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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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31 October 1978

DOCUMENT 410/78

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and

Education

on aspects of education in the European Community

Rapporteur: Mr P.J. POWER

1.2.1

PE 55.467/fin.



By letter of 11 January 1978 the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education requested authorization to draw up a report on the report from the Commission of the European Communities on education in the European Community 1976-1977.

Authorization was given by the President of the European Parliament in his letter of 25 January 1978.

On 23 February 1978 the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education appointed Mr P. POWER rapporteur.

At its meeting of 21 September 1978 the committee decided that the report should also cover two communications from the Commission of the European Communities on, respectively, the teaching of languages in the Community and the study of the European Community in school as well as two motions for resolutions on, respectively, foreign language teaching in the Community and the possible adoption of Esperanto as the working language of the European Community, these having been referred to the committee on 12 May and 3 July 1978.

It considered the various documents at its meetings of 16 May, 21 September, 25 September and 19 October 1978.

At its meeting of 19 October 1978 the committee adopted the motion for a resolution by 12 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions.

Present: Mr Van der Gun, chairman; Mrs Dunwoody, vice-chairman; Mr Power, rapporteur; Mr Albers, Mr Bouquerel, Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti, Mr Dinesen, Mr Dondelinger, Mr Geurtsen, Mr Kavanagh, Mr Mascagni (deputizing for Mr Pistollo), Lord Murray of Gravesend, Mrs Squarcialupi, Mr Wawrzik.



C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
A MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION .....	5
B EXPLANATORY STATEMENT .....	7
I. Introduction .....	7
II. Education in the European Community 1976-1977 .....	8
III. The teaching of languages in the Community .....	10
IV. The study of the European Community in schools .....	14
V. Conclusions .....	16
 <u>ANNEX I:</u> Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr WAWRZIK, Mr SCHYNS, Mr FUCHS, Mr FRUH, Mr AIGNER, Mr JAHN, Mr SCHWÖRER and Mr H. W. MÜLLER on foreign language teaching in the Community (Doc. 118/78) .....	18
 <u>ANNEX II:</u> Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr PISONI, Mr ZAGARI, Mr BERSANI and Mr FIORET on the possible adoption of Esperanto as the working language of the European Community (Doc. 178/78) .....	19



The Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on aspects of education in the European Community

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the report on education in the European Community 1976-1977 drawn up by the Commission (PE 49.167),
  - having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council on the education action programme at Community level and on the teaching of languages in the Community (COM(78) 222 final),
  - having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council on educational activities with a European content: the study of the European Community in schools (COM(78) 241 final),
  - having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr WAWRZIK, Mr SCHYNS, Mr FUCHS, Mr FRÜH, Mr AIGNER, Mr JAHN, Mr SCHWÖRER and Mr H. W. MÜLLER on foreign language teaching in the Community (Doc. 118/78),
  - having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr PISONI, Mr ZAGARI, Mr BERSANI and Mr FIORET on the possible adoption of Esperanto as the working language of the European Community (Doc. 178/78),
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education (Doc. 410/78),
1. Welcomes the Commission's latest initiatives in the educational field, as this is clearly an area where cooperation and coordination across national frontiers will benefit the individual European citizen;
  2. Considers it important to maintain a continuing exchange of views with the Commission on all questions of educational policy on which the Community can exert a positive and useful influence;
  3. Recommends to the Commission, with a view to future cooperation, that it draw up at suitable intervals documents on specific and clearly defined subjects in the field of educational policy so as to ensure that the discussions do not become too general in nature;

