Statement of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on the promotion of regional or minority languages through artificial intelligence

Adopted on 16 March 2022

Since the drafting of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the 1980s, different new technologies have improved the conditions for its implementation by the states parties. The Committee of Experts has already examined how new social media help to increase the media offer in regional or minority languages.[1]

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) marks a new era of technology which can also facilitate the everyday use and promotion of regional or minority languages and hence support states parties in implementing the Charter provisions which they have ratified. The Council of Europe is currently preparing a legal framework on AI, based on the Council of Europe's standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Committee of Experts welcomes the development of AI applications using regional or minority languages. This requires the gathering of natural language data, which is of particular importance for the documentation of less-widely used languages. It needs to be borne in mind that AI constitutes an addition to the learning and use of regional or minority languages. Particular attention must be paid to developing and/or including appropriate administrative and legal terminology in each regional or minority language. Once developed, AI applications facilitate the daily use of regional or minority languages, disseminate such languages to larger audiences, raise their visibility and prestige, and encourage more people to learn, use and transmit them to the next generations.

With the help of AI applications, authorities can fairly quickly make available an offer for users of regional or minority languages, including in less-widely used languages. The use of AI therefore supports authorities in taking "resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them", which is one of the central objectives and principles of the Charter.

Having taken note of the study "Facilitating the Implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages through Artificial Intelligence"[2], the Committee of Experts encourage states

- to include the promotion of the use of regional or minority languages in their policies, legislation and practice on digitalisation,

- to promote the inclusion of regional or minority languages into research and study on AI with a view to supporting the development of applications facilitating their use in public and private life,

- to develop, in co-operation with the users of regional or minority languages and the private sector, a structured approach to the use of AI applications in the different fields covered by the Charter.

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[1] Council of Europe (ed.): New technologies, new social media and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Report for the Committee of Experts, 2019
[2] Council of Europe Secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ed.): Facilitating the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages through artificial intelligence, 2022