



## **ELEN statement to the French Government regarding the Diwan Breton immersion schools.**

**20th February 2021**

Dear President Mr. Emmanuel Macron,

On behalf of the European Language Equality Network, the international NGO for the protection and development of European lesser-used languages, we express our full support to the Diwan Breton bilingual immersion schools, and to call on the French state to immediately reverse its decision to reduce the amount of teaching hours in Breton at the secondary and college level.

That we should have to ask this in the 21st century of a modern European state, in a European Union dedicated to the protection of its linguistic diversity, and as the world celebrates International Mother Language Day on February 21st, merely reflects the disastrous situation we have come to regarding French treatment of the so-called 'regional' languages on its territories.

Language rights are human rights, and in this regard, the French state must act to protect its own citizens who speak a 'regional' language.

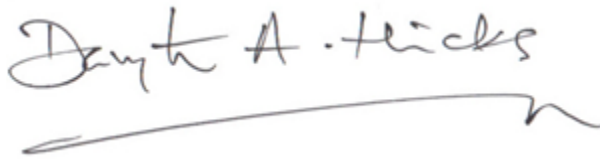
France must also cease from its habit of placing obstacles in the everyday running and development of the Diwan schools, a habit which it has practiced since the school was first formed in 1977.

We give our full support to the request of teachers, to students and parents of the Diwan colleges and the Diwan network, for the maintenance of three hours of weekly Breton teaching by class, not by level. Allocating these hours per level when there are several classes at the same level means reducing hours and possibly jobs.

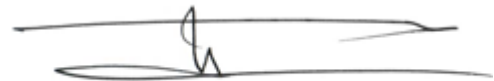
Furthermore, in order to begin to address the systemic discrimination by the French state against Breton and all regional languages, we call on France to:

- Ratify the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional of Minority Languages, as required for EU accession states.
- Fully support the Paul Molac Bill on regional languages that will be voted on in the National Assembly in April.
- Bring forward legislation for a Breton Language Act, as well as for all other 'regional' languages, that will guarantee language rights in the various sociolinguistic domains.

On behalf of ELEN,



Davyth Hicks, ELEN Secretary-General.



Tangi Louarn, ELEN Vice-President.

*ELEN is the European NGO that works for the promotion and protection of European lesser-used languages. It represents 46 languages with 166 member organisations in 23 European states. It has consultative status with the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the UN, UNESCO, and the EESC.*