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Event | 01.06.2016

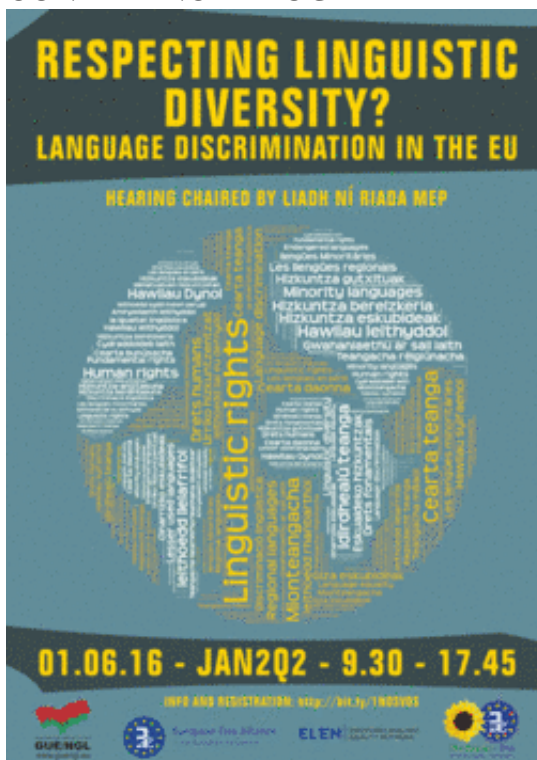
Respecting Linguistic Diversity?

Language discrimination in the EU

Respecting linguistic diversity? Language Discrimination in the European Union

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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



Hosts: GUE-NGL and EFA-Greens in partnership with ELEN.

Interpretation. Irish, Welsh, Catalan, Spanish, French, English. **Background** In January 2015 ELEN presented its Report to the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on language discrimination against co-official language speakers (Catalan, Basque and Galician) in the Spanish state. It revealed a shocking list of beatings and humiliation of people trying to use their official language with state authorities. However, the ELEN Report only reveals the tip of the iceberg as there are many reports of this kind of discrimination across Europe. France, for example, is notorious for being a 'rogue' state on this issue having discriminated against its own 'regional' languages so thoroughly in the name of a perceived threat to 'unity' that they are

all now defined by UNESCO as severely endangered. In addition, we see regular occurrences of language based discrimination (despite being prohibited under the Charter of Fundamental Rights) happening to nearly all regional or minority languages in Europe, for example, to the Hungarian national minorities in Slovakia and Romania. The hearing will discuss how the EU and its Member-States deals with this problem. It will review the situation in various States with presentations from ELEN Member NGOs working on the ground who will provide the evidence for language discrimination with numerous case studies. A panel of experts will assess the current language rights situation and make recommendations with civil society stakeholders on what measures the EU should bring forward to deal with the situation. This will include the Council of Europe's ECRI recommendation's that language discrimination constitutes a form of both direct and indirect racism. Discussion, with participation from the Commission, Council of Europe (FCNM and ECRML), OSCE HCNM, and the UN OHCHR, will focus on how best to use existing legislation already in place such as the Race Equality Directive and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Donostia Language Protocol proposals, and on the ELEN proposal for new legislation such as a language rights directive for regional, minority and endangered language speakers. After all, if the EU can protect fish and plants why can't it act to protect its own linguistic diversity? The Recommendations from the hearing will be presented to the Culture and LIBE Committees. **8.30 - 9.30 Registration and Signing In.**

9.30 Opening session. Welcome speech Liadh Ní Riada MEP, Davyth Hicks (ELEN Secretary-General). **Introductory Remarks** Jordi Sebastià MEP, Josep-Maria Terricabras MEP, Josu Juaristi MEP, Marina Albiol MEP, Ramon Tremosa MEP (Moderator Davyth Hicks). **10.10 Language Rights Issues** **Keynote** Keynote: "Making the minority language invisible, the evasion of the minority language crisis in policy." Mr Conchúr Ó Giollagáin (Moderator, Liadh Ní Riada). **10.25 Language Rights and Discrimination in Europe (Moderator, Liadh Ní Riada)** "Respecting linguistic diversity? Language discrimination in Europe." Mr Davyth Hicks (ELEN)

