Measuring the degree of language maintenance has been of growing interest in sociolinguistics since the 1970s when the first efforts to create systematic assessment tools were made within the paradigm of ethnolinguistic vitality studies. Over the decades, several instruments with an in-build potential of universal applicability have been launched and tested in a wide variety of contexts all over the world. These include the GIDS (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) by Fishman (1991, 2001), Edward’s 1992 language maintenance typology, the UNESCO Framework (2003), the EGIDS (Extended Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) by Lewis and Simons (2010), as well as some of the methodical approaches developed in ethnolinguistic vitality studies (e.g. Ehala and Niglas 2007; Ehala 2010; Yagmur and de Vijver 2011).

The current paper will present and critically discuss the so far newest assessment tool, the European Language Vitality Barometer (EuLaViBar) which was created by the international, interdisciplinary EU-FP7 project ELDIA (European Language Diversity for All, www.eldia-project.org) in 2010-2013. Initially the project grew from the acute need of re-evaluating and re-conceptualising multilingualism in today’s world characterized by the radically changed critical functions and social positions of languages, and from the urgent need of finding effective ways to support the traditional and the new forms of language diversity in Europe and beyond. The project outcome, the EuLaViBar, is a tool which illustrates and summarises quantitative survey data, as well as a thematic map which can be used to ”guide” future interventions aiming at promoting the maintenance of endangered languages. The paper will first briefly introduce the theoretical framework, then give an overview of the method of creating a barometer for a given language, and close with an assessment of the strengths and the weaknesses of the implemented research methods and the tool itself.

Keywords: tools for language policies and planning, measuring language maintenance, minority languages.