23 (20.72 %)
Very well		49 (44.14 %)

## 9. How often do you speak Limburgish?

### At home

Never		<b>37</b> (33.33 %)
Hardly ever		<b>16</b> (14.41 %)
Sometimes		<b>6</b> (5.41 %)
Almost always		<b>14</b> (12.61 %)
Always		<b>38</b> (34.23 %)
n/a		<b>0</b> (0 %)

### At work

Never		<b>41</b> (36.94 %)
Hardly ever		<b>12</b> (10.81 %)
Sometimes		<b>33</b> (29.73 %)
Almost always		<b>21</b> (18.92 %)
Always		<b>1</b> (0.9 %)
n/a		<b>3</b> (2.7 %)

### At school

Never		<b>48</b> (43.24 %)
Hardly ever		<b>9</b> (8.11 %)
Sometimes		<b>16</b> (14.41 %)
Almost always		<b>6</b> (5.41 %)
Always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
n/a		<b>32</b> (28.83 %)

### In stores (as customer)

Never		<b>35</b> (31.53 %)
Hardly ever		<b>17</b> (15.32 %)
Sometimes		<b>43</b> (38.74 %)
Almost always		<b>11</b> (9.91 %)
Always		<b>4</b> (3.6 %)
n/a		<b>1</b> (0.9 %)

### At government facilities

Never		<b>50</b> (45.05 %)
Hardly ever		<b>23</b> (20.72 %)
Sometimes		<b>31</b> (27.93 %)
Almost always		<b>6</b> (5.41 %)
Always		<b>1</b> (0.9 %)
n/a		<b>0</b> (0 %)

### On the phone (with people you know)

Never		<b>34</b> (30.63 %)
Hardly ever		<b>8</b> (7.21 %)
Sometimes		<b>27</b> (24.32 %)
Almost always		<b>34</b> (30.63 %)
Always		<b>8</b> (7.21 %)
n/a		<b>0</b> (0 %)

**On the phone (with people you do not know)**

Never		<b>54</b> (48.65 %)
Hardly ever		<b>32</b> (28.83 %)
Sometimes		<b>24</b> (21.62 %)
Almost always		<b>1</b> (0.9 %)
Always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
n/a		<b>0</b> (0 %)

**10. How often do you speak Limburgish to?****Family**

Never		<b>38</b> (34.23 %)
Hardly ever		<b>11</b> (9.91 %)
Sometimes		<b>8</b> (7.21 %)
Almost always		<b>20</b> (18.02 %)
Always		<b>34</b> (30.63 %)
n/a		<b>0</b> (0 %)

**Friends**

Never		<b>28</b> (25.23 %)
Hardly ever		<b>13</b> (11.71 %)
Sometimes		<b>29</b> (26.13 %)
Almost always		<b>35</b> (31.53 %)
Always		<b>6</b> (5.41 %)
n/a		<b>0</b> (0 %)

**Colleagues**

Never		<b>42</b> (37.84 %)
Hardly ever		<b>15</b> (13.51 %)
Sometimes		<b>31</b> (27.93 %)
Almost always		<b>16</b> (14.41 %)
Always		<b>4</b> (3.6 %)
n/a		<b>3</b> (2.7 %)

**Customers / clients**

Never		<b>46</b> (41.82 %)
Hardly ever		<b>22</b> (20 %)
Sometimes		<b>27</b> (24.55 %)
Almost always		<b>8</b> (7.27 %)
Always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
n/a		<b>7</b> (6.36 %)

**Shopkeepers / employees**

Never		<b>36</b> (32.73 %)
Hardly ever		<b>23</b> (20.91 %)
Sometimes		<b>42</b> (38.18 %)
Almost always		<b>7</b> (6.36 %)
Always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
n/a		<b>2</b> (1.82 %)

### Government employees

Never		<b>50</b> (45.05 %)
Hardly ever		<b>25</b> (22.52 %)
Sometimes		<b>31</b> (27.93 %)
Almost always		<b>4</b> (3.6 %)
Always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
n/a		<b>1</b> (0.9 %)

## 11. How often do you write/type Limburgish?

### Letters

Never		<b>94</b> (85.45 %)
Hardly ever		<b>9</b> (8.18 %)
Sometimes		<b>2</b> (1.82 %)
Almost always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
Always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
n/a		<b>5</b> (4.55 %)

### E-mail

Never		<b>78</b> (70.27 %)
Hardly ever		<b>24</b> (21.62 %)
Sometimes		<b>8</b> (7.21 %)
Almost always		<b>1</b> (0.9 %)
Always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
n/a		<b>0</b> (0 %)

