

ATLAS LINGUARUM EUROPAE

Background information:

The origins of this project date back in 1965, when the realisation of a European linguistic atlas was proposed at *The Geolinguistics International Congress* in Marburg. The project came into being in 1970 under UNESCO guidance and it represents the first and so far the only research project of such dimensions in the domain of linguistics; the project was approved of at the initiative of The Royal Science Academy in the Netherlands in 1976.

[The Introduction](#) to the *Atlas Linguarum Europae* was issued in Assen in 1975, followed by [The First Questionnaire](#)

in 1976 and by

The Second Questionnaire

in 1979. Thus,

The European Languages Atlas

exists for over a quarter of a century. The first fascicle from the first volume was issued in 1983 at Van Gorcum Publishing House in Assen and it includes both maps and linguistic commentaries. Once the fifth fascicle appeared in 1997, at the initiative of the president Mario Alinei the publishing of the atlas has been done by the Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato Publishing House in Rome.

The official languages of the project are English, French and German. The title word of the map is given in six languages (French, English, Russian, German, Spanish and Italian). The commentaries to the maps are edited in French, English or German. The last printed fascicle is the sixth in 2002, while the seventh is in the course of being printed under the guidance of Wolfgang Viereck, the ex-president of ALE.

Nicolae Saramandu has been the ALE president since 2005 and the archive and the General Secretariate are in Bucharest at the Institute of Linguistics, institute belonging to the Romanian Academy. Nicolae Saramandu followed the presidents A. Weijnen (1970-1982), M. Alinei (1982-1998) and W. Viereck (1998-2005). As the current ALE president and as co-author, Nicolae Saramandu coordinated national and international activities, maintaining connexions among the members of the International Editorial Board. The ALE activities in Bucharest are done with the financial support of the Romanian Academy.

The eighth fascicle is going to appear under the guidance of the current president. The commentaries and the legends for this fascicle are in final form. At its basis, ALE is an interpretative atlas that makes use of both traditional and innovative methods. ALE is a lexical atlas, but certain phonetic and morphological phenomena can be also observed.

On the basis of onomasiological and motivational maps, ALE offers a rigorous typology of languages and dialects spoken in Europe. Motivational maps are an innovation in the field of linguistic geography and a modern form of interpreting lexical data. These maps are based both on etymological criteria and on investigating some answers regarding the notions' name. From the point of view of the maps included (semasiological, onomasiological and motivational maps, among which the latest give the atlas a note of originality), ALE represents a complex data basis for different linguistic research and at the same time it offers relevant information regarding Europe's cultural history .

The already published six fascicles are dedicated to the vocabulary and they contain data regarding different semantic spheres: plants, animals, natural phenomena, land setting, jobs, the body and its senses, family etc.

ALE is the first continental linguistic atlas, whose frontiers are neither political nor linguistic, but mere geographical. The choice of the continent derives from the fact that the linguistic situation in Europe is a complex one. There exist six families of languages on the European territory: Altaic, Basque, Indo-European, Caucasian, Semitic and Uralic. Within these language families there exist 22 language groups (such as Romance, Germanic or Celtic), which in their turn consist of 90 languages and individual dialects. The heterogeneous material was collected in 2631 localities from Iceland to the Ural Mountains. The ALE members belong to the [47 national committees](#)

, to which 4 committees for the minority languages have been added.

