



# EUROPEAN LANGUAGE EQUALITY

META  NET  
META  FORUM 2023

## The Role of National and Regional Language Institutes for Digital Language Equality

Sabine Kirchmeier (EFNIL)  
sabine@kirchmeier.dk

27-06-2023 META-FORUM 2023 – Digital Language Equality for a Multilingual Europe  
<http://european-language-equality.eu>

# The panel

## EFNIL

- Frieda Steurs (Instituut voor de Nederlandse Taal, Netherlands)
- Kristine Eide (Norwegian Language Council, Norway)
- Svetla Koeva (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria)
- Rickard Domeij (Language Council of Sweden, Sweden)

## ELEN

- Davyth Hicks (European Language Equality Network)



EUROPEAN LANGUAGE  
EQUALITY NETWORK

Set up in 2012 replacing EBLUL.

ELEN represents **50 languages with 174 member organisations in 25 European states.**

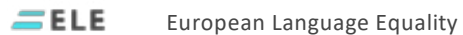
ELEN members comprise most of Europe's **civil society territorial language organisations.**

Focus on **advocacy work** at international institutions and **project work**.

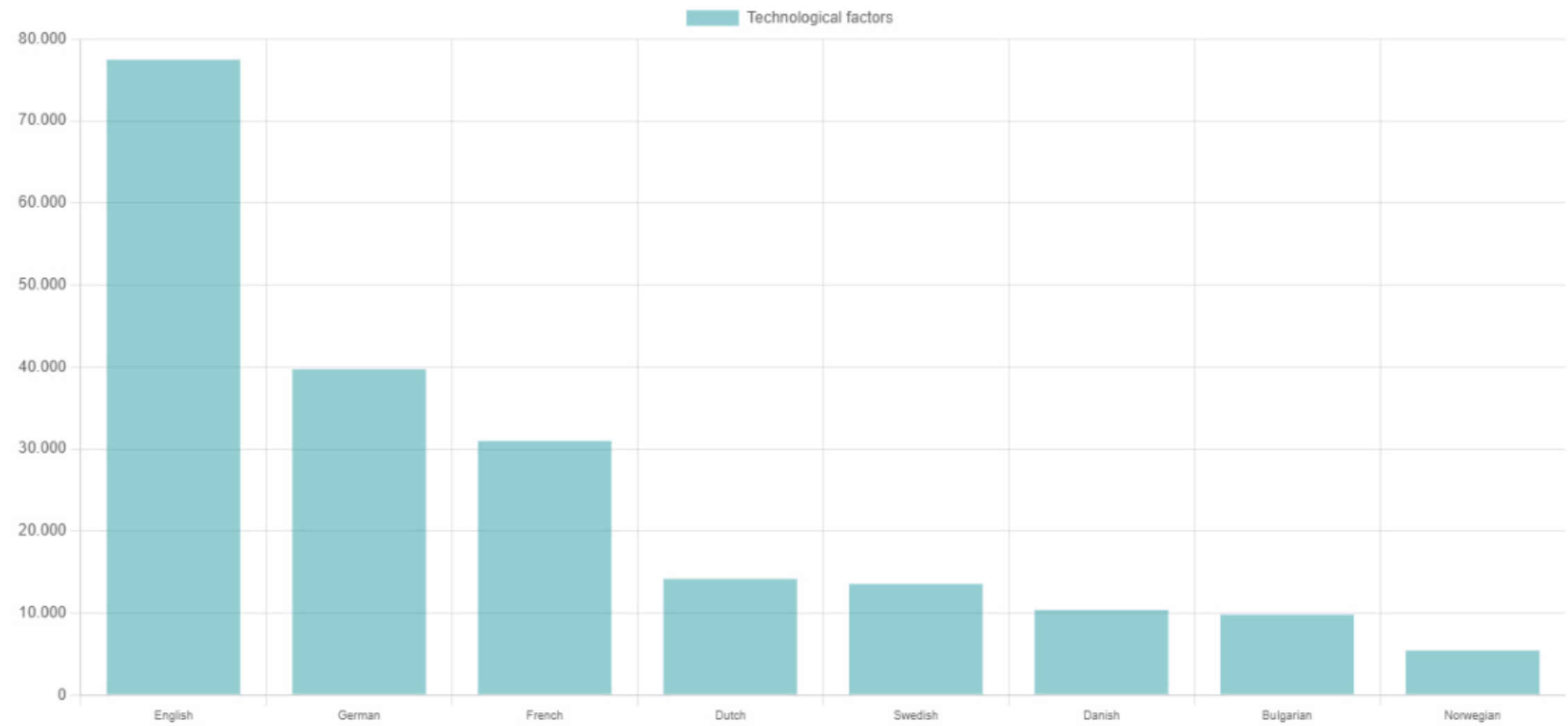




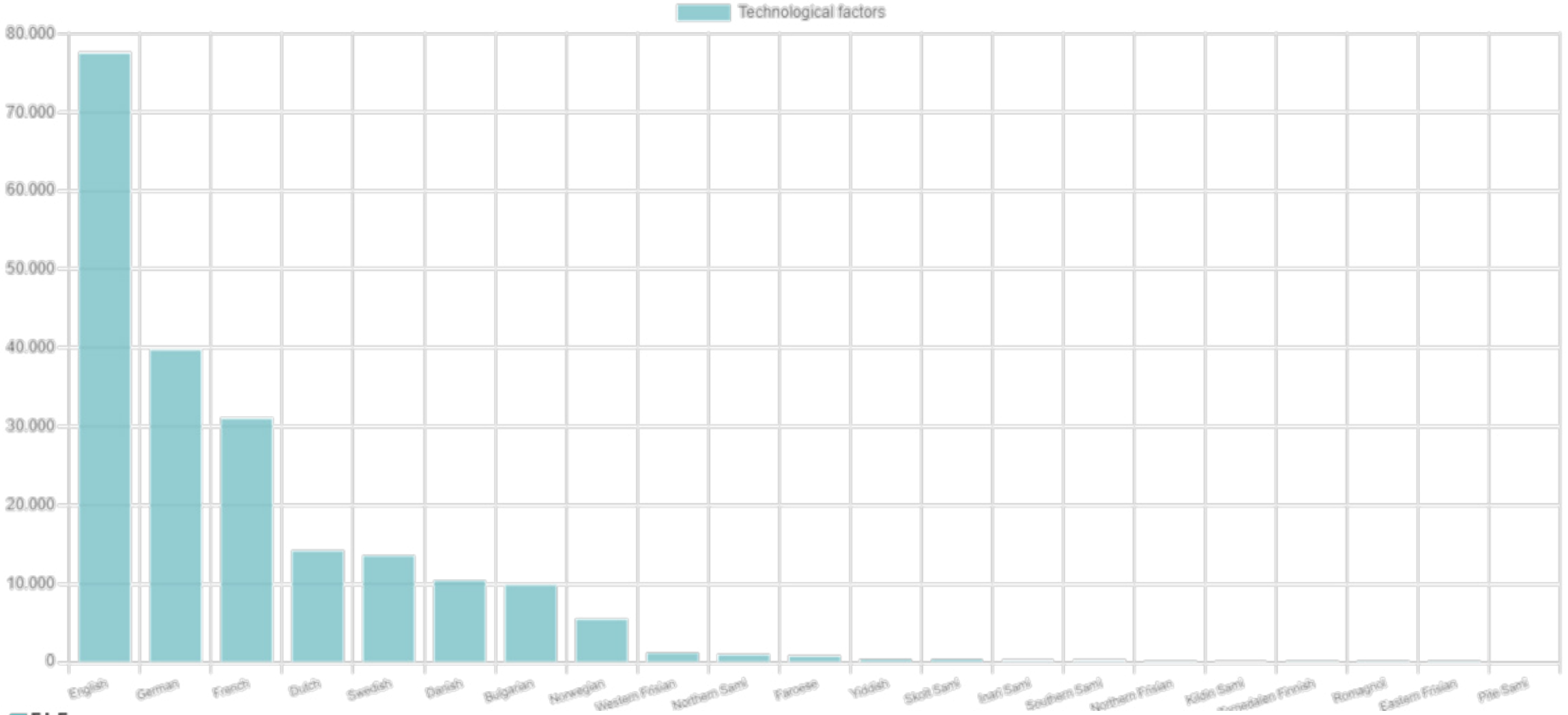