- "Language speakers' rights, revisiting the 1998 OSCE Recommendations," Mr Miquel Strubell, Linguapax International.
- "Protecting Irish language rights," Mr Rónán Ó Domhnaill, An Coimisinéir Teanga / Irish Language Commissioner.
- "Linguistic supremacism," Mr Ferran Suay (Acció Cultural del País Valencià (ACPV) / Universitat de València).

11.30 COFFEE

11.45 Case studies on language discrimination (Moderator Marina Albiol)

- Breton: Mr Tangi Louarn (President, Kevre Breizh and ELEN-EBLUL France).
- Catalan: Ms Neus Mestres (Director, Plataforma per la Llengua)
- Irish: Mr Ciarán Mac Giolla Bhéin (Advocacy Manager, Conradh na Gaeilge)
- Welsh: Ms Tamsin Davies (Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg).
- Basque: Mr Paul Bilbao-Sarria (Secretary-General, Kontseilua)
- Hungarian in Slovakia: Mr János Fiala (Szlovákiai Magyarok Kerekasztala)
- Hungarian in Romania: Ms Krisztina Sándor (Erdélyi Magyar Nemzeti Tanács).
- Occitan: Mr Alexis Quentin (Institut Estudis Occitan).

- Galician: Mr Paolo Filgueiras (A Mesa pela Normalización Lingüística)

LUNCH 13.30 15.00 European and International Norms on regional or minority language rights: are they sufficient? (Moderator Josu Juaristi)

- Mr Sixto Molina, Council of Europe, European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), Head of Secretariat.
- Ms Belen Rodriguez de Alba, UN OHCHR, Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section.
- Ms Iryna Ulasiuk, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM).
- Ms Kristina Cunningham, EU Commission, DG Education and Culture, Multilingualism.

16.00 Language Rights Issues Keynote: "Overcoming language discrimination, the global development of language rights." Mr Rob Dunbar, Roinn na Ceiltis is Eòlas na h-Alba, Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann. (Moderator: Liadh Ní Riadah). 16.15 Case study on the cultural importance of language in terms of linguistic rights

Mr Liam Ó Maolaodha, Oireachtas na Gaeilge (Moderator Liadh Ní Riada). **16.25 COFFEE 16.35 Solutions** (Moderator, Liadh Ní Riada)

- A new alternative **"The Protocol to Ensure Language Rights"** created by contributions from civil society - the way forward for establishing substantive linguistic rights. Paul Bilbao-Sarria, Kontseilua.
- **Better implementation of existing mechanisms**, the ECRML, FCNM, ECHR. Sixto Molina (CoE ECRML), Kristina Cunningham (EU Commission), Belen Rodriguez de Alba (UN OHCHR).
- **Languages Directive, new legislation?** Rob Dunbar: Best practices in protecting languages against discrimination. Davyth Hicks: An EU Directive for regional, minority or endangered languages? Mr Conchúr Ó Giollagáin: EU Emergency Commission on Language Endangerment: A Proposal.
- **Better promotion in the media of linguistic rights.** Páidi Ó Lionáird (TV Presenter 7 Lá, TG4). Mr Maitiú Ó Coimín (Tuarisc.ie).

17.40 Discussion. (Moderator, Liadh Ní Riada).

17.50 Concluding Speech: "Dealing with language discrimination and ensuring linguistic rights in the EU." Liadh Ní Riada MEP (Moderator Davyth Hicks) Registration: The hearing is open to the public. In order to gain entry participants are requested to register at least seven working days before the event at: <http://www.greens-efa.eu/events/registrations/796-respecting-linguistic-diversity.html>

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Responsible MEPs



Jill Evans

Member



Josep Maria Terricabras

EFA President and first Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group

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