

**European Parliament Resolution
on linguistic and cultural minorities in the European Community**

(Resolution prepared by Mark Killilea and adopted by the European Parliament on February 1994.)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 16 October 1981 on a Community charter of regional languages and cultures and a charter of rights for ethnic minorities,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 February 1983 on measures in favour of minority languages and cultures,
 - having regard to its resolution of 30 October 1987 on the languages and cultures of regional and ethnic minorities in the European Community,
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 January 1993 on the Commission communication to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee entitled "New Prospects for Community cultural action",
 - having regard to the motions for resolutions by:
 - Mr Hume and others on the minority languages (B3-0016/90);
 - Mr Gangoiti Llaguno on the promotion and use of regional and/or minority languages (B3-2113/90);
 - Mr Bandrés Molet on granting broadcasting licences to Basque-language radio stations (B3-0523/91);
 - Mrs Van Hemeldonck on the signing of the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages (B3-1351/92);
 - having regard to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, accorded the legal form of a European Convention by the Council of Europe, and opened for signature on 5 November 1992,
 - having regard to the final document of the Copenhagen meeting of the CSCE conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (5-29 June 1990) and in particular to Chapter IV of that document;
 - having regard to the Chapter of Paris for a New Europe (CSCE) adopted in Paris on 21 November 1991,
 - having regard to rule 148 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media and the opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights (A3-0042/94),
- A. encouraged by the commitment, contained in Article 128 of the EC Treaty, to the Community contributing to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States while respecting their national and regional diversity,
- B. declaring the need for a European linguistic culture and recognising that its scope also includes protection of the linguistic heritage, the overcoming of the language barrier, the promotion of lesser-used languages and the safeguarding of minority languages,
- C. encouraged by the process of democratization in central and eastern Europe and in particular by the determination of recently democratized peoples to promote their own languages and cultures,
- D. whereas all peoples have the right to respect for their language and culture and must therefore have the necessary legal means to protect and promote them,
- E. whereas the linguistic diversity of the European Union is a key element in the Union's cultural wealth,
- F. whereas the protection and promotion of the Union's linguistic diversity is a key factor in the creation of a peaceful and democratic Europe,
- G. whereas the Community has a responsibility to support the Member States in developing their cultures and

protecting national and regional diversity, including the diversity of indigenous regional and minority languages,

H. whereas the Community should encourage action by the Member States in cases where the protection of such languages and cultures is inadequate or non-existent,

I. whereas the Community also has a duty in its relations with the governments of associated and third countries to draw attention to the rights of minorities and, if necessary, to support governments in finding ways of ensuring that these rights are safeguarded; whereas it must also condemn any deliberate denial of these rights,

J. whereas the linguistic diversity of the European Union is a reflection of its cultural diversity and too often goes unrecognised,

K. whereas language is an essential means of communication in the European Union now being created and whereas European integration must make the use of the most widespread languages as a way of communicating across the present internal borders compatible with protecting and safeguarding the less widespread languages in regional or transregional contexts,

L. whereas the minority languages and cultures are also an integral part of the Union's culture and European heritage and whereas, from this point of view, the Community should provide them with legal protection and the appropriate financial resources to this end,

M. whereas many lesser used languages are endangered, with a rapid drop in the number of speakers, and whereas this threatens the well-being of specific population groups and greatly diminishes Europe's creative potential as a whole,

N. whereas, while the duty of every Member State government to protect and promote its official language(s) must be fully respected, it must not be exercised to the detriment of the lesser used languages and the people for whom they are the natural cultural vehicle;

O. whereas, however, the term "minority languages and cultures" may embrace phenomena of differing characteristics and dimensions according to the Member State in question and may be understood as referring to certain languages which are already official in some Member States but which do not receive adequate dissemination or identical status in the neighbouring Member State or another Member State,