EUROPEAN  
LANGUAGE  
EQUALITY



# DLE Metric Technological Scores for Panel Speakers' National Languages



# DLE Technological Scores for (Panel Speakers') National Language and Official Minority Languages



## Panel Question 1

What initiatives are your institutions taking to ensure the digital survival of your languages?

# **Svetla Koeva**

## **Institute for Bulgarian Language, Bulgarian Academy of Science**

Official language: Bulgarian (6,5 mill. speakers)

- For 85.3% – Bulgarian is their mother tongue;
- for 8.7% – Turkish;
- for 3.9% – Romani;
- for 1.1% – other languages.

Number of Bulgarian language speakers abroad:  
1.7 million, according to the 2020 World Bank report.

# Frida Steurs

## Instituut voor de Nederlandse Taal (Dutch Language Institute)

- Official languages:
  - Dutch: 25 million speakers (Netherlands, Belgium, abroad)
  - Frysian: 450,000 speakers (province of Fryslan)
  - Dutch sign language (NGT): 60,000 users (Netherlands)
  - Flemish sign language (VGT): 6,000 users (Flanders)
- Minority languages:
  - The Netherlands has recognised Limburgish, Lowlands Saxon, Yiddish and Sinti-Romanes as regional or non-territorial languages

# Rickard Domeij

## Language Council of Sweden

Official language: Swedish (about 9 mill. speakers)

National minority languages:

- Sami (about 6.000 speakers)
- Finnish (20.0000)
- Meänkieli (25.000)
- Romani (50.000-10.0000)
- Jiddisch (1.000-3.000)
- Swedish sign language (15.000)

# Kristine Eide

## Language Council of Norway

Official language:

- Norwegian (approx. 5 mill. speakers)

Official written languages:

- Norwegian Nynorsk (approx. 10-15%)
- Norwegian Bokmål (approx. 85%).

Indigenous languages: Sami languages

- Lule Sami: 1.000
- North Sami: 26 000
- South Sami: 600

Minority languages:

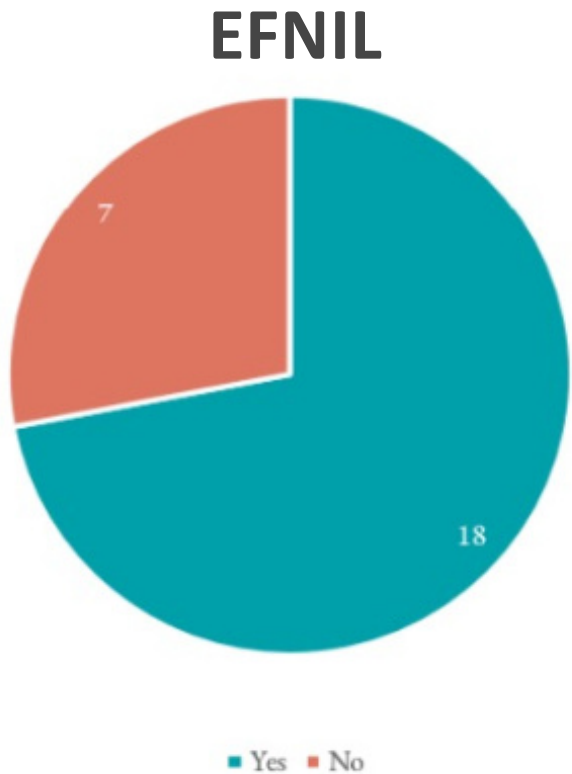
- Kven 2. 000 – 8.000
- Romanes (-)
- Romani (-)
- Norwegian sign language (approx. 16 500 users)

## Davyth Hicks

### European Language Equality Network (ELEN)

- ELEN represents 50 languages with 174 member organisations in 25 European states.
- ELEN members comprise most of Europe's civil society territorial language organisations.
- Focus on advocacy work at international institutions and project work.