4. Draws attention in this connection to the whole complex of problems associated with the teaching of migrant workers' children, who should be given high priority in acquiring an education that will enable them both to continue living in their host country and to return to their country of origin, it being essential that the latter recognize the education they have received;
5. Warmly advocates further studies and pilot projects in the field of foreign language teaching since a common means of communication must be created if prejudice is to be broken down and mutual trust and understanding established among the peoples of Europe;
6. Feels, therefore, that every child in the European Community should have the opportunity of acquiring working knowledge of at least one Community language apart from his or her mother tongue;
7. Welcomes the proposal to establish a series of pilot projects to help in introducing guide lines relating to the teaching of a foreign language to less able pupils or those with little interest in languages, but believes that these should be given priority and a scheme of Community support created;
8. Does not believe that it is practical to select Esperanto or any real language as a compulsory first foreign language;
9. Does not wish to see the creation of common means of communication impose cultural uniformity on the citizens of Europe, as it is of great importance to protect the languages and cultures of all the Community countries, including those of ethnic and linguistic minorities and, particularly, those in serious danger of extinction;
10. Is of the opinion that the citizens in a community with a directly-elected parliamentary assembly need to be better informed about the European Community and that Community studies should therefore form an integral part of the teaching programmes in all schools;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of its committee to the Council and Commission.



EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. INTRODUCTION

1. As the Education Ministers of the European Community will be meeting in Council at the end of November 1978, the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education instructed the rapporteur to draw up a report on the documents expected to be on the agenda of that meeting.

2. On 16 May 1978 the Commission informed the committee that the following documents would be discussed:

- a communication on the teaching of languages in the Community;
- a communication on the study of the Community in schools;
- a report on the admission of students at institutions of higher education in one country to institutions in another;
- a report on the particular situation regarding the education of young women aged up to 18 years;
- an updated report on education in the European Community dealing with the remaining areas of education policy.

3. Unfortunately as recently as October the rapporteur discovered that only the first two documents were available to the committee, and his report would thus have to be based on these alone, plus the first report on education in the European Community, 1976-77.

4. On the other hand, in recent months different groups within the European Parliament have tabled two motions for resolutions concerning aspects of education policy which the committee felt should be included in its consideration of Community education policy in this report, viz:

- the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Pisoni and others on the possibility of using Esperanto as a working language in the European Community;
- the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Wawrzik and others on foreign language teaching in the Community.

5. The report by the Committee on Social Affairs has therefore been restricted to a consideration of those documents available, and it was not possible to include answers to the specific questions put orally at the meeting of 16 May 1978 and reproduced in the rapporteur's working document of 8 September 1978<sup>1</sup>, as the information requested has not yet reached him.

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<sup>1</sup>PE 54.767

## II. EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY 1976-77

6. The Commission document<sup>1</sup> summarizes important educational measures taken in 1976-77 and outlines developments involving cooperation between education and other sectors such as vocational training, regional development and environmental policy.

7. Current educational cooperation derives from a resolution adopted by the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council on 6 June 1974<sup>2</sup> which advocates European cooperation in education with, as a first step, an Education Committee to try to promote harmonization of the different educational systems and compile documentation and statistics.

8. This first modest step, a mere programme declaration, was followed up some two years later by an action programme in the field of education<sup>3</sup>.

9. The action programme set various specific goals such as the introduction of an educational system for the children of migrant workers, including intensive study of the language of the host country, and greater opportunities for studying their own mother tongue. A directive to this effect was in fact adopted by the Council at its meeting of 28 June 1977<sup>4</sup>, but only for children of migrant workers from the Member States. This discrimination against children from third countries was strongly condemned in an oral question by Mr ALBERS<sup>5</sup>.

10. As regards the improvement of relations between the various educational systems, the action programme provided for regular meetings between the persons responsible for educational policies and for study visits and short exchanges for teachers. The Commission states in its document that many such activities have been organized in the last couple of years.

<sup>1</sup> PE 49.167

<sup>2</sup> OJ No C 98, 20.8.1974, p.2

<sup>3</sup> OJ No C 38, 19.2.1976, p.1

<sup>4</sup> Press release No. 790/77 (presse 85) p.4

<sup>5</sup> Doc. 266/77

11. The third objective of the action programme is the compilation of statistics. The Commission states, however, that this objective is still at the planning stage, but there are plans for a network of national information offices on education in the Community to be officially inaugurated in 1978. Various working parties have also been set up to establish statistics on schoolchildren and full-time students in higher education.

