

**Association Unis dans la Diversité Linguistique
Kevredigezh Unanet e Liesseurtet ar Yezhoù**

United Nations

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Item 4 : Focusing on the rights of minorities and effective early prevention of conflicts

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Madame Chair,
Dear representatives,

My name is Emmanuel Le Merlus and I represent the association "Unis dans la diversité linguistique" which aims to promote the Breton language which is spoken in Brittany, in France. UNESCO classified the Breton language as a language under serious threat in 2009.

France has known periods of unrest concerning its national minorities, in Corsica, New Caledonia and Brittany in particular.

Nowadays, peaceful demonstrations are organized regularly to demand linguistic rights.

In April, following the vote of a bill favorable to immersive education in regional languages, members of the presidential majority referred the matter to the Constitutional Council.

The Constitutional Council censured this bill, although a majority of deputies and senators voted in favor of it.

A revision of the French Constitution would allow the adoption of this type of bill.

National minorities and majorities of countries could learn each other's languages, when their languages differ. Thus, these minorities and majorities could communicate easily and understand each other better.

The risks of conflict are reduced when groups of people from different cultures and languages know the language and culture of their neighbors.

Children have the ability to learn several languages from an early age. Teacher exchanges between national minorities and majorities could be organized.

Early multilingualism brings better intellectual development of the child. Well-educated youth are less likely to engender conflict.

France is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and should lead by example with regard to the recognition and protection of national minorities.

Thank you for your attention.