COMMUNITY IN DIVERSITY: A PLEA OF A SUBSTANTIAL MULTILINGUALISM IN A COMMON EUROPE

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To understand Europe means to understand diversity, diversity in culture, political practice and also in language. Even on the basis of a single state the struggle for monolingualism accompanied only the rising of the national state (and the ideas of civil liberties and democracy) in the 19th century; in the Middle ages and the early modern times people at least in towns and markets had to have a command of different languages at least on a basic level. If we want to avoid nationalism and struggle for supremacy between different present European societies and states, we have to reinvent, to support, and to develop a contemporary culture of multilingualism. If we want to accept us as Europeans in a community in diversity, we have to address each other not only in a lingua franca but also - if not first of all – in the respective mother tongue.