

CALRE WORK GROUP
CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Presentation and Invitation to participate in the “Cultural and Linguistic Diversity” Work Group

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This document comprises 4 sections: Justification, objectives, activities and schedule



1. Justification

Cultural diversity is one of the distinctive features of the European Union, and the protection of its cultural and linguistic heritage is one of its founding values.

A total of 55 million E.U. citizens use a language considered to be a regional minority language (RML); there are 44 such languages which reflect diversity in terms of their presence and realities. Some RML have more speakers than the sum of the speakers of certain official EU languages; others are recognised in regional public administrations and constitute an official language, while others are in their death throes.

European institutions do not always offer fair treatment to the language rights of the citizens making up the various peoples of Europe, even acknowledging the value of diversity and the efforts being made to protect cultural heritage, both material and non-material.

Language rights make up an integral part of basic human rights, given that the basic principle of non-discrimination is at the core of these rights.

In Europe no one should feel discriminated against for using a RML. In practice at EU institutions, minority regional languages face problems that range from the lack of recognition of language rights, the lack of educational provisions, the lack of due treatment in public administrations or the real absence of public promotion of social communication.

The European Charter of Regional Minority Languages (ECRML) is a binding international treaty, a reference, a guide aimed at protecting the common cultural heritage, while promoting and enhancing respect for minority languages.

The CALRE General Assembly (Seville, 2017) agreed to set up a work group to reflect and make progress on the recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity within the institutions of the European Union.

2. Objectives



2.1 General objectives:

To preserve and enhance European cultural and linguistic diversity; it would be advisable that legislative assemblies and regional or autonomous governments should collaborate, with a view to fostering, recognising and protecting RMLs. Knowledge, cooperation and action.

There is political willingness to cooperate and to share valid knowledge on the protection of civil rights of regions and cultural minorities. Governments at large and the regional parliamentary assemblies of Europe can effectively protect and recognise the rights of 55 million Europeans as well as the sustainability of minority cultures.

The Work Group on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity aspires to become an open forum for debate and learning that will enhance the flow and exchange of ideas, information and good practices; all this serves the interests of our cultural heritage, the protection of its diversity, in particular, the situation of today's regional minority languages.

The Work Group should take on the role of meeting space for interested regional parliaments and should be endowed with resources that will enable the concurrence and participation of technical staff and experts from European institutions and specialised non-government organisations.

2.2 Specific objectives

In 2018 this working group is aiming at increasing awareness as to the problems faced by minority languages (RML), with the ultimate to report to CALRE members the following: a deeper understanding of the main threats and weaknesses; outlining strengths and opportunities that would arise from the promotion and development of recommended policies; responding effectively to and enhancing successful practices and experiences in different European regions.

3. ACTIVITIES



The work group is designed to study, reflect and come up with proposals and recommendations that will be considered by regional parliaments and EU institutions.

3.1 The drawing up of an evaluation report

The first activity would be to convene a seminar aimed at the exchange of points of view and debate between representatives of various interested regional parliaments; the seminar would be open to experts from European Institutions, academia and specialist organisations.

It is envisaged that at this first meeting an exchange and analysis of practical scenarios of interest will take place and lead to the drawing up of preliminary recommendations; finally, the necessary personal and professional links will have been forged to establish a stable and fruitful work group.

3.2 Evaluation report to be debated by participants and recommendations made

The resulting document will be a synthesis of the debating process the participants will have engaged in; it will gather up the contributions of various regional parliaments and offer the findings of the evaluation report; it will also reflect the recommendations arising from the first technical working seminar.

3.3 Presentation of conclusions

The conclusions of the first seminar, of the subsequent debates conducted by participants, and of the agreements reached, shall form the basis a document outlining conclusions that will be presented at the CALRE Plenary Meeting for debate and due consideration thereof.



4. SCHEDULE

March 15. Presentation of the plan, objectives and schedule of actions

April: Convening of Seminar for the legislative assemblies

May 3 and 4: Seminar takes place, diagnostic analysis takes place
(participants meet in Valencia)

June: Registration period finalises. Participants debate. Proposals are
tabled.

September: Meeting to give approval to the document which is to be
presented at the Brussels Plenary Meeting between September 10 and 14.