

## Report on the Situation of the Galizan Language

The Spanish State systematically flouts not only its own internal language legislation, rendering it effectively void in practice, but also most of the terms agreed to in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). This failure to comply with the terms of the Charter is far from new, and the *Mesa pola Normalización Lingüística* (Galizan Language Board) has publicly criticised both the Spanish and Galizan governments for failing to exercise their respective executive, monitoring powers as well as the failure to apply sanctions in order to ensure the operability of the approved binding legislation deriving from the Charter.

Moreover, over recent years the Galizan and Spanish governments have not only failed to apply the terms of the European Charter, but have actively infringed it, with a whole series of legal measures and acts designed to hold back and reverse the inroads made so far by Galizan in society, relegating it to an second-rate position in order to rekindle old and new prejudices alike against the language, thereby further increasing the loss of prestige suffered by Galiza's own language.

The aim of this report is to set out briefly some aspects of the backlash currently undergone by the Galizan language, clashing with the terms of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

**Public administration.** Public administration is the one area hardest hit by the recent setbacks affecting the Galizan language, partly because it is the main party responsible for protecting and promoting our language, but also because the Spanish and Galizan governments as well as several local councils are either failing to implement measures designed to protect the Galizan language or actively applying measures leading to a clear regression. Over recent months, for example, using articles 2 and 36.4 of Directive 2004/18/EC of The European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts (Official Journal of the European Union L134, 30/4/2004, p. 114) and the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in the Treaty on European Union as a pretext, the Galizan government has issued instructions to local administrations to publish calls for tender in one of the official languages of the UE, which in practice means that they will be available in Spanish but not in Galizan, contrary to previous practice. In this case, it is clear that European legislation and the failure to recognise Galizan as an official EU language effectively undermine citizens' rights, whilst at the same time running counter to art. 10 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

**Place names.** Several public administrations, especially local authorities, have recently been guilty of backsliding regarding the use of the official Galizan-language place names. Specifically, several councils governed by the Spanish People's Party (PP) have not only slashed the presence of Galizan in their public announcements and publicity, but have also taken to using mangled, Spanish-language versions of Galizan place names. One clear case involves the city of A Coruña, whose local

council has once again taken to using the non-official form La Coruña, a practice which had been given up in public usage over recent years. The same applies to the General State Administration and its related bodies, e.g. the state-owned railway company (RENFE).

**Education.** Education is without a doubt the main area affected by the recent setbacks in Galiza, affected by actions taken by both the Galizan and Spanish governments. Today, formal education is one of the main causes behind the rapid drop in the number of Galizan speakers, instead of contributing to halting the process of language shift, gradually replaced by Spanish.

The repeal of the Decree approved in 2007 intended to ensure the presence of Galizan on a par with Spanish as a language of instruction in primary and secondary education, replaced by the so-called Decree on Multilingualism (which, in theory, reduces Galizan to one third, although, in practice, in most schools the actual number of subjects taught in Galizan is considerably lower) marked a turning-point, in that as it was the actual Galizan government which passed legislation for the first time since the end of the Franco dictatorship which openly went against the language it is supposedly bound to protect and promote, as confirmed by the Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe in its last report regarding the application of the ECRML in Galiza, criticising the “gradual reduction” of teaching in Galizan “at all levels” carried out by the Galizan government. Not only does the aforementioned Decree effectively reduce the presence of Galizan in schools, but furthermore actively bans the teaching of certain subjects in Galizan, such as mathematics and scientific and technical subjects, again for the first time since the end of the dictatorship.

At the same time, it is also currently impossible to ensure teaching in Galizan in pre-primary, primary and secondary education, with the legislation passed by the State, namely the Bill for Improving Quality in Education, inevitably leading to a serious situation of inferiority for the co-official languages within the core curriculum as of the upcoming academic year, as well as providing families who so wish with the possibility to opt for education solely in Spanish.