# ELE survey: Is your institution responsible for developing, updating and maintaining language resources?



## Panel Question 2

What is your view on the recent development in language technology and artificial intelligence and what does it mean for the languages you represent?

## Panel Question 3

Has your strategy for language resources changed in the light of the demand for more language data for the development of large language models?

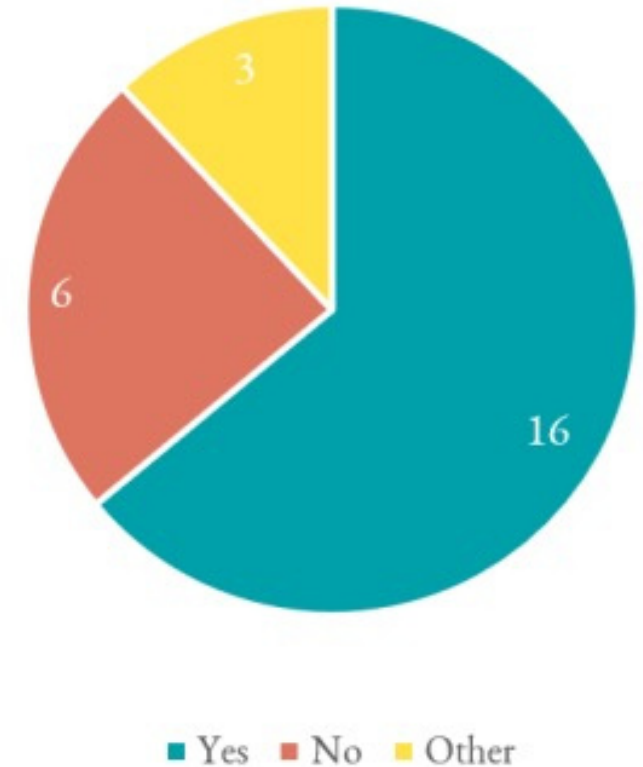
# ELE survey: Plans for Resources in EFNIL and ELEN Institutions

## EFNIL

- Corpora, especially multimodal and speech
- Language models
- LT tools for internal use such as neologism spotter
- Expansion of current resources

## ELEN

- Corpora, especially text and speech
- LT tools such as MT and speech applications
- Expansion of current (basic) resources
- Language models



## Panel Question 4

What are the obstacles against sharing technological resources and data for your languages, and how can they be overcome?

