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The status of minorities and their relations with their kin-States

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Egidijus VAREIKIS and other members of the Assembly

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

According to the tradition of the Council of Europe and international conventions, responsibility for the protection of minorities lies primarily with the home States. There are a dozen examples of minorities living in countries neighbouring their kin-States where the same ethnicity represents the titular ethnicity of the nation State. Kin-States can also play a legitimate and important role in the protection and preservation of kin-minorities, with a view to safeguarding their genuine linguistic and cultural identity. On the other hand, such kin-states must take care that the form and substance of the assistance given are also acceptable to the States of which the members of the kin-minorities are citizens, and to which the basic rules contained in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157) are applicable.

Council of Europe member States should refrain from taking unilateral measures, which would risk compromising the climate of co-operation with other States. In 2007, however, the Polish Parliament passed a law on what is called the "Polish Card", a card confirming that the holder belongs to the Polish nation, which may be issued to individuals who cannot obtain dual citizenship in their own countries. The Polish Card is not the only example. A few years before, the issue of a Hungarian card was on the Parliamentary Assembly agenda, and the practice of issuing "cards" is about to spread among the Council of Europe member States which have kin-minorities in their neighbouring countries. We propose an investigation of this dangerous phenomenon and the preparation of a comprehensive report about the real aims of the States and authorities that issue such "cards", as well as encouragement to Council of Europe member States to eliminate bad practices in the area of freedom and human rights that the Council of Europe represents, avoiding misunderstandings and suspicions between ethnic minorities, their home countries and the States referred to as kin-States.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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