

# 20 THINGS

## YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT EUROPE'S LANGUAGES



### THE SILBO LANGUAGE

of La Gomera, Spain, is an ancient whistling language and is still being taught in local schools.

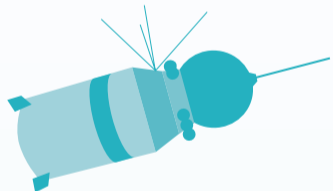
### MALTESE

is the only European language in the Afro-Asiatic family (which includes Arabic, Hebrew, Berber, and Hausa).

Aoccdnrig to a rscheearch sudty , it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltters in a wrod are; the olny iprmoatnt fatcor is taht the frist and lsat lttres be at the rghit pclae. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

### EUSKARA,

the Basque language, is believed to be one of the oldest European languages. Its origins are unknown.



Russian was the first language spoken in **OUTER SPACE**.

**LITHUANIAN** is very similar to ancient Sanskrit and is the oldest spoken Indo-European language.



It is believed that about **70,000 YEARS AGO**

a change happened in the human brain that allowed humans to suddenly develop complex language and thoughts about things that are not immediately visible. This led to the ability to develop ideas, plans, beliefs and bigger concepts and being able to express these with language.



More than half of Europe is **BILINGUAL**.

Languages have around

**50,000**

words or more.

Typically, native speakers know

**15,000 to 20,000**

word families but individual speakers normally use only a few hundred.

There are about

**225 INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

in Europe – roughly 3% of the world's total.

αβγδε

You may know much more Greek than you think! You are certainly familiar with alpha, beta, delta, gamma and perhaps π and P. In fact mathematics, astronomy, biology, geography, technology, philosophy, not to mention politics, democracy and many more common terms in Europe's languages all have their origins in Greek!

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### THE MOST DIFFICULT TO PRONOUNCE?

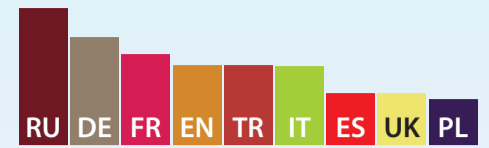
The Czech letter ř is said to be one of the most difficult letters to pronounce in the world – except if you are Czech!



### The EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

of the Council of Europe is the only treaty in the world which aims to protect and promote traditional regional and national minorities' languages.

The mother tongues spoken by most people in Europe are Russian, German, French, English and Turkish, in that order.



One of the main Serbian orthographic rules is

**“WRITE AS YOU SPEAK AND READ AS IT IS WRITTEN”.**

This means that even proper names coming into Serbian from another language are transcribed according to their pronunciation: for instance, New York is Njujork, and Gérard Depardieu is Žerar Depardje.



More than

**200 FAKE LANGUAGES**

have been created for literature and cinema (such as Elvish in “Lord of the Rings” and Klingon in “Star Trek”).

Recent medical studies have shown that learning a second language MAY delay the onset of **DEMENTIA** by several years.

### INDO-GERMANIC LANGUAGES

derive from an ancient language that existed 4000-5000 years ago. Most linguistic ethnologists locate it with human cultures living somewhere in the area of the Caspian Sea. From there it spread to Europe and as far as India.

According to UNESCO, at least

**43%**

of the estimated 6000 languages spoken in the world are **ENDANGERED**.



### KINSHASA,

the capital of the D. R. of the Congo, is the world's second largest French speaking city, after Paris, and before Montreal and Brussels.

20 years European Day of Languages  
**26 September**