## ELE Survey: Obstacles against Sharing Resources?

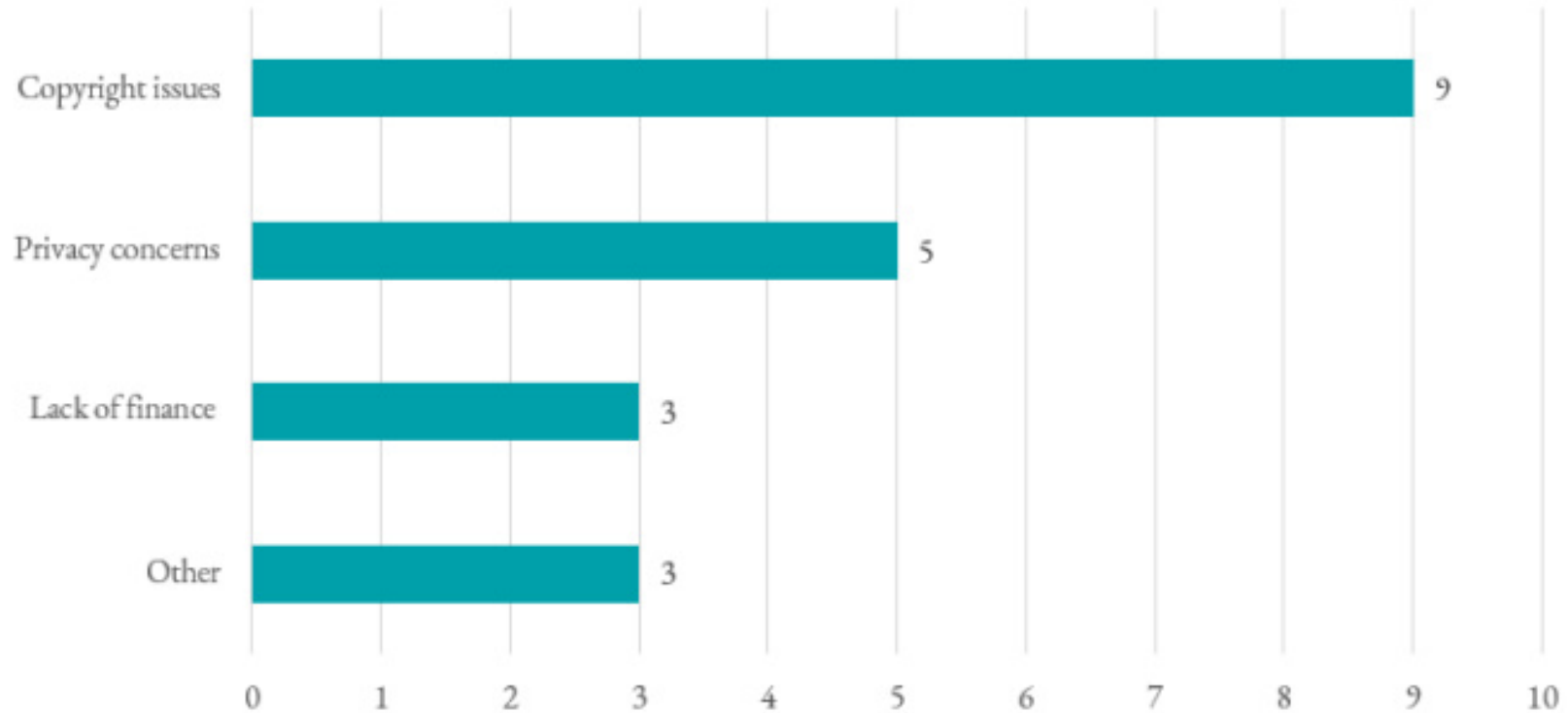


Figure 8: What are the reasons for not making these resources accessible?

## Panel Question 5

What are your expectations and wishes regarding the recent initiatives proposed – the European Language Data Space and the Language EDIC?

# Panel Recommendations on Language Data Space/Language EDIC

- The panel strongly supports the aim of full digital language equality in Europe by 2030, and the plans for a European Language Technology infrastructure.
- The LT infrastructure should reduce the technology gap between European languages.
- The LT infrastructure should support and enable EU policies and national language policies and ensure that the policy recommendations from the ELE SRIA are followed up.
- The focus should not only be on technology and market, but also on language needs and rights, and on accessibility of language data.
- Rule-based technology still works best for many minority languages. It must be part of the infrastructure, too.
- Minority language representatives must be involved in building the LT infrastructure to a greater extent, and the right to include and use minority languages on digital platforms must be strengthened.
- The problem of lack of finance and expertise for LT development for smaller language communities must be addressed and solved.



European Language Equality



# Thank you!



The European Language Equality project has received funding from the European Union under grant agreements № LC-01641480 – 101018166 (ELE) and № LC-01884166 – 101075356 (ELE2).

Sabine Kirchmeier (EFNIL)  
sabine@kirchmeier.dk

27-06-2023 META-FORUM 2023 – Digital Language Equality for a Multilingual Europe  
<http://european-language-equality.eu>