# Preface

The 8th International Workshop of the ISCA Special Interest Group on Speech and Language Technol- ogy for Minority Languages (SALTMIL)1 and the Fourth Workshop on African Language Technology (AfLaT2012)2 is held as a joint effort as part of the 2012 International Language Resources and Eval- uation Conference (LREC 2012). Entitled “*Language technology for normalisation of less-resourced languages*”, the workshop is intended to continue the series of SALTMIL/LREC workshops on com- putational language resources for minority languages, held in Granada (1998), Athens (2000), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (2002), Lisbon (2004), Genoa (2006), Marrakech (2008) and Malta (2010), and the series of AfLaT workshops, held in Athens (EACL2009), Malta (LREC2010) and Addis Ababa (AGIS11).

The Istanbul 2012 workshop aims to share information on tools and best practices, so that isolated researchers will not need to start from scratch. An important aspect will be the forming of personal contacts, which can minimize duplication of effort. There will be a balance between presentations of existing language resources, and more general presentations designed to give background information needed by all researchers.

While less-resourced languages and minority languages often struggle to find their place in a digi- tal world dominated by only a handful of commercially interesting languages, a growing number of researchers are working on alleviating this linguistic digital divide, through localisation efforts, the development of BLARKs (basic language resource kits) and practical applications of human language technologies. The joint SALTMIL/AfLaT workshop on “Language technology for normalisation of less-resourced languages” provides a unique opportunity to connect these researchers and set up a common forum to meet and share the latest developments in the field.

The workshop takes an inclusive approach to the word normalisation, considering it to include both technologies that help make languages more “normal” in society and everyday life, as well as tech- nologies that normalise languages, i.e. help create or maintain a written standard or support diversity in standards. We particularly focus on the challenges less-resourced and minority languages face in the digital world.

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1<http://ixa2.si.ehu.es/saltmil> 2[http://AfLaT.org](http://AfLaT.org/)

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