BIG Solutions for Small Languages

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Will the small languages survive?

• Tough language competition
• Some language dies in every two weeks
• Futurologist Alvin Toffler:
  «Future of the smaller languages depends on machine translation» (1996)
• Only 1.6 M native speakers
• Rich in inflections
  *about 23 M wordforms in contemporary Latvian*
• During the last centuries has faced tough competition from German, Russian, English
• Official Language of European Union
• BLARK (Basic Language Resource Kit) not yet completed
• Locally developed language technology tools widely used
  *Tilde software on >500 000 desktop in Baltics*

• **Latvian National Corpus** Initiative

• Industry and academia **cluster** on language technologies currently being established

• **Language Shore** initiative
International cooperation structure to integrate the skills of professionals in the education, research and industry sectors

at the Latvian national, Baltic Sea regional and global levels

consolidation of the resources and activities of language technology companies and research institutions

in the EU, post-Soviet countries and beyond

to achieve critical mass for providing efficient R&D in language technologies for smaller languages.
Leveraging Innovation: EU FP7 and ICT PSP projects
SMALL languages deserve to have BIG technologies!

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