



Third Session of the Forum on Minority Issues
Minorities and effective participation in economic life
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Statement of the Universal Esperanto Association
Universala Esperanto-Asocio (UEA)

Madame Chair, Madame the Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am speaking on behalf of the Universal Esperanto Association, which represents speakers of the international language, Esperanto, in more than 120 countries.

In the draft recommendations which we are discussing today, and particularly chapter 32, the need for translation appears several times. Indeed, to be active in the economic field, all participators need to have access to laws and texts governing this field in their own language.

Today, we wish to draw your attention to the attempts of various institutions in Europe to deny the equality of languages of the member states, although this equality has been solemnly declared in all the fundamental texts of the European Union. Concretely, this concerns an attempt to exclude the possibility to use a language other than English, French or German during the registration, examination and publication of a patent. This practice would give an unfair advantage to the companies and citizens of the States where these languages are used.

In the European Union, with its 23 official languages, the use of only these three languages for patents would cause unfair inconvenience to companies and citizens in countries where these languages are not official, and this decision would without doubt have a negative impact on the effective participation of all concerned in economic life. Such a decision would contribute to the loss of prestige of languages vis-à-vis some other privileged languages. It is obvious that this would lead to a marginalisation on the economic scene of languages like Italian or Polish, for example, the use of which would be excluded from the administrative procedure and in which terminology linked to technical discoveries would no longer be created. The speakers of these languages would become second-zone citizens.

We strongly protest against these attempts to deny the linguistic rights of a large number of the citizens of the European Union, and against the irrational refusal to use a neutral language of intercommunication like Latin, or better still, the international language, Esperanto. The use of this interethnic communication tool, which is very much alive today, leads to the respect of all linguistic and cultural minorities. Many publications, conferences and events bear witness to this, and they include technical and scientific subjects, university dissertations, and moreover, there are many scientific associations that use Esperanto.

Thank you for your attention.

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