

Réseau européen pour l'égalité des langues

Thank you Madame Chair, your excellencies.

The European Language Equality Network is today the leading international organization working for the protection of European minoritized and endangered languages. Every day, we work with our members to help them in their efforts at effective language recovery and revitalization and every day we deal with attacks and discrimination against these languages, most of which are endangered. It could all be so different. We know that ensuring language rights and protections for minoritized languages reaps its own rewards. We've seen how protecting languages helps with peace-building, in Ireland for example, with the language measures that came as part of the Good Friday Agreement. We've also seen how ensuring language immersion education ensures social cohesion, for instance in Catalonia. In addition, investing in a language community brings numerous economic benefits. Yet still the problems, the discrimination, the threats of endangerment for our European languages continues. In Europe, the EU proclaims in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union that the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. But where is this respect for minorities, in particular language minorities? Where are these rights [inaudible]. The rights of minorities have a foundational value, upon which the EU and its member state polities have to be built. How can they be absent? We therefore expect the EU and its member states to live up to this constitutional commitment and to consider minority rights and language minority rights as foundational to European societies. We call on the EU to launch negotiations with ELEN to implement our strategy to achieve long overdue protection measures for our languages and clear unambiguous rights for European [CUT OFF].