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We should protect interpreters in conflict zones!

Written declaration No. 442

This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

In conflict zones, interpreters are on the front line. No register records interpreters' deaths, but it is believed that, between 2003 and 2008, 360 were killed in Iraq.

Interpreters – frequently ill-informed about their duties and rights – have inadequate (physical and legal) protection. With their families, they are often left unprotected in post-conflict situations and no priority whatsoever is given to their asylum requests.

Lacking any official status, interpreters run serious risks. While the Geneva Conventions recognise the need for linguistic mediation in order to protect the rights of individuals, the rights of interpreters, for their part, are not dealt with in any way.

We hereby:

- call on member states to provide better protection for interpreters during and following conflicts;
- remind member states of the need to be scrupulous in their application of the few provisions of international law that do exist in order to provide interpreters with better protection, inter alia by assimilating them into other categories of staff mentioned in the Geneva Conventions;
- emphasise the neutrality and impartiality of interpreters, whose safety should be ensured in conflict zones in the same way as that of ICRC staff.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

MARTY Dick, Switzerland, ALDE
ALIGRUDIĆ Miloš, Serbia, EPP/CD
BECK Marieluise, Germany, ALDE
BEMELMANS-VIDEC Marie-Louise, Netherlands, EPP/CD
BRASSEUR Anne, Luxembourg, ALDE
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FRANKEN Hans, Netherlands, EPP/CD
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GROSS Andreas, Switzerland, SOC
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VOLONTÈ Luca, Italy, EPP/CD
VRIES Klaas, de, Netherlands, SOC
ZERNOVSKI Andrej, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", ALDE

Total = 40

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