

RESOLUTION 2024-02

Cultural Institute of Brittany (ICB)

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates in Husum/Hüsem, Germany on 21 September 2024:

Endangered Place Names In Brittany (France)

In France the application of the 3DS Law n° 2022-217¹ on 21 September 2022 is leading to the debretonnisation of our countryside.

According to article 169 of this law: „The municipal council shall name the roads and localities, including private roads open to traffic”. All municipalities must name the roads and localities, give a number to each user and provide addressing in Local Address Base format in the National Address Base, according to the unilateral standards of the Post Office.

These operations have not yet been completed for small municipalities. The communes are applying this law, in conjunction with the Post Office, often choosing a French name for roads that previously had no name, leading to the gradual disappearance of the Breton place names. At the Post Office’s request, they mix French and Breton by adding „rue”(street) or „chemin”(road) to a Breton-language name. For technical reasons, locality names sometimes disappear when they are entered into the Local Address database.

Deprived of addressing, the Breton names of localities are condemned to fall into disuse, as in the region of Plouezoc’h where the names Lansalut, Coat Quiff, Porz ar Prat, Kervec, Kerall and Leoc’hen have now been erased.

A whole country is changing its name, and important elements of its culture and identity, before our very eyes. Francization prevails. For the wrong technical reasons, our Breton linguistic heritage is disappearing, in defiance of the commitments made by France when it ratified the UNESCO Convention on intangible heritage (2003)².

The urgency of the situation is such that the Breton associations have decided to alert UNESCO in order to find solutions on how to inventory, protect and repair the damage that has already been inflicted on our Breton heritage over the years.

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- 1 LOI n° 2022-217 du 21 février 2022 relative à la différenciation, la décentralisation, la déconcentration et portant diverses mesures de simplification de l’action publique locale (1)
NOR : TERB2105196L
ELI : <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2022/2/21/TERB2105196L/jo/texte>
Alias : <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2022/2/21/2022-217/jo/texte>
JORF n°0044 du 22 février 2022
Texte n° 3 Extrait du Journal officiel
 - 2 <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

Following the Koun Breizh association's application to UNESCO to have Breton toponymy included on the list of intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding, the association initially brought together a group of 12 Breton cultural associations to organise a conference on the subject of endangered Breton toponymy. The quality of the contributions made by the qualified speakers, all experienced players in the field of addressing, helped to identify relevant elements to support the proposal to protect this intangible toponymic heritage put forward by Koun Breizh and the collective.

The tendency to eradicate regional particularities is a constant in the profound actions of the central French state, which plays on time.

The FUEN Assembly of Delegates calls on France to:

- rule back the effect of the 3 DS Law no 2022-217 in the five Breton departments.

The FUEN Assembly of Delegates calls on UNESCO to:

- accept the request from the Breton Associations
- condemn the French state for its lack of consideration of the terms of the Convention on intangible heritage
- include Breton Toponymy of the five Breton departments on the list of intangible cultural heritage