

**EU Statement**  
**The International Decade of Indigenous Languages**  
**16 December 2022, General Assembly**

The European Union motto is ‘united in diversity’: which means a diversity of cultures, customs, beliefs and of languages. Besides the 24 official languages and three alphabets of the Union, there are over 60 indigenous, regional or minority languages, spoken by some 40 million people.

Multilingualism and respect for linguistic diversity is a core value of the European Union, and we continue to stress the importance of freedom of expression, in every society and every community.

Indigenous Peoples significantly contribute to the world’s linguistic diversity. Of the 7,000 languages spoken in the world, 5,000 are Indigenous, and the vast majority of the world’s 2,680 endangered languages are Indigenous languages. Estimates show that more than half of today’s spoken languages will be extinct or seriously endangered by the end of this century.

The European Union is deeply concerned by the rapid loss of Indigenous languages around the world. This alarming trend requires attention and action by the international community and at regional and local levels.

The European Union remains committed to promoting Indigenous languages and cultures. We welcome the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) as an important moment to step up action. This year the EU announced that we are investing a further €7 million to support indigenous peoples worldwide – this support also covers protection of indigenous languages.

The Decade will provide a crucial framework to draw attention to the critical status of many Indigenous languages across the world. Further, it will spur action and mobilization of stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion. It provides a unique opportunity for the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Indigenous languages.

The preservation of Indigenous languages not only requires greater awareness but also concrete commitments. The Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages provides guidance in this regard. This can be achieved through education, capacity building, and innovation in the sphere of digital empowerment and media development. This also means that private IT companies have an important role to play during the decade.

We continue to be guided by the same values and principles on which the European Union was founded. This is why we shall continue to support every effort for the revitalisation of Indigenous languages globally.

I thank you