Recommendation 814 (1977)[1]

Modern languages in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that a knowledge of languages is not only essential for communication and exchanges between Europeans, but also leads to the mutual understanding of cultural values ;

2. Being of the opinion that cultural diversity is an irreplaceable asset, and that this justifies the active maintenance of language minorities in Europe ;

3. Emphasising the importance of ensuring that everyone should learn at least one widely used language, but at the same time encouraging the diversification of teaching in this area ;

4. Recalling its Recommendation 786 (1976), on the education and cultural development of migrants, and recognising the socio-cultural implications of the teaching of languages, and hence the need for special efforts to facilitate the acquisition by migrants of languages including their mother tongue and that of their host country ;

5. Appreciating the efforts made at the international and European levels, in particular within the Council of Europe and the European Communities, and with reference to the aims set out in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe for encouraging exchanges in the field of education ;

6. Recalling its Recommendation 535 (1972), on the promotion of modern languages in Europe, and its Order No. 364 (1977), urging a study of minority languages and dialects ;

7. Considering that Resolution (69) 2, adopted by the Committee of Ministers, could have proved a suitable instrument for the implementation of effective and co-ordinated language teaching programmes, but that it does not seem to have obtained the anticipated results ;

8. Welcoming the work undertaken by the CCC in the field of modern languages, and in particular as regards the implementation of new methods of language teaching,

9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

a. call on the governments of the member states of the Council of Europe to develop the teaching of modern languages, taking account of :

the particular needs of less privileged groups, particularly migrants ;

the need to diversify the languages taught ;

the cultural advantages of maintaining language minorities in Europe ;

the pedagogical aspects of language learning ;

b. encourage, with regard to the teaching of languages, the adoption of co-ordinated educational policies based on proposals drawn up at European level ;

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1. Assembly debate on 5 October 1977 (7th Sitting) (seeDoc. 4018, report of the Committee on Culture and Education). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 October 1977 (7th Sitting).

c. report on the action taken by member states on Resolution (69) 2 adopted by the Committee of Ministers ;

d. support the activities of the CCC in the field of modern languages, and in particular the work of the group of experts engaged in the development of a European unit-credit system with special emphasis on the differing basic requirements of types of learners (threshold levels).