Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Motion for a resolution[1]
tabled by Mr Lluís Maria de PUIG i OLIVE and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The Assembly points out that the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is the only binding legal instrument specifically devoted to the safeguarding of regional or minority languages. The monitoring process shows that the charter system has improved the situation of regional or minority languages in almost all states parties.

The charter's conception that the recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity will ultimately reduce tensions arising from minority issues explains why it is also perceived as an essential contribution to the maintenance of peace and stability.

Regrettably, the increased international recognition of the charter is not reflected by the number of ratifications. At present, the charter has been ratified by only 22 member states of the Council of Europe and signed by a further 11 member states. The rhythm of signatures has almost completely come to a standstill.

The Assembly very early recognised that in many cases the charter offers the sole hope of survival of the fragile heritage which regional or minority languages constitute. From the mid-1990s onwards, it systematically required new member states to commit themselves to accede to the charter.

A special responsibility is placed on the national parliaments concerned to urge their governments to make all the necessary efforts so that the ratification process can be completed without further delay.

If the present trend is not reversed, it will inevitably lead to the extinction of languages in regions where they have been traditionally used for centuries and where they represent an integral part of regional identity.

Therefore, the Assembly calls on the 25 Council of Europe member states that have not signed or ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages to do so as soon as possible.

Signed (see overleaf)

1. Referred to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, for report: Reference No. 3406 (9th Sitting, 25 January 2008).

Signed[2]*:*

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2. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group