



NPLD Statement on International Mother Language Day 21 February 2026

On the occasion of International Mother Language Day, the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) reaffirms its commitment to safeguarding and promoting Europe's rich linguistic diversity.

Across Europe, millions of people grow up speaking different mother tongues, whether these are regional, minority, national or migrant languages. Each of these languages represents a unique way of understanding the world, carrying memory, identity and belonging across generations.

At the same time, Europe is home to a number of traditional regional and minority languages that form an essential part of our shared cultural heritage. Many of these languages require sustained public support to ensure their transmission, visibility and vitality in contemporary society. Protecting and promoting these languages is not only a cultural responsibility, but also a democratic commitment to inclusion, participation and social cohesion.

International Mother Language Day invites us to reflect on the importance of linguistic diversity in all its forms. For NPLD, this means recognising both:

- the right of individuals and communities to maintain and transmit their mother tongues, and
- the need for targeted and structured policies that safeguard Europe's traditional regional and minority languages.

Linguistic diversity is not a competition between languages. It is a collective asset. A multilingual Europe is stronger, more creative and more resilient when all languages, especially those historically minoritised, are valued and supported.

On this day, NPLD calls on European institutions, national and regional governments, and civil society to continue investing in policies that ensure linguistic diversity thrives, in education, public life, culture and digital spaces.

Languages are not only means of communication. They are expressions of identity, dignity and democratic pluralism. Protecting them is investing in Europe's future.