1. Calls for the principles and proposals set out in its aforementioned resolutions of 16 October 1981, 11 February 1983 and 30 October 1987 to be fully applied;
2. Points out again the need for Member States to recognise their linguistic minorities and to make the necessary legal and administrative provisions for them to create the basic conditions for the preservation and development of these languages;
3. Believes, furthermore, that all minority languages and cultures should also be protected by appropriate legal statute in the Member States;
4. Considers that this legal statute should at least cover the use and encouragement of such languages and cultures in the spheres of education, justice and public administration, the media, toponymics and other sectors of public and cultural life without prejudice to the use of the most widespread languages, when required to ensure ease of communication within each of the Member States or in the Union as a whole;
5. Points out that the fact that a proportion of the citizens of a state use a language or have a culture which is different from the dominant one in that state or from the dominant one in a part or region of that state should not give rise to discrimination of any kind, or, in particular, to any form of social marginalisation that would impede their access to, or continuance in, employment;
6. Supports the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, accorded the legal form of a European Convention, as an effective yet flexible instrument for the protection and promotion of lesser used languages;
7. Calls on the Member State governments which have not yet done so as a matter of urgency to sign and their parliaments to ratify the Convention choosing at all times to apply those paragraphs best suited to the needs and aspiration of the linguistic communities in question;
8. Calls on the Member State governments and on the local and regional authorities to encourage and support specialised associations, in particular the Member State Committees of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages so that the responsibilities of citizens and their organisations for the development of their language

can be realised;

9. Urges the Member States and the relevant regions and local authorities to examine the possibility of concluding agreements to create trans-frontier linguistic institutions for any minority languages or cultures existing in two neighbouring countries or in several Member States simultaneously;

10. Calls on the Commission to:

a) contribute, within its field of competence, to the implementation of the initiatives undertaken by the Member States in this area;

b) take account of the lesser used languages and their attendant cultures when working out various areas of Community policy, and make equivalent provision for the needs of speakers of lesser used languages, in all educational and cultural programmes, e.g., YOUTH FOR EUROPE, ERASMUS, TEMPUS, European Dimension, Platform Europe, MEDIA, schemes for the translation of contemporary literary work;

c) encourage the use of lesser used languages in the Community's audiovisual policy, for instance in respect of High Definition Television and assist lesser used language producers and broadcasters to produce new programmes in 16:9 format;

d) ensure that modern digital telecommunications technology, which allows for the compressing of satellite and cable broadcast transmissions, is used for carrying a greater number of minority languages;

e) put in place as quickly as possible a programme inspired by LINGUA for lesser used languages, with use being made of networks which have already been developed in the framework of the activities of the Bureau for Lesser Used Languages such as the mercator education network;

f) facilitate the immediate publication, after corrections and additions, of the scientific map of lesser used language communities in the EC, prepared by the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages;

g) encourage the publication of the Treaties of the European Communities and other basic provisions and informations on the European Community and its activities in the Union's lesser used languages;

11. Calls on the Council and Commission to:

a) continue their support and encouragement for European organizations representing the lesser used languages, particularly the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, and to provide them with the necessary resources;

b) ensure that adequate budgetary provision is made for the Community's programmes in favour of lesser used languages and their attendant cultures and propose a multiannual action programme in this field;

c) take due account of the linguistic and cultural heritage of regions in the development of regional policy and in the allocation of funds from the ERDF by supporting integrated regional development projects which include measures to support regional languages and cultures, as well as in the development of social policy and in the allocation of funds from the ESF;

d) take due account of the needs of speakers of lesser used languages in the countries of central and eastern Europe, when developing EC programmes for economic and social reconstruction, and in particular the PHARE programme;

e) encourage the translation of books and literary works and the subtitling of films between minority languages or into Community languages;

f) ensure that in encouraging minority languages, the European Community does not do so to the detriment of the main relevant national language and must, in turn, ensure this in no way affects the teaching of that main language in schools;

12. Calls for the languages spoken on overseas territories belonging to the Member States to enjoy the same rights and provisions as mainland languages;

13. In relation to non-territorial autochthonous languages (e.g. the Roma and Sinti languages and Yiddish) calls on all relevant bodies to apply mutatis mutandis the recommendations set out in this resolution;

14. Stresses that the recommendations contained in this resolution are not such as to jeopardise the territorial

integrity or public order of the Member States, and furthermore, are not to be interpreted as implying the right to enter into any activity or carry out any action which contravenes the objectives of the United Nations Charter or any other obligation laid down in international law;

15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the central and regional governments of the Member States, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the United Nations and UNESCO.