### SMS

Never		<b>56</b> (50.45 %)
Hardly ever		<b>15</b> (13.51 %)
Sometimes		<b>27</b> (24.32 %)
Almost always		<b>12</b> (10.81 %)
Always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
n/a		<b>1</b> (0.9 %)

### Chat (Whatsapp, facebook messenger etc.)

Never		<b>34</b> (30.63 %)
Hardly ever		<b>25</b> (22.52 %)
Sometimes		<b>31</b> (27.93 %)
Almost always		<b>20</b> (18.02 %)
Always		<b>0</b> (0 %)
n/a		<b>1</b> (0.9 %)

**12. How often do you hear Limburgish in Roermond?**

Never		0 (0 %)
Hardly ever		0 (0 %)
Sometimes		41 (36.94 %)
Almost always		66 (59.46 %)
Always		4 (3.6 %)

**13. I think Limburgish is a dialect to be proud of**

Fully disagree		1 (0.93 %)
Disagree		11 (10.19 %)
Neutral		33 (30.56 %)
Agree		36 (33.33 %)
Fully agree		27 (25 %)

**14. I think Limburgish is important for L. identity**

Fully disagree		0 (0 %)
Disagree		11 (10 %)
Neutral		13 (11.82 %)
Agree		58 (52.73 %)
Fully agree		28 (25.45 %)

**15. I prefer using Limburgish over standard Dutch**

Fully disagree		28 (25.69 %)
Disagree		24 (22.02 %)
Neutral		40 (36.7 %)
Agree		11 (10.09 %)
Fully agree		6 (5.5 %)

**16. Limburgish should be preserved**

Fully disagree		0 (0 %)
Disagree		1 (0.92 %)
Neutral		17 (15.6 %)
Agree		46 (42.2 %)
Fully agree		45 (41.28 %)

**17. I am proud to be an inhabitant of Limburg**

Fully disagree		1 (0.91 %)
Disagree		7 (6.36 %)
Neutral		33 (30 %)
Agree		43 (39.09 %)
Fully agree		26 (23.64 %)

**18. Limburgish is worth as much as standard Dutch**

Fully disagree		13 (11.82 %)
Disagree		36 (32.73 %)
Neutral		27 (24.55 %)
Agree		24 (21.82 %)
Fully agree		10 (9.09 %)

**19. Local government should finance the preservation of Limburgish**

Fully disagree		5 (4.59 %)
Disagree		37 (33.94 %)
Neutral		30 (27.52 %)
Agree		34 (31.19 %)
Fully agree		3 (2.75 %)

**20. Provincial government should finance the preservation of Limburgish**

Fully disagree		5 (4.63 %)
Disagree		27 (25 %)
Neutral		30 (27.78 %)
Agree		41 (37.96 %)
Fully agree		5 (4.63 %)

**21. Which language do you prefer using?**

Limburgish		40 (37.04 %)
Dutch		65 (60.19 %)
Other		3 (2.78 %)

**22. Which language do you speak best?**

Limburgish		5 (4.63 %)
Dutch		69 (63.89 %)
Other		34 (31.48 %)

**23. Which language do you use most?**

Limburgish		18 (16.36 %)
Dutch		66 (60 %)
Other		26 (23.64 %)

**Elementary school (24-25-26)**

**24. I want Limburgish to be a language of instruction.**

Fully disagree		38 (34.55 %)
Disagree		46 (41.82 %)
Neutral		15 (13.64 %)
Agree		10 (9.09 %)
Fully agree		1 (0.91 %)

**25. I want Limburgish to be taught as a subject.**

Fully disagree		27 (24.77 %)
Disagree		48 (44.04 %)
Neutral		22 (20.18 %)
Agree		10 (9.17 %)
Fully agree		2 (1.83 %)

**26. I want the history of Limburg and Limburgish to be taught to the children.**

Fully disagree		11 (10.09 %)
Disagree		23 (21.1 %)
Neutral		29 (26.61 %)
Agree		42 (38.53 %)
Fully agree		4 (3.67 %)



**Secondary school (27-28-29)****27. I want Limburgish to be a language of instruction.**

Fully disagree		40 (36.36 %)
Disagree		50 (45.45 %)
Neutral		14 (12.73 %)
Agree		5 (4.55 %)
Fully agree		1 (0.91 %)

**28. I want Limburgish to be taught as a subject.**

Fully disagree		29 (26.36 %)
Disagree		51 (46.36 %)
Neutral		20 (18.18 %)
Agree		8 (7.27 %)
Fully agree		2 (1.82 %)

