

# Foreword

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The clash between supporters and opponents of the so-called “linguistic territoriality principle” — or, as it is often characterized, between advocates of the *droit du sol* and advocates of the *droit des gens* — is one of the most emotional aspects of the conflict between Belgium’s two main communities. After being repeatedly requested to do so, the steering group of the Re-Bel initiative decided to select this issue as one of the two themes to be discussed at its 4th public event, held at the University Foundation on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2010, and hence as the subject of the e-book based on it.

The lead piece of this e-book is the background paper that was circulated to four commentators and to the other participants of the public event. It coincides largely with the first “Lecture for the XXI<sup>st</sup> century” delivered in November 2007 at the K.U. Leuven (Van Parijs 2008) and summarizes some of the central claims articulated and defended in a book published this month (Van Parijs 2011), with a special emphasis on the theme of its fifth (and longest) chapter entitled “Linguistic territoriality”. The formulation proposed in this chapter (finalized long after the lecture and also made available to the commentators) is somewhat different from the formulation adopted in the lead piece, but the substance is not fundamentally different.

Among the comments included in this e-book, those by philosopher Helder De Schutter (K.U.Leuven), by economists François Grin (Université de Genève) and Henry Tulkens (Université de Louvain) and by historian Harry Van Velthoven (Hogeschool Gent) are written versions of their oral interventions at the Re-Bel event. Because of their keen interest in the subject and original approach to it, Jan Velaers, constitutional lawyer (Universiteit Antwerpen) and member of the Venice Group, and Alain Maskens, medical doctor, writer and founder of the Brussels association Manifesto, were subsequently invited to join. An extensive “Reply” provides a selective response to all six critical comments.

## References

Van Parijs, Philippe. 2008. “Linguistic Justice for Europe, Belgium and the World”, in *Lectures for the XXI<sup>st</sup> Century* (B. Raymaekers ed.), Leuven University Press, pp. 13-36.

Van Parijs, Philippe. 2011. *Linguistic Justice for Europe and for the World* Oxford: Oxford University Press.