

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002368/24
to the Commission
Pernando Barrena Arza (The Left)
(31 October 2024)**

Subject: Content of the Council of Europe report on Spain's compliance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Two weeks ago, the Council of Europe published a report on Spain's compliance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, a document the country is a signature to.

The report recognises that language policies on Basque leave a lot to be desired. It recommends immediate action to ensure that citizens have access to the health system, public administration and judicial processes in the Basque language. It also includes an implicit call for the elimination of language zoning in Navarre as an additional obstacle to the protection of the Basque language there.

1. Does the Commission believe the governments of the Basque Autonomous Community, Navarre and Spain should act to ensure that citizens are also served in Basque, particularly in the justice system, the public health service and public administration?
2. Does the Commission agree that it would be advisable to follow the Council of Europe's indications and eliminate the zoning of language rights in the Autonomous Community of Navarre?

Submitted: 31.10.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(12 December 2024)**

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union explicitly prohibits any discrimination based on membership of a national minority and promotes the respect for linguistic diversity.

Within its scope of competence, the Commission remains committed to promoting linguistic diversity. Concretely, Erasmus + and Creative Europe are funding programmes that support linguistic diversity ⁽¹⁾.

However, the Commission has no competence in evaluating Member States' compliance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML).

The Commission also has no competence regarding the use of languages, as the legal provisions governing the use of languages fall within the exclusive competence of the Member States.

Governments at state level have ratified the Charter, and they are responsible for implementing policies to protect and promote regional and minority languages within their borders.

The Council of Europe monitors their compliance and provides guidance to ensure their members fulfil their obligations. The latest report from the Committee of Experts on Spain's compliance with the ECRML was released on 24 September 2024.

It reflects ongoing challenges for Spain in meeting its obligations under the Charter and encourages further measures to foster linguistic diversity especially in justice, public administration, and healthcare, where regional languages like Basque are often underused. The Commission has no role in the evaluation of this report.

⁽¹⁾ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d325c589-011a-11ef-a251-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>