

RESOLUTION 2024-06

Association Plataforma per la Llengua

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:

In favor of the immersive education system in Catalonia

The Catalan public education immersion approach system has generally remained stable, enjoying a broad social and political consensus over the last 40 years with organizations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that have lauded the Catalan immersion approach¹. However, it has suffered several judicial setbacks in the last few years.

The Catalan school system is based on a linguistic immersion approach. It privileged Catalan as the main but not exclusive language of instruction, with the aim that at the end of their mandatory education, all children in the system effectively acquired fluency in both co-official languages Catalan and Spanish. This system is crucial because, without it, many children from Spanish-speaking environments would not learn Catalan properly, with Spanish being the majority language with more exposure and even prestige.

A recent judicial development in relation to the Catalan education system has put an end to the current language immersion system. This development, which prevents Catalan from being the language of teaching, is a cause for concern. Now, the Court can force schools to change their course plan for all students at a whole school or just a classroom to implement the teaching of at least 25% of subjects in Spanish, meaning pre-school, primary and secondary education is not always available in Catalan. The UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues expressed concern about these rulings².

At the same time, it is important to note that this development has been damaging to defenders of Catalan. In the judicial procedure of execution, two organizations and two trade unions that defend Catalan speakers' interests were denied participation. These entities were dismissed on the pretext that the sentence does not affect Catalan but rather Spanish. Instead, the High Court of Justice of Catalonia allowed an entity in defence of the Spanish language to request the execution of the sentence.

Moreover, through the EU Committee on Petitions and its previous chair, the European Parliament promoted the views of Spanish nationalists against immersion, with biased and partisan interventions, a hearing³ and a mission to Catalonia⁴.

1 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000059089/PDF/059073eng0.pdf.multi.nameddest=59089>

2 https://www.plataforma-llengua.cat/que-fem/en_noticies/107/un-expresses-concern-about-the-situation-of-catalan-in-schools-and-calls-for-a-review-of-the-rulings-against-immersion-made-by-the-high-court-of-justice-of-catalonia.

3 https://www.plataforma-llengua.cat/que-fem/en_noticies/84/we-call-upon-the-president-of-the-european-parliament-to-stop-dolors-montserrat-attacks-against-catalan-via-european-institutions

4 https://www.plataforma-llengua.cat/que-fem/en_noticies/110/the-committee-chaired-by-dolors-montserrat-in-the-european-parliament-promotes-the-views-of-spanish-nationalists-against-immersion-following-the-visit-of-meps

The Assembly of Delegates of FUEN calls on:

- The European Parliament to work towards on its compromise to safeguard the rights of linguistic minorities in accordance with the EU treaties and values of the EU.
- The Spanish State, as stated by the UN Rapporteur on Minority Issues, to consider that reducing the use of the Catalan language in the successful immersion programme in Catalonia would run the risk of children and pupils from Spanish-speaking backgrounds from learning Catalan well, as it is a minority language.
- The Spanish judiciary to review and reconsider the ruling that Spanish teaching should constitute at least 25% of all teaching in primary and secondary schools in Catalonia.