

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr COTTRELL, Mr ISRAEL, Mr BROK,  
Mr HARRIS and Mrs Elaine KELLETT-BOWMAN

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

concerning use of languages in the European  
Parliament

The European Parliament,

- conscious of the desire to promote the greatest working efficiency of its own institution,
- aware of its responsibilities in this respect to the people of Europe and to the Member State governments,
- concerned that working efficiency is increasingly hampered by working in a multiplicity of languages, with the consequent difficulties of multiple translation of documents,
- concerned at the increasing cost thereof and aware of the criticism levelled at the Parliament in this respect, especially with regard to waste through sheer volume of paperwork,
- recognizing equally the importance of reflecting the heritage of language and of its significance to national cultures within the Community,
- determined, however, to relate this recognition to the prime importance of working efficiency and the essential need to be a respectful guardian of public money,
- noting the working procedures of other international institutions, including the Council of Europe and the United Nations,
- believing that certain reforms now overdue,

RESOLVES to request the President and Bureau of Parliament as follows:

- (1) to designate the present seven working languages of the Community henceforth to the category of official languages of the European Parliament
- (2) to designate the following languages to the category of principle working languages of the Parliament: French, German, English, Italian,
- (3) to declare that notwithstanding the accession of further Member States, no further languages shall be admitted to the status of principle working languages
- (4) to declare that each Member of the Parliament shall have the right to speak and be heard in any language designated as an official language of the Parliament
- (5) but to declare also that with regard to the accession of new Member States, no documents or other official written material will be translated and that as a rule in future, no languages which do not have the status or principle working languages will be so translated,

other than the final decisions of Parliament,

- (6) points out that DANISH, DUTCH and GREEK will retain their status as official languages of the European Parliament but not principle working languages, and that SPANISH and PORTUGUESE, for example, would enjoy the same status
- (7) to allow a period of 3 years for these languages to assume their new status as official, but not principle, working languages
- (8) to resolve that increased facilities will be made available during this period to assist any Member of the Parliament or member of staff to become proficient in one or any combination of the principle working languages of the Community
- (9) to point out that similar procedures are already followed in the Council of Europe and the United Nations
- (10) to point out that unless a procedure of this kind is instituted, the Parliament will come to a halt through the sheer volume of paperwork, not to mention the inflationary cost of continuing to work in every area in a multiplicity of languages
- (11) to further investigate other areas where avoidable language duplication may be eradicated, such as simple guidance signs in the Parliament, where straightforward recognizable phrases or words in one language would be acceptable
- (12) to commence a programme of producing visitor information material in the principle working languages of the Parliament, over the 3 year designated period: but to allow a derogation of two years consequent upon the accession of a new Member State for 'special information programmes' in those countries - each programme to terminate after two years except for a supply of basic material
- (13) to charge a working party with responsibility for giving effect to these recommendations
- (14) to observe that this guideline, whilst intended for the convenience and efficiency of the Parliament, may form a useful basis for other Community institutions