**Healthcare.** This is another field where it has become increasingly difficult for citizens to be attended to in their chosen language since the People’s Party came to power in the Galizan government, e.g. failing to provide patients with a Galizan-language version of medical consent forms.

**Media.** Since the advent of digital terrestrial television (DTTV), the proportion of Galizan has fallen considerably, with currently only one channel broadcasting exclusively in Galizan, namely the public Galizan Television (TVG), whose second channel also broadcasts in English. At the same time, the government continues to fund private television channels broadcasting in Galiza with no more than 10% in Galizan, despite the legal contractual requirement to broadcast at least half of their programs in Galizan.

The Galizan government has also given large hand-outs to the written press allegedly to be used for promoting the language. However, these grants fail to comply with the minimum requirements to ensure fair competition, whilst at the same time lacking in mechanisms to ensure that the money provided is actually invested in using the Galizan language. In fact, it is more than easy to see that Galizan is practically non-existent in the press which receives public funding to that effect, whilst at the same time the few newspapers which do use Galizan receive no such support, clearly contravening art. 11 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

**Justice.** Since the Law on Language Normalisation came into force 31 years ago, very little progress has been made regarding the introduction of Galizan into the justice system. Legal rulings are published in Spanish only and all but very rarely are the terms of section 2 of art. 7 of Law 3/1983, dated 15 June actually met regarding the right of the interested party to receive notification in the language of his or her choice, at the request of a small minority of members of the judiciary and administrative staff.

Furthermore, in the terms of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages regarding the justice system have been systematically breached since it came into force as of 1 August 2001, bearing in mind that the Charter is an international treaty ratified by the Spanish government and as such, pursuant to art. of the Spanish Constitution, it is an integral and binding part of the internal legislation.

Galizan accounts for no more than 5% of all of the legal notifications and resolution, and this widespread denial of citizens' rights to use the Galizan language in their dealings with the judicial system is further aggravated by the refusal on the part of the majority of the judiciary and the public prosecutor to use Galizan while carrying out their duties. At the same time, the Galizan administration responsible for personnel and resources fails to provide computers systems capable of generating documents in Galizan. As such, the systems currently available within the judicial system effectively render it impossible to generate legal procedures and documents in Galiza, thereby breaching the terms of both the Law on Language Normalisation and the European Charter.

While legal texts such as those cited above are constantly flouted in practice, the same also applies to other declarations of intent with no legal effect, such as the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, signed in Barcelona in 1996 with the backing of the whole of both the Spanish and Galizan parliaments, together with to the General Plan for Language Normalisation, passed unanimously by the Galizan parliament in 2004.

**Culture.** The European Charter contains a series of concrete measures designed to foster the use of the co-official languages during cultural events. In the case of Galizan, the economic crisis has served as an excuse for the authorities to reduce or even completely withdraw all financial support to companies involved in the cultural sector, thereby making it impossible to see films at the cinema in

Galizan and reducing the scope of the Galizan language publishing sector, to cite two examples. The same also applies to theatre companies and other area of culture.

**Economy.** Despite the fact that the legislation makes provision for citizens to receive certain documents in Galizan, including, for example, insurance policies, companies in the sectors involved are unaware of consumer rights in this area and constantly fail to comply with these requirements. The *Mesa pola Normalización Lingüística* (Galizan Language Board) has received complaints from citizens who have been denied this right by companies who, only after much insistence, in some cases finally yielded, albeit not without objections.

**Portugal.** The introduction of Portuguese as a language taught in compulsory education would be a positive step forwards, together with other activities aimed at spreading knowledge about the culture of Portuguese-speaking countries and strengthening awareness of Galizan as part of the socio-political reality of the Portuguese-speaking areas.

