

RESOLUTION 2016-06

Resolution on the situation of linguistic rights of the Frisian-speaking population in the Netherlands

submitted by the Ried fan de Fryske Beweging – Council of the Frisian Movement

At the Assembly of Delegates in Wrocław / Breslau, on 21 May 2016, the Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities adopted the following resolution:

The Netherlands has signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and also signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The scaling-up as a threat for the Frisian language.

Nearly all the head offices have disappeared from the Province of Fryslân and the board language in the businesses has become Dutch, even in agricultural companies. The same is now happening in the administration, schools, courts, broadcasting, police, and health care (even in the emergency room). According to the Law on the use of the Frisian Language the authorities not only have to preserve the Frisian language, they also have to encourage its use. The “Ried fan de Fryske Beweging” never has noticed any duty of care for the Frisian language at any reform of administrative bodies. The reform of the courts in the Netherlands shows the opposite: more and more sessions of the court are transferred to the neighbouring non-Frisian-speaking provinces, because of the specialisation of the prosecutors. One of the most striking examples recently concerns a Frisian-speaking suspect who had to go to a court outside the province of Fryslân. He could get an interpreter if he wanted to, but Fryslân has in its own capital a court where everyone can use the minority language without any problem.

The implementation of the Law on the use of the Frisian Language is a dead letter.

There are dozens of examples that the Law on the use of the Frisian Language is not being implemented. The “Ried of the Fryske Beweging” concludes with great concern that nor the central government, nor the municipalities have a budget for implementing the Law. The province of Fryslân has a small budget. Just to give an example: One of the municipalities De Fryske Marren has a budget (2015) of € 122,400,000 and spends € 5000 for preserving the Frisian language and it has no language policy (which it is obliged to according to the Law). There exists a covenant between the municipalities, the province and the central government that Frisian language policy must at least stay at the same level when scaling up municipalities, like was the case with De Fryske Marren. In real life, the new community falls back to the lowest level.

We call upon the Dutch government and the Frisian provincial government:

1. To do everything to implement the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and also to

stop the violation of the European Convention of Human Rights that everyone has the right to a fair trial and to use their own language.

2. In accordance to the Law on the use of the Frisian language (and the signed Language Charter and Framework Convention on European level), to preserve the Frisian minority language and to encourage its use in the administration, schools, court, broadcasting, police, health care and emergency room. That means also that there should be enough funding available.