

Statement at the occasion of the European Day of Languages 2023

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) is committed to the cultural development of all our member regions. Culture, and cultural diversity are key elements of regional sustainability, and language is a fundamental element of Europe's shared cultural heritage.

The AER's nearly 140 member regions in 25 countries engage at European level to represent our common interests on political, economic, and social issues. We strive towards common solutions in the interest of all, while recognising our diversity as a strength and an opportunity to learn from one other.

This is also true of the languages spoken across European regions. The value of languages cannot be defined narrowly by the number of speakers, perceived economic importance, or the political weight of the countries where they are spoken. All Europe's languages connect people with one another across borders and generations, with places and with our shared cultural heritage. Europe's rich tapestry of languages must therefore be respected, nurtured and celebrated on an equal footing if we aspire to unite Europe in its diversity.

Language diversity in Europe has a lot to do with the values of our organisation as the voice of regional interests throughout Europe: it supports democracy, openness, and dialogue. Guaranteeing it is in line with the guiding principles of fairness and solidarity. We are convinced that linguistic diversity increases the effectiveness of social, economic, and political processes: being able to express oneself in the language of one's country or region and being understood contributes to identification with the community.

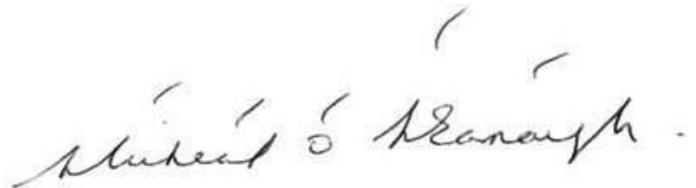
Not all European languages enjoy a status that can be described as fully consolidated. In the spirit of the above values and guiding principles, the AER is committed to promoting the regular use, maintenance and learning of all languages in Europe. This can contribute to a general willingness to learn languages and to an ever better understanding of the richness of culture in Europe.

We look forward to continuing to work with, and to support our member regions, and communities within those regions, in consolidating, in developing and in valuing their language resources, especially minority or under threat languages.

Strasbourg/Brussels, 26 September 2023



Albert Castellanos Maduell
President



Mícheál Ó hÉanaigh
Vice President for Youth, Culture and Tourism