

On behalf of ELEN France, which stands for European Language Equality Network which has replaced, the European, Euro Bureau of less disseminated languages.

This is a very vast area and recognition as such in French state is ultra centralised which represents languages in Alsace, in Brittany, in Flanders, in Occitania, Catalonia north and the overseas territories Gyana, New Caledonia, Polynesia, Mayott, Guadeloupe, but who wish to continue to live and express themselves through their languages and culture. Officially the French State ignores the UNDM, France and Turkey are the two states, the only two states that have not signed the framework convention of the CoE on national minorities, even the charter of regional and minority languages of the CoE which was signed by France in 1999 has been rejected by the constitutional council which considers that the charter in the sense that it confers specific rights to groups of speakers of regional minority languages within territories within which these languages are practiced, natively effects the constitutional principles of indivisibility of the republic, equality before the law and unity of the French people. This approach leads to veritable structural discrimination which is based rooted in mentality and institutions as was noted by the independent expert, Gay McDougall in her report on France in 2008.

Some progress however has been seen under the pressure of civil society, some schools have been set up by associations but without equal access to public assistance, public aid. Bilingual classes are progressing but we always have to fight to keep the funds, we have 13 % of journalist living around Paris and 90% of those who come out of the ENA in France, the elite of the state are in fact born in Paris in the upper classes. Despite what has been acquired, but rather in the constitution regional languages has been introduced but the constitutional council in fact has indicated that this article does not give a right liberty that the constitution guarantees however the president of France, Francois Hollande, under the pressure of associations has promised to ratify the Europe Charter on Regional and Minority languages and to amend the constitution, so we await assistance to be able to encourage France to implement its promises.

Thank you very much.