

Mr Sixto Molina
Head of the Secretariat of the European Charter
for Regional or Minority Languages

Dear Mr Molina

As you will be aware, the 5th Report of the Committee of Experts concerning the level of compliance by the Spanish State with the terms of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was released on 11 December, together with a series of recommendations issued by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Amongst other recommendations, the Committee of Ministers calls for the need to “remove the restrictions on the teaching of Galizan in Galiza”, based in turn on the “recommendations for immediate action” on Galizan in Galiza made by the Committee of Experts.

As the President of the *Mesa pola Normalización Lingüística* (Galizan Language Board), the leading NGO involved in promoting the Galizan language and safeguarding language rights in Galiza, I wish to draw to your attention to the following declarations made by Mr Alberto Núñez Feixó, the President of the Autonomous Government of Galiza, the body with the powers necessary to implement all and any legal changes necessary with a view to fulfilling the recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers:

"If reports exist which go against Galizans being able to study, know and speak in English, then that's the problem of the authors of those reports." (Praza Pública 11/12/19)¹

*"We will continue to push forwards with our multilingual policies, which are absolutely in line with today's Europe"*² (Galicia Confidencial 11/12/2019)

Santiago de Compostela, 12 December 2019

¹ Praza Pública. 11/12/19 <https://praza.gal/politica/fejoo-desdena-as-criticas-do-consello-de-europa-a-politica-linguistica-da-xunta-ala-eles>

² Galicia Confidencial 11/12/2019 <http://www.galiciainconfidencial.com/noticia/111855-xunta-insiste-defender-ensino-ingles-galego-se-conece>

These declarations made during the press conference following the Galizan Government Council meeting are indicative of the complete lack of regard for the work carried out by the Committee of Experts and the resolution of the Committee of Ministers. The President finished by saying that the General Secretary for Language Policy of the Galizan Government is the body responsible for carrying out an in-depth analysis of the situation.

In response to the questions posed by journalists from the *Sermos Galiza* newspaper, the General Secretary for Language Policy stated:

*“We consider the Report to be lacking in scientific robustness because the people behind it have never set a foot in Galiza and because it contradicts the data provided by the Galizan Institute for Statistics (IGE) which it omits to mention. Moreover, as our education system differs from that proposed by the Charter, it thereby fails to reflect the true situation in Galiza”.*³

Rather than reporting and acting on the recommendations contained in the Report by striving to implement the measures necessary to comply with them, the President of the Galizan Government and high-ranking government officials have purposely set out instead to publicly discredit, disparage and misrepresent the contents of the Report drawn up by the Committee of Experts and the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers.

We believe that the declarations made by high-ranking Galizan Government officials are in flagrant defiance of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers.

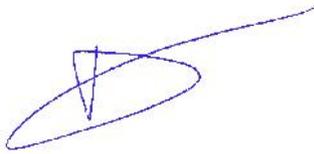
You will also be aware that the views of NGOs, academic institutions, grass-roots organisations as well as that of the Galizan Government via its General Secretariat for Language Policy were all heard during the monitoring process. The view of the Galizan Autonomous Government was also taken into account in the report issued by the Spanish State.

We believe that such an attempt to disparage the Charter’s monitoring process, the independent Committee of Experts and international bodies whose mission is to protect Human Rights, democracy and legality such as the Council of Europe is wholly unacceptable and that it constitutes a clear violation of Art. 6 of the Charter.

In light of the above, we request that you undertake all of the steps deemed necessary in order to:

³ Sermos Galiza 13/12/19 <https://www.sermosgaliza.gal/articulo/lingua/politica-linguistica-defende-competencias-linguisticas-do-alumnado-galego/20191213181250088335.html>

- Demand that the Galizan Government retracts its declarations questioning the work of the Committee of Experts;
- Inform the Galizan Government of the commitments undertaken by the Spanish State regarding the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- Remind the Galizan Government that one of the primary aims of the Council of Europe is to uphold Human Rights and democracy.



Marcos Maceira Eiras
President of A Mesa pola Normalización Lingüística