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Alfonsi calls for joint effort on language diversity

Press release from François Alfonsi MEP

MEP **François Alfonsi** has called for a joint effort between the European Commission and Europe's nations and regions to protect Europe's endangered languages and promote language diversity.

Mr Alfonsi spoke as he presented a draft of his report on Europe's endangered languages and linguistic diversity to the European Parliament's Culture Committee today in Brussels.

François Alfonsi is the European Parliament's only Corsican-speaking MEP and this is the European Parliament's first detailed study of the issue of language diversity and protecting endangered languages in Europe in a number of years.

There has been no major, in-depth international study into endangered languages since the 1990s.

The report regrets the drastic cuts to EU funding available for promoting language diversity over the past decade. It calls on the EU and its Member States to 'commit wholeheartedly to a policy of protection and promotion that is up to the job of preserving the diversity of the EU's linguistic and cultural heritage by supporting ambitious protection policies within the language communities concerned.'

It also calls on the EU to support a language policy that 'enables children to acquire two mother tongues from the very earliest age.'

François Alfonsi said:

"I was very encouraged by the positive comments of many of colleagues about the need to protect Europe's linguistic heritage.

"Linguistic diversity is a part of our shared cultural heritage and all languages are a part of our shared cultural future. The speakers of Europe's endangered languages need and deserve our support.

"Let's remember that linguistic diversity receives specific mention in the EU's Lisbon Treaty, and as such, it should be respected as a core value of the EU.

"What we need is a joint effort between the European Commission, and Europe's nations and regions to protect and promote Europe's rich linguistic heritage.

"I regret that funding made available for this work at EU level has been cut dramatically since 2000. But there are positive signs, with some European countries making successful efforts to help endangered languages.

"Let's learn from that success and work together so that future generations can enjoy Europe's rich linguistic heritage."

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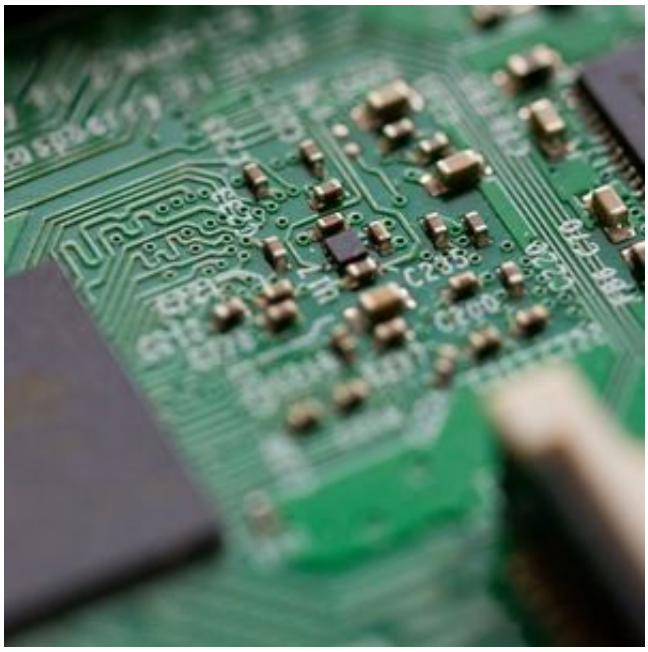


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