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Press Conference on the study "Assessing the European Union's support for regional and minority languages: 10 years after the Alfonsi resolution (2013-2023)"

The study "Assessing the European Union's support for regional and minority languages: 10 years after the Alfonsi resolution (2013-2023)" demonstrates a lack of political will on the part of the European Commission to protect and promote regional and minority languages.

This study co-financed by 8 MEPs: Diana Riba i Giner (Greens/EFA), Rasmus Andresen (Greens/EFA), Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (Renew), Carles Puigdemont (NI), Clara Ponsati (NI), Antoni Comin (NI), Tatjana Zdanoka (NI) and François Alfonsi (Greens/EFA), was carried out by Dr Vicent Climent- Ferrando, from Pompeu Fabra University and UNESCO Chair on language policies for multilingualism.

It takes as starting point the 2013 Alfonsi report on endangered languages, adopted by a large majority by the European Parliament. The Alfonsi resolution noted that these languages were not receiving sufficient attention in the Commission's multilingualism policy and that their funding had decreased over the years; a situation that should not have continued in the next multiannual financial framework (2014-2020).

This study traces the evolution of EU support for minority and regional languages over this period (2013-2023) using public policy analysis.

Its findings are more than alarming and demonstrate that regional and minority languages are in serious danger of extinction. In particular, the study highlights the following issues:

- Lack of data and statistics on endangered languages, including funding;

- Priority is given to economically useful languages, which creates an artificial hierarchy between

languages considered useful and those considered less necessary;

- Lack of consideration for minority and regional languages in the development of languages technologies, which contributes to their digital extinction.

The Commission justifies this lack of political will and of putting minority and regional languages on the agenda by the fact that it does not have competences in the field of language policy, which would be strictly reserved for the Member States. However, this study shows that the Commission has already been cooperating in the field of language learning with Member States through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), the instrument used to identify "good policy practice from among the grand reservoir of diverse policy approaches within the EU and proposing common actions". This method is already used by the Commission for EU official languages, but not for endangered languages.

The MEPs who presented the study at a press conference and a meeting of the Minority Intergroup are determined to put pressure on the Commission

François Alfonsi,EFA MEP, stressed:

"When I presented this report to the European Parliament 10 years ago, there was a very massive vote from all countries, parties and political groups. It is totally hypocritical to hide behind the argument of the competence of the States when it is precisely the policies of the States that have created the situation of great difficulty for these languages! The Commission therefore has a duty towards the European Parliament; it is to propose policies that correspond to the will expressed in Parliament. "

"This has not been done at all by the previous or the current Commission. Enough of this contempt!"

Diana Riba i Giner, EFA MEP, added:

"Today, we are creating a gap between the languages that some consider useful and necessary and the other so-called regional or minority languages, which are absent or considered irrelevant. This perception does not coincide with the reality of the languages.

These are languages with which millions of people create, communicate, live and feel every day."

"Faced with this reality, we ask the European Commission for ambition but also for creativity, because there is much room for improvement and much unexplored ground to support multilingualism in Europe."

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François Alfonsi

Member



Diana Riba i Giner

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

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