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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, xx.xx.xxxx  
COM(xxxx) xxx final

xxx/xxxx (XXX)

Proposal for a

**RECOMMENDATION [OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND] OF THE  
COUNCIL**

**establishing the lyrics of the European Anthem**

(presented by the Commission)

## EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

### 1) CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

- **Grounds for and objectives of the proposal**

The importance of a national anthem in strengthening national identity, and thereby contributing to political cohesion, is generally recognised. Most, if not all, national anthems have words which can be sung together by all citizens. This plays a role in strengthening the link between the citizen and the imagined community which is the nation, thus contributing to more participatory democracy. At the EU level, however, this valuable tool for strengthening participation in the European project, and bringing the EU closer to the citizen, is missing. When a melody from Ludwig Van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was chosen as the European Anthem by the Heads of State and Government in 1985, Friedrich von Schiller's words of *An die Freude* were not adopted. While the 1985 decision was understandable at the time, subsequent developments, may have made it opportune to revisit it, by proposing that the EU recommend lyrics in a neutral language to enable citizens who so wish to sing the European Anthem together.

The objectives of this proposal are, in essence:

to help strengthen a common European identity in harmony with national, regional and other identities, thereby making the EU more effective for citizens.

to increase citizen participation in European integration.

to help achieve (1) and (2) by providing lyrics in a neutral, pan-European language for citizens to sing together.

to ensure parity of esteem for all European languages.

to reconfirm and rebalance the two elements of the EU's motto of "united in diversity", to ensure that diversity is not emphasized at the expense of unity.

This proposal does not set out to create a binding European legal framework, but merely to suggest a way that citizens who so wish may sing together so as to express their common European identity. There is no wish to replace national anthems, but to add a European dimension to the multilayered identities of European citizens.

- **General context**

When a melody from Ludwig Van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was chosen as the European Anthem by the Heads of State and Government in 1985, Friedrich Von Schiller's words of *An die Freude* were not adopted. This decision was necessitated by the principle of equality of all EU official languages. Schiller had written in German, and it was not felt appropriate to officialise his inspiring words, even by giving equal

validity to their translations in the other official languages, as this too would have given one language the status of *primus inter pares*. A further factor was that Schiller's words celebrate a universal human emotion, joy, and do not contain any specific reference to Europe or European integration.

While the 1985 decision was understandable at the time, subsequent developments may have made it opportune to revisit it. The current economic and financial crisis is placing unprecedented strain on the citizen's sense of belonging to Europe. It is clear that the first loyalty of many citizens is to their own country, and action is needed to strengthen a sense of belonging to the wider Europe, in harmony with the legitimate national and regional identities of citizens. One of the consequences of the 1985 decision is that European citizens are deprived of a common anthem which they could sing together to celebrate their sense of belonging to a common Europe. The present proposal aims to remedy that by proposing lyrics which can be heard, and read in translations into 39 languages, at [www.europo.eu/en/european-anthem](http://www.europo.eu/en/european-anthem) (all 23 official EU languages, world languages such as Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Indonesian, Hindi, Bengali; Croatian; and other languages spoken within the EU, such as Catalan, Basque, Galician, Luxembourgish, Welsh, Breton, Scottish Gaelic, Frisian).

- **Existing provisions in the area of the proposal**

The proposed Recommendation complements and builds upon the 1985 decision of the Heads of State and Government to choose a European Anthem.

- **Consistency with other policies and objectives of the Union**

The proposal is perfectly consistent with the declared policies and objectives of the European Union.

## 2) CONSULTATION OF INTERESTED PARTIES AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- **Consultation of interested parties**

*Consultation methods, main sectors targeted and general profile of respondents*

This proposal is the outcome of a Citizens' Initiative

*Summary of responses and how they have been taken into account*

This proposal is the outcome of a Citizens' Initiative

- **Collection and use of expertise**

There was no need for external expertise.

- **Impact assessment**

An impact analysis is not deemed necessary at this time.