12. The fourth objective of the action programme is entitled 'cooperation in the field of higher education'. The aims here included short study visits, discussions with the persons responsible and the drawing up of reports and proposals designed to eliminate obstacles to the mobility of students and university teaching and research staff. According to the Commission document, 32 grants were awarded in 1976 to promote the development of joint study programmes between institutions of higher education in different Member States. The Commission has cooperated with the Council of Europe in drawing up a report describing the different administrative, social and linguistic obstacles to the free movement of teaching staff, students and research workers. A handbook is also now available which provides students with information about opportunities for study in other countries. It should also be noted that in 1976 the European University Institute in Florence was officially inaugurated. The Institute offers post-graduate courses in history, economics, law and political and social sciences.

13. The fifth objective of the action programme concerns the teaching of foreign languages. The intention is that all pupils in the Community should have the opportunity of learning at least one foreign language and that future language teachers should stay for a time in the country in which the language is spoken. The Commission's efforts here have resulted in a communication to the Council, discussed in III below.

14. The last objective of the action programme is the introduction of equal opportunity for unrestricted access to all forms of education. At Community level, priority will be given to better preparation of young people for work and the provision of further education in order to reduce youth unemployment. This is really the only area in which the Council and the Ministers of Education have decided on specific action in the field of education apart from the directive on the education of the children of migrant workers mentioned above. Thus, on the basis of the Education Committee's report<sup>1</sup>, a resolution was adopted on 13.12.1976 concerning measures to be taken to improve the preparation of young people for work and to facilitate their transition from education to working life<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> PE 47.567

<sup>2</sup> OJ No C 308, 30.12.1976

This resolution was the subject of an own-initiative report by the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education, which after a full discussion welcomed the initiative but regretted the lack of specific proposals and felt that education, vocational training and employment policies had to be coordinated before any results could be achieved.<sup>1</sup>

15. It should also be noted that, unlike the education policy, a vocational training policy is provided for in Article 128 of the EEC Treaty. The Commission and the newly-created Centre for the Development of Vocational Training in Berlin are working hard on this problem. Various working parties have been set up to discuss the different subjects and priority problems. The 1976 Council directive on equal treatment for men and women<sup>2</sup>, which admittedly is not directly concerned with education but nevertheless is closely concerned with the problem of equal opportunities for boys and girls as regards general education and education and vocational guidance, should also be borne in mind. Finally, mention should also be made of the recommendation adopted by the Commission in 1976 on vocational preparation for young people who are unemployed or threatened by unemployment<sup>3</sup>. In a report on this recommendation<sup>4</sup>, the European Parliament requested that the proposals should be formulated more realistically as part of a binding programme of action.

16. The Commission concludes its document by mentioning the extensive network of contacts between the Community and international organizations concerned with education such as the Council of Europe, the OECD, UNESCO and the ILO.

### III. THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES IN THE COMMUNITY<sup>5</sup>

17. According to the Commission, the aim of this programme is to ensure that all Community citizens are able to communicate with each other in at least one language other than their mother tongue.

18. This objective was already laid down in the Council Resolution on an action programme in the field of education<sup>6</sup>. Point 17 states that encouragement should be given to

'offering all pupils the opportunity of learning at least one other Community language'.

19. The latest Commission document replaces this vague general statement by detailed and practical proposals for the attainment of the desired objective.

<sup>1</sup> Doc. 513/77

<sup>2</sup> OJ No L 39, 14.2.1976, p.40

<sup>3</sup> Doc. 298/76

<sup>4</sup> Doc. 398/76

<sup>5</sup> COM(78) 222 final, 22.6.1978

<sup>6</sup> OJ No C 38, 19.2.1976

20. Emphasis is laid first of all on the fundamental importance of the training of language teachers. To enable them to impart their knowledge to pupils with maximum effect, they must spend a period of study in a country where the language they are to teach is spoken. The Commission therefore requests the Council to establish a Community-wide scheme for the exchange of teaching assistants. Specifically, the Commission advocates the introduction of a programme for 1980-1983 involving an annual total of 10,000 foreign language teaching assistants in the Community as a whole.

21. The Community's role here would be of a financial nature: it would contribute to these exchanges and meet 50% of the expenditure on pilot projects concentrating on an assistants scheme for technical and technological establishments and exchanges with countries whose language is not widely known.

22. Exchanges of foreign language teaching assistants are by no means a new phenomenon. Some countