Joint Statement from National Language Associations on Proposed Redundancies at the University of Exeter

To

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We, the undersigned representatives of UK national language associations, wish to express our deep concern regarding the recently announced proposals that place a substantial number of academic colleagues at risk of compulsory redundancy. The scale and concentration of the proposed cuts, particularly within the humanities and social sciences, and notably in disciplines central to language, culture, and communication, pose serious risks not only to the affected staff but also to the long term academic strength and international reputation of the University of Exeter.

Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines play a vital role in the intellectual, cultural, and civic life of the UK. They contribute directly to public engagement, international collaboration, global competitiveness, and the development of graduates equipped to navigate an interconnected world. Significant reductions in these areas would have consequences far beyond the institution itself, affecting national capacity in languages and undermining the broader ecosystem of scholarship, research, and education.

At a time when the sector is actively reflecting on how to place the human at the centre of our practices in an era shaped by rapid advances in artificial intelligence, these proposed cuts feel particularly at odds with the needs of the moment. Language based disciplines cultivate precisely the forms of cultural understanding, critical interpretation, and human centred communication that AI cannot replicate. Reducing capacity in these areas risks weakening the very expertise that enables universities, and society, as well as our students, to navigate technological change responsibly and creatively.

We stand in solidarity with colleagues at the University of Exeter during this period of uncertainty and stress. We respectfully urge the University to reconsider the nature of the proposed restructuring, to engage meaningfully with staff and representative bodies, and to explore alternative approaches that safeguard both academic excellence and staff wellbeing.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further and to support constructive dialogue that protects the integrity and future of language education and research in the UK.

Signed,

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President of GLA, German Language Association UK

Executive committee of BAKLE, the British Association of Korean Language Education

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