**29. I want the history of Limburg and Limburgish to be taught to the children.**

Fully disagree		12 (10.91 %)
Disagree		31 (28.18 %)
Neutral		25 (22.73 %)
Agree		38 (34.55 %)
Fully agree		4 (3.64 %)

**30. In the Roermond court, people should always speak Limburgish.**

Fully disagree		64 (58.72 %)
Disagree		39 (35.78 %)
Neutral		6 (5.5 %)
Agree		0 (0 %)
Fully agree		0 (0 %)

**31. In the Roermond court, the option to speak Limburgish should be available.**

Fully disagree		32 (29.09 %)
Disagree		35 (31.82 %)
Neutral		24 (21.82 %)
Agree		17 (15.45 %)
Fully agree		2 (1.82 %)






**32. Oral communication between municipality/province and myself should be possible in Limburgish.**

Fully disagree		16 (14.68 %)
Disagree		35 (32.11 %)
Neutral		32 (29.36 %)
Agree		23 (21.1 %)
Fully agree		3 (2.75 %)


**33. Written information of the municipality/province should be made available in Limburgish.**

Fully disagree		38 (34.86 %)
Disagree		51 (46.79 %)
Neutral		13 (11.93 %)
Agree		6 (5.5 %)
Fully agree		1 (0.92 %)

**34. Regional TV should be in 100% Limburgish .**

Fully disagree		11 (10.19 %)
Disagree		47 (43.52 %)
Neutral		40 (37.04 %)
Agree		9 (8.33 %)
Fully agree		1 (0.93 %)






**35. Regional TV should be in 100% Dutch.**

Fully disagree		15 (13.89 %)
Disagree		43 (39.81 %)
Neutral		38 (35.19 %)
Agree		9 (8.33 %)
Fully agree		3 (2.78 %)






**36. Regional TV should be a mix of Dutch and Limburgish.**

Fully disagree		5 (4.67 %)
Disagree		9 (8.41 %)
Neutral		39 (36.45 %)
Agree		46 (42.99 %)
Fully agree		8 (7.48 %)






**37. Regional radio should be in 100% Limburgish .**

Fully disagree		9 (8.41 %)
Disagree		44 (41.12 %)
Neutral		43 (40.19 %)
Agree		9 (8.41 %)
Fully agree		2 (1.87 %)






**38. Regional radio should be in 100% Dutch.**

Fully disagree		12 (11.21 %)
Disagree		47 (43.93 %)
Neutral		39 (36.45 %)
Agree		7 (6.54 %)
Fully agree		2 (1.87 %)






**39. Regional radio should be a mix of Dutch and Limburgish.**

Fully disagree		4 (3.7 %)
Disagree		9 (8.33 %)
Neutral		41 (37.96 %)
Agree		45 (41.67 %)
Fully agree		9 (8.33 %)






**40. Regional newspapers should be in 100% Limburgish .**

Fully disagree		29 (26.85 %)
Disagree		61 (56.48 %)
Neutral		17 (15.74 %)
Agree		1 (0.93 %)
Fully agree		0 (0 %)






#### 41. Regional newspapers should be in 100% Dutch.

Fully disagree		8 (7.48 %)
Disagree		32 (29.91 %)
Neutral		22 (20.56 %)
Agree		35 (32.71 %)
Fully agree		10 (9.35 %)






#### 42. Regional newspapers should be a mix of Dutch and Limburgish.

Fully disagree		10 (9.26 %)
Disagree		33 (30.56 %)
Neutral		39 (36.11 %)
Agree		23 (21.3 %)
Fully agree		3 (2.78 %)






#### 43. All cultural expressions in Roermond should be in Limburgish.

Fully disagree		12 (11.21 %)
Disagree		57 (53.27 %)
Neutral		31 (28.97 %)
Agree		6 (5.61 %)
Fully agree		1 (0.93 %)






#### 44. Regional companies should provide contracts in Limburgish

Fully disagree		46 (42.99 %)
Disagree		53 (49.53 %)
Neutral		6 (5.61 %)
Agree		1 (0.93 %)
Fully agree		1 (0.93 %)

#### 45. Regional companies should provide manuals/instructions in Limburgish

Fully disagree		41 (38.32 %)
Disagree		52 (48.6 %)
Neutral		12 (11.21 %)
Agree		1 (0.93 %)
Fully agree		1 (0.93 %)

#### 46. Regional companies should stimulate the use of Limburgish on the work floor.

Fully disagree		20 (18.87 %)
Disagree		40 (37.74 %)
Neutral		35 (33.02 %)
Agree		10 (9.43 %)
Fully agree		1 (0.94 %)