



Recommendation 1833 (2008)¹

Promoting the teaching of European literature

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is concerned to ensure that European literature is passed on – at all levels of the education system – in all its wealth and diversity, whether in the form of the written heritage built up over the centuries or in the form of contemporary writing. This concern for the teaching of literature prompted a colloquy on the subject at the French Senate in Paris on 11 December 2007.
2. The Assembly has already stated its position in [Recommendation 815 \(1977\)](#) on freedom of expression and the role of the writer in Europe, [Recommendation 1043 \(1986\)](#) on Europe's linguistic and literary heritage, [Recommendation 1135 \(1990\)](#) on literary translation, [Recommendation 1383 \(1998\)](#) on linguistic diversification, [Recommendation 1539 \(2001\)](#) on the European Year of Languages and [Recommendation 1740 \(2006\)](#) on the place of the mother tongue in school education.
3. Knowledge of a language involves more than just mastering it as a means of communication. Knowledge of great works of literature enriches thought as well as life itself.
4. Learning one's mother tongue and its literature plays a major part in forging a national consciousness among schoolchildren. Learning other European languages and their literature can help to inculcate European citizenship.
5. The Assembly notes that some successful transnational experiments have taken place, particularly with regard to history teaching.
6. It is necessary to go beyond a strictly national conception of literature teaching and offer schoolchildren at all levels a transversal approach to Europe's heritage, highlighting the common link of respect for cultural diversity.
7. The Assembly recognises that the Internet has become an important means of access to knowledge and in this connection welcomes the European Parliament's proposal to establish a European digital library in the form of a single, direct and multilingual point of access to Europe's cultural heritage.
8. Accordingly, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers encourage member states, and especially their education authorities, to:
 - 8.1. rekindle a desire to read among young people by promoting the teaching of Europe's literary heritage in all types of primary and secondary education and by devising appropriate syllabuses for all levels;
 - 8.2. provide this teaching in addition to, and not instead of, the teaching of mother-tongue literature and the learning of foreign languages;
 - 8.3. strengthen existing approaches to the teaching of literature in Europe that emphasise the European dimension;
 - 8.4. present the teaching of European literature as an integral part of education in European citizenship, taking into account cultural diversity, in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS N°. 5), and the linguistic pluralism of our continent;

1. *Assembly debate* on 17 April 2008 (17th Sitting) (see [Doc. 11527](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Mr Jacques Legendre). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 17 April 2008 (17th Sitting).



- 8.5. support the translation of texts – past and present – especially masterpieces of European literature, from and into the languages spoken in Europe, paying special attention to less widely used languages;
- 8.6. consider producing anthologies and teaching material for European literature appropriate to the various levels and practices of European school systems;
- 8.7. develop websites on Europe's literary heritage where all the citizens of Europe can find texts, bibliographies, literary history, courses and web links.