

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr PATTERSON

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on provision and training of interpreters for
special settings

PE 73.866

The European Parliament,

- aware that the increasing mobility of citizens within the European Community will result in a higher frequency of social and legal problems encountered by workers temporarily resident in a Member State of which they are not nationals,
 - aware that language barriers already prevent many Community nationals from making full use of medical, social and judicial services to which they are entitled in another Member State,
 - noting that most Member States have large numbers of migrant or immigrant workers who, especially among women and children of first generation, retain their own language and therefore suffer from communication problems with welfare and social workers of the State who may try to help them,
 - considering that it is impossible for every Social Service Department, Probation Office, Hospital or Social Work Agency to have personnel able to communicate adequately in all languages used by the inhabitants of their area,
 - considering that voluntary non-specialist linguists or compatriots of the patient or client are insufficiently qualified, in terms of specialised knowledge of the setting and understanding of the needs of the situation, to satisfactorily interpret in delicate social or legal problems,
 - pointing out that political reasons may inhibit expatriates from expressing their views in front of Consular staff, and that Court interpreters often act for both prosecution and defendants which also results in reticence on the part of the individuals concerned,
- I. Considers that a regional panel of skilled interpreters trained for work in social, medical or legal fields would greatly help to solve communication problems in these fields;
 2. Points out that skilled interpreters with special training could, where necessary, give both a literal translation of what the client or patient has said, and an explanation in terms of his culture and customs;
 3. Considers that skilled interpreters with some knowledge of social, medical or legal agencies and their functions, who can work with them in a sensitive and confidential role when interviewing across language barriers, would facilitate the representatives of these agencies to carry out their jobs to the fullest extent;

4. Calls therefore upon the Commission
 - a) to undertake research into the viability of a project to train and set up panels of specialised interpreters in urban areas throughout the Community, from which qualified interpreters in a range of languages could be drawn as and when needed,
 - b) to explore the possibility of establishing pilot certificate courses in conjunction with appropriate organisations for suitable linguists to fill such panels holding recognised qualifications,
 - c) to approach colleges already offering language, social and legal studies with a view to setting up such certificate courses;
5. Instructs its President to forward this Resolution to the Commission.