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## Seminar on “Regional or minority languages in Europe today”

Strasbourg 5 December 2013 – The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is organising on 9 December (afternoon) and 10 December (morning) 2013 in the Senate building (Palais du Luxembourg) in Paris a seminar on “Regional or minority languages in Europe today” in co-operation with the Secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe.

Protection and promotion of regional or minority languages is one of the goals of the Council of Europe as an essential component of the European cultural heritage. Accordingly, it adopted in 1992 the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ratified to date by 25 member states. The seminar will be the occasion for taking stock of the situation of regional languages from the standpoint of the European Union and the Council of Europe. The [report](#) on “endangered European languages and linguistic diversity in the European Union”, adopted by the European Parliament in June 2013, will be presented in particular. Special attention will also be paid to the role of local and regional authorities in protecting and promoting regional or minority languages. Specific sessions will be devoted, on the one hand, to the six Council of Europe member states (Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”) which undertook to ratify the Charter at the time of their accession but have not yet done so, and on the other hand to France and Italy which have signed but not ratified the Charter.

The seminar will be opened by Jean-Vincent Place, Senator for Essonne (France), Chairman of the Contact Group between the Committee of the Regions of the European Union and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and by Herwig van Staa, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and will bring together governmental and regional representatives together with representatives of civil society.

Speakers include François Alfonsi, European Parliament rapporteur, Co-President of the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages, Vesna Crnić-Grotić, Chairperson of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe and Paul Molac, co-President of the Study group Regional languages of the National Assembly of the French Republic. Several Congress members will speak on the situation in their respective countries. Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress, will conclude the seminar.

A press conference will be held at the opening of the seminar on 9 December at 2 pm in the Clémenceau room of the Palais du Luxembourg, Paris (France). Interested journalists are requested to forward their details for accreditation to Pauline Cadéac ([pauline.cadeac@coe.int](mailto:pauline.cadeac@coe.int)). They should report on the day of the meeting to the Senate reception services (15 or 15ter rue de Vaugirard).

The seminar is open to the press.

[Programme](#)  
[European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages](#)

### Contact on the spot :

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The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions.

It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities.

President of the Congress: Herwig Van Staa (Austria, EPP/DC), President of the Chamber of Regions: Nataliya Romanova (Ukraine, IDLG), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC)  
Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG), European Conservatives & Reformists Group (ECR)