## DISCRIMINATIONS' EXPEDIENT COMPLAINED BY *LIÑA DO GALEGO* 2013

**25/10/2012** O Consello de Europa critica con contundencia a política lingüística de Feijóo, sobre todo por reducir o galego no ensino

[Europe's Council criticizes forcefully language policy of Feijóo, especially to reduce the Galician in education](#)

**10/10/2012** Só o 3% dos centros de educación infantil das cidades imparten o ensino en galego

[Only 3% of infant schools in the cities taught Galician language](#)

**05/06/2012** A Mesa alerta de que o ensino en galego "é residual na educación infantil das sete cidades"

[A Mesa gives warning that teaching in Galician language "is residual in the early childhood education of the seven cities"](#)

**18/04/2013** A Mesa demanda unha presenza real da nosa lingua na UNED

[A Mesa demands a real presence of our language in UNED \(National University of Distance Education\)](#)

**26/09/2013** A Mesa alerta de que Novagalicia Banco tamén está a ser desgaleguizada na lingua

[A Mesa gives warning that Novagalicia Banco uses Galician language less every time](#)

**22/03/2013** A Génesis Seguros non lle importa o que che importa. A Mesa denuncia que Génesis Seguros oferta a posibilidade de que a clientela galega faga as súas pólizas en catalán, alemán ou inglés, mais non en galego.

[Genesis Insurance couldn't care less what you care. A Mesa claims that Genesis Insurance offers the possibility that the Galician customers make their policies in Catalan, German or English, but not in Galician.](#)

**13/05/2013** Carrefour discrimina o galego

A Mesa trasladou ao grupo Carrefour as queixas de varios clientes indignados polo trato que a nosa lingua recibe nos seus supermercados

A empresa non explica a razón de que o galego reciba un trato diferente ás outras linguas cooficias do Estado

[Carrefour discriminates against Galician language](#)

[A Mesa informed Carrefour Group of complaints from various disgusted customers by the treatment that our language receives in their supermarkets](#)

**15/05/2013** Facebook continúa con *Arteijo* e *Rianjo* por causa da Xunta

[Facebook continues using \*Arteijo\* and \*Rianjo\* because of Xunta](#)

**01/10/2013** Renfe recupera *La Coruña* e *Orense*

A Mesa denuncia que a empresa pública mudou os topónimos legais da súa páxina web para volver introducir as formas deturpadas.

[Renfe gets back \*La Coruña\* and \*Orense\*](#)

[A Mesa claims that the public company changed legal place names from its website to bring back the misleading ways.](#)

**29/11/2013** O goberno español nega unha bolsa predoutoral a unha estudante por entregar o certificado de estudos en galego

[The Spanish Government denies a predoctoral scholarship to a student to deliver the certificate of studies in Galician](#)

**03/12/2013** O presidente da Mesa dirixiuse aos reitores das tres universidades galegas para que "tomen medidas ante unha discriminación gravísima e inadmisíbel"

[A Mesa's President addressed the rectors of the three Galician universities to "take measures before a serious and unacceptable discrimination"](#)

**04/12/2013** A Mesa reclámalle ao Goberno español que arbitre as medidas para readmitir as candidaturas rexeitadas por teren un documento en galego, cata lán ou vasco

[A Mesa claims that the Spanish Government arbitrates measures to readmit the applications rejected for having a document in Galician, Catalan or Basque](#)

**09/08/2013** A Mesa leva perante o Valedor as presións da Deputación para que un funcionario non use o galego no traballo

[A Mesa denounced before the Ombudsman the pressures of Provincial Government in order that an employee does not use the Galician at work](#)

**11/04/2012** "Si haces la prueba en gallego no te la corregimos"

Eis a advertencia do tribunal do proceso de selección de bolsas para o departamento de Turismo do Concello de Redondela a unha aspirante que se dispuña a facer o exame no idioma propio de Galiza

["If you do the test in Galician, we don't correct it"](#)

[This is the warning from the court of the scholarship's selection process to City of Redondela's Tourism department made a candidate who got ready to take the exam in the language of Galicia](#)

**13/04/2012** Concentración de apoio á rapaza afectada pola discriminación lingüística en Redondela

[Protest meeting to support girl affected by linguistic discrimination in Redondela](#)

**17/04/2012** Amplo respaldo da cidadanía de Redondela á moza que viu vulnerado o seu dereito ao uso do galego nas probas de selección para as bolsas de Turismo do concello