### 3) LEGAL ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

- **Summary of the proposed action**

It is recommended to sing the European Anthem in a neutral language to underline the equal status of the official and working languages of the Union, and the aspiration that lyrics which do not belong to any one national language, or any one Member State, have the potential to belong equally to all EU citizens. Two verses are included, but the proposal relates only to verse one - celebrating the re-unification of Europe in peace and harmony, and leaving war in the past. The full text of the proposed lyrics, and a literal translation into English, can be read in the annex below.

- **Legal basis**

The legal basis of the proposal is Article 176(5), [second/first] indent, of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union. It enables the Council [and the European Parliament, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure,] to adopt [recommendations/incentive measures] for the achievement of its objectives, one of which is to contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.

- **Subsidiarity principle**

The subsidiarity principle applies insofar as the proposal does not fall under the exclusive competence of the Community.

The objectives of the proposal cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States for the following reason.

The recommending of common lyrics for the European Anthem cannot be achieved by any single Member State.

Community action will better achieve the objectives of the proposal for the following reason(s).

The objectives of the proposal cannot be as effectively carried out by the Member States as by the Union. The common European nature of the recommended lyrics means that they cannot be established by any one Member State.

The use of a non-constraining Community instrument provides an efficient means to adopt recognised European lyrics to sing the European Anthem in all Member States.

The text itself is limited to the lyrics which can usefully be adopted at European level;.

The proposal therefore complies with the subsidiarity principle.

- **Proportionality principle**

The proposal complies with the proportionality principle for the following reason(s).

It does not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives.

It imposes no financial or administrative burdens or expenses.

- **Choice of instruments**

Proposed instruments: recommendation.

Other means would not be adequate for the following reason.

As the anthem is the expression of the European sentiment of the peoples of Europe, the choice to sing it or just perform the music should be left to the persons responsible for each performance. Only a common set of lyrics in a neutral language needs to be established for the case that the anthem is sung together by citizens from different Member States.

#### 4) **BUDGETARY IMPLICATION**

The proposal has no implication for the Union budget.

#### 5) **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- **European Economic Area**

The proposed act does not concern an EEA matter and does not therefore need to extend to the European Economic Area.

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**establishing the lyrics of the European Anthem**

[THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND] THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 167(5) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission <sup>(1)</sup>,

[Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee <sup>(2)</sup>,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions <sup>(3)</sup>,]

[Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure <sup>(4)</sup>,]

Whereas:

- (1) The strengthening of a common European identity in harmony with the national and regional identities of citizens would be likely to lead to increased cohesion and solidarity within the European Union, and thus contribute to a more effective implementation of the EU Treaties.
- (2) The importance of a national anthem in strengthening national identity, and thereby contributing to political cohesion, is generally recognised.
- (3) The role of a national anthem in strengthening the link between the citizen and the imagined community which is the nation contributes to more participatory democracy.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C [...], [...], p. [...].

<sup>2</sup> OJ C [...], [...], p. [...].

<sup>3</sup> OJ C [...], [...], p. [...].

<sup>4</sup> OJ C [...], [...], p. [...].