The ALE members are invited to take part in annual working meetings, where, besides presentation of the maps in work, numerous exchanges of scientific information take place, administrative problems are solved, reports on the previous activities are done and future activities are established. Generally, these reunions have been organised by traditional university centres or research institutes from Nijmegen (1970, 1971, 1972, 1973), Köln (1970), Prague (1972), Bucharest (1974), Marburg (1975, 1978), Strassbourg (1976), Warsaw (1977, 1991), Moscow (1979, 1987, 1990), Amsterdam (1980), Bardonecchia (Torino, 1981), Copenhagen (1982), Leipzig (1983), Aussois (1984), Belgrade (1985), Edinburgh (1986), Pécs (1986), Grenoble (1987, 1993), Balatonszabadi (1988), Turku (1988), St. Vincent (Aosta, 1989), Schellhorn Kiel (1989), Brest (1990, 2004), Florence (1991), Glencolmcille (1992), Uppsala (1992), Budapest (1993), Thessaloniki (1994), Tallinn (1994), Fossano (1995), Amsterdam (1997), Florence (1998), Msida (Malta, 1999), Lublin (2000), Uppsala (2001), Ljubljana (2002), Riga (1996, 2003),

[Brno \(2005\)](#)

,
[Dubrovnik \(2006\)](#)

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[Struga \(2007\)](#)

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[Durrës \(2008\)](#)

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[Glasgow \(2009\)](#)

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[Krakow \(2010\)](#)

,
[Leeuwarden \(2011\)](#)

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[Riga \(2012\)](#)

,
[Bayonne \(2013\),](#)

[Marburg \(2014\)](#)

,
[Sofia \(2015\)](#)

,

[Ulster \(2016\)](#)

,
[Londonderry \(2017\)](#)

,
[Santiago de Compostela \(2017\)](#)

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Useful links: [Published questions 1](#) , [Published questions 2](#) , [Model Map](#)

Maps: [Berger](#) , [Cahier](#) , [Cordonnier](#) , [Crayon](#) , [Epouvantail](#) , [Foie](#) , [Hetre](#) , [Letter](#) , [Papier](#) ,
[Pissenlit](#)

,
[Pomme de terre](#)

,
[Puits](#)

[Notes for contributors](#)

PUBLICATIONS:

Atlas Linguarum Europae: Introduction (1975). Assen (Van Gorcum).

Atlas Linguarum Europae: Premier Questionnaire (1976). Assen (Van Gorcum).

Atlas Linguarum Europae : Second Questionnaire (1979). Assen (Van Gorcum).

Atlas Linguarum Europae (1983). Volume I: *Premier fascicule, Cartes et Commentaires*. Assen (Van Gorcum).

Atlas Linguarum Europae (1986). Volume I: *Deuxième fascicule, Cartes et Commentaires*. Assen/Maastricht (Van Gorcum).

Atlas Linguarum Europae (1988). Volume I: *Troisième fascicule, Cartes et Commentaires*. Assen (Van Gorcum).

Atlas Linguarum Europae (1990). Volume I: *Quatrième fascicule, Cartes et Commentaires*. Assen/Maastricht (Van Gorcum).

Atlas Linguarum Europae (1997). Volume I: *Cinquième fascicule, Cartes et Commentaires*. Roma (Poligrafico).

Atlas Linguarum Europae Perspectives nouvelles en géolinguistique (1997). Roma (Poligrafico).

Atlas Linguarum Europae (2002). Volume I: *Sixième fascicule, Cartes et Commentaires*. Roma (Poligrafico).

Atlas Linguarum Europae (2007). Volume I: *Septième fascicule, Cartes et Commentaires*. Roma (Poligrafico).

Atlas Linguarum Europae (2014). Volume I: *Huitième fascicule, Commentaires*. Bucureşti (Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti).

Atlas Linguarum Europae (2014). Volume I: *Huitième fascicule, Cartes linguistiques européennes*. Bucureşti (Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti).

For other details regarding the importance of the atlas and a detailed history of it see Wolfgang Viereck, „The *Atlas Linguarum Europae* - its linguistic and cultural significance”, in *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique*, Tome L, 1-2, Bucureşti 2005, p.73-92.

Cf. Mario Alinei, „The *Atlas Linguarum Europae* after a quarter century: a new presentation”, in *Atlas Linguarum Europae. Perspectives nouvelles en géolinguistique*, Instituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Roma, 1997 and the *ALE* archive.

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