[Extensive support of the Redondela's citizens to the girl who was violated their right to use Galician in the selection process for County Tourism's grants](#)

**30/05/2013** A Mesa denuncia que o Concello do Barco de Valdeorras non respecta a oficialidade do galego

[A Mesa claims that Barco de Valdeorras Council does not respect the official status of the Galician](#)

**16/07/2013** A Mesa denuncia que a Deputación da Coruña exclúe o galego na súa campaña de sensibilización sobre o aforro de auga

[A Mesa claims that the Provincial Government excludes the Galician in its awareness campaign on saving water](#)

**01/08/2013** O galego é tratado como lingua de segunda nas Festas de María Pita, denuncia A Mesa

[A Mesa claims that the Galician language is treated as second in María Pita's celebrations](#)

**11/05/2013** Ordenan colocar adhesivos enriba dos únicos sinais que hai en galego na AP-9

[Order to put stickers on top of the only signs that are in Galician language on the AP-9 highway.](#)

**21/05/2013** Non ás ameazas de sanción por usar o galego nos sinais públicos! En galego sen exclusións!

[No threats of sanction to use Galician in public signs! No exclusions in Galician!](#)

**01/08/2013** A Mesa anima a cidadanía a lles solicitar ao Concello da Guarda e á Xunta que non permitan a exclusión do galego nas Festas do Monte

[A Mesa encourages the public to ask the A Guarda's Council and the Xunta not allow the exclusion of Galician in the Festas do Monte](#)

**28/12/2012** A Mesa da Coruña: "a campaña de Nadal de Carlos Negreira non une; exclúe o galego e exclúe o cumprimento das leis"

[A Mesa from A Coruña: "Carlos Negreira's Christmas season does not unite; it excludes the Galician and the compliance with law"](#)

**10/07/2013** A Mesa de Bergantiños solicita que non se exclúa o galego nas sinalizacións da praia das Salseiras

[A Mesa from Bergantiños requests that do not exclude the Galician on the beach signs of Salseiras](#)

**26/07/2012** Unha doutora do SERGAS exixiu a familiares dun moribundo que non falasen en galego na súa propia casa

[A SERGAS' doctor demanded the family of a dying man who did not speak in Galician at own home](#)

**04/03/2013** A Mesa denuncia un novo caso de discriminación lingüística no SERGAS.

Un paciente do SERGAS é obrigado a retrasar unhas probas de preoperatorio por solicitar a documentación en galego.

[A Mesa denounces a new case of linguistic discrimination in SERGAS.](#)

[A SERGAS patient is forced to delay preoperative tests for request documentation in Galician.](#)

**06/03/2013** "Galego na sanidade: mala saúde e peor pronóstico", artigo de Susana Méndez

["Galician in health service: poor health and worse prognosis", article by Susana Mendez](#)

**13/03/2012** A Mesa denuncia en Vigo dous graves casos de discriminación contra galegofalantes na sanidade e na xustiza

[A Mesa complaints in Vigo two serious cases of discrimination against Galician speakers in the health and justice services.](#)

**24/03/2012** O cidadán de Vigo que acumulaba 237 días de retraso para unha operación no SERGAS ao fin poderá asinar o consentimento informado en galego

[The Vigo's citizen who accumulated 237 days of delay for a surgery may sign the informed consent in Galician language](#)

**20/06/2012** Un xulgado de Vigo ameaza con non admitir unha demanda en galego se non se presenta cunha tradución xurada ao castelán

[A Vigo's court threatens not admit a lawsuit in Galician language if it is not presented with a certified translation into Spanish](#)

**09/04/2013** A Mesa exige a destitución do asesor xuridico do Concello de Muros que impide aos muradáns expresárense en galego, quer por "inepto", quer por "fascista"

[A Mesa requires the dismissal of the legal adviser of the Council of Muros that prevents Muros' citizens express in Galician because of his "ineptude" and "fascism".](#)