



**European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages  
European Language Equality Network  
Réseau Européen pour l'Égalité des Langues  
EBLUL/ELEN-France**

Consultative status with the Economic and Social Committee of the United Nations

**EBLUL/ELEN France**

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**RELEASE**

**Council of Human Rights of the United Nations: France dodges questions on regional languages, in contradiction with the commitments of the Head of State.**

Representatives of the European Language Equality Network EBLUL France, intervened in November 2012 in Geneva within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of France by the Council of Human Rights of the United Nations. They proposed to the Member States of the working group (47 states) a set of recommendations so that France recognizes and respects the diversity of languages and cultures of its territory and the identities of the components of the society.

At the plenary session of 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013, attended by Paul Bilbao, responsible for Kontseilua for the Basque Country, Alexis Quentin representative of the Estudis Occitans Institute and Tangi Louarn, President of Kevre Breizh for Brittany, many Member States have intervened to request in particular that France changes its Constitution to recognize minority groups, withdraw its reservations on article 27 of the Covenant of civil and Political Rights and Article 30 of the Convention of Children's Rights which allows respect for languages and cultures of minority groups, the ratification of the European Charter for regional or Minority Languages and increasing the diffusion time of regional languages on public radio and television by giving them necessary financial and human resources. France is also invited to involve NGOs defending regional languages to follow the current Universal Periodic Review and to the elaboration of its next report.

Delegates of EBLUL / ELEN France were particularly surprised that in its answers, the French delegation, led by Mr Francois ZIMERAY, Ambassador for Human Rights, completely dodges questions about the rights of French citizens to their own languages and cultures and the recognition of linguistic diversity in France. The ambassador merely recalled the traditional and scandalous refusal of France with regard to human rights, to recognize other cultures and languages other than French on behalf of the uniqueness of language and culture of the French people, which refers to an ethnic but not political conception of French citizenship.

EBLUL / ELEN-France is even more surprised by that refusal to respond to the recommendations on the recognition of regional languages as the President of the Republic committed himself at different times, either directly or through his ministers, to ratifying the European Charter of regional or minority languages and to amending the Constitution in this respect. There is a major contradiction between the official statements of the Head of State, the Government and the position of the state services on the ground. EBLUL / ELEN-France has decided to appeal to the Head of State.

For EBLUL/ELEN-France,  
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