- (4) Most, if not all, national anthems have lyrics which can be sung together by all citizens.
- (5) At the EU level this valuable tool for strengthening participation in the European project, and bringing the EU closer to the citizen, is not yet present.
- (6) When a melody from Ludwig Van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was chosen as the European Anthem by the Heads of State and Government in 1985, Friedrich von Schiller's words of *An die Freude* were not adopted.
- (7) While the 1985 decision was understandable at the time, subsequent developments, may have made it opportune to revisit it, by proposing that the EU recommend lyrics in a neutral language to enable citizens who so wish to sing the European Anthem together.
- (8) The current economic and financial crisis is placing unprecedented strain on the citizen's sense of belonging to Europe.
- (9) The first loyalty of many citizens is to their own country, and action is needed to strengthen a sense of belonging to the wider Europe, in harmony with the legitimate national and regional identities of citizens.
- (10) One of the consequences of the 1985 decision is that European citizens are deprived of a common anthem which they could sing together to celebrate their sense of belonging to a common Europe.
- (11) The present proposal aims to remedy that by proposing lyrics which can be heard, and read in translations into 39 languages, at [www.europo.eu/en/european-anthem](http://www.europo.eu/en/european-anthem) (all 23 official EU languages, world languages such as Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Indonesian, Hindi, Bengali; Croatian; and other languages spoken within the EU, such as Catalan, Basque, Galician, Luxembourgish, Welsh, Breton, Scottish Gaelic, Frisian).
- (12) The translations aim to ensure that all EU citizens can understand the lyrics, and can therefore decide whether they wish to sing them.
- (13) The neutral language chosen, Esperanto, was born in Europe 125 years ago and has developed its own community of regular users, present in all EU Member States. This language is more widely used than is often realised: its Wikipedia has over 160,000 articles and is the 28<sup>th</sup> largest of the 284 Wikipedia languages<sup>5</sup>; and its rich original literature is now widely documented<sup>6</sup>.
- (14) The 2011 report of the Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism<sup>7</sup> saw a role for this language, as developed in the UK *Springboard to Languages Programme*<sup>8</sup> since 2006, in improving language learning in general, possibly contributing to the

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<sup>5</sup> [http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Wikipedias](http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/List_of_Wikipedias).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.librejo.com/enciklopedio> - the Concise Encyclopedia of the original literature of Esperanto, published by Mondial in New York in 2008, has 740 pages.

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/news/news5090\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/news/news5090_en.htm).

<sup>8</sup> [www.springboard2languages.org](http://www.springboard2languages.org).

Europe 2020 goal of reducing the percentage of school dropouts to below 10% from the present 15%.

- (15) As the objectives of the present Recommendation, extending to all Member States, can be better achieved at Community level, the Community can take measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity provided for in Article 5 of the Treaty on the European Union. To also respect the principle of proportionality, such as stated in the same Article, the present Recommendation does not exceed what is necessary to achieve these goals.

HEREBY RECOMMEND: that, when the European Anthem is sung, the attached lyrics are used, in their original neutral language, as a means to enhance the sentiment of belonging to a Union which respects and puts on the same footing all its national and regional cultures and languages.

HEREBY INVITE Member States, their institutions and European institutions, to disseminate the knowledge of these lyrics.

— .

Done at Brussels,

*[For the European Parliament  
The President]*

*For the Council  
The President*

## ANNEX

[Lyrics in Esperanto with literal English translation]

### Verse 1

Kantu kune, amikaro, ni la ĝojon festas nur,  
Let us sing together, friends, we are only celebrating joy,

Nek rivero, nek montaro, plu landlimoj estas nun.  
Neither river, nor mountain range, there are no more borders now.

Ho Eŭrope, hejmo nia, tro daŭradis la divid',  
Oh, Europe, our home, your division lasted too long,

Nun brilegu belo via, ĉiu estas via id'.  
Let your beauty now shine forth, each of us is your descendent,

Via flago kunfratigas homojn post milita temp',  
Your flag unites as brothers and sisters those whom war did once divide,

Via leĝo nun kunigas civitanojn en konsent'.  
Your law now brings together citizens in full accord.

### Verse 2

De l' Malnova Kontinento ĵus ekstaris la popol',  
Throughout the Old Continent people now are on the march,

Gvidas ĝin tre nova sento kaj kuniga forta vol'.  
A very new feeling guides them, strong determination to unite.

Sub la ŝildo de la juro ni vivados en konkord'.  
Under the shield of the law, we will live in harmony,

Tio estas nia ĵuro: unu land' kaj unu sort'.  
That is our oath, one country and one destiny

Jen ekzemplo por la mondo: jen direkto, jen la vojo';  
There's an example for the world, there's a direction, there's the way,

Tuthomara granda rondo, en la paco, en la ĝoj'.  
The whole human race, in peace, and in joy.

The present recommendation comprises only Verse 1, celebrating the re-unification of Europe in peace and harmony, and the consigning of war to the past. Verse 2 is clearly federalist, and those who wish Europe to take that step are free to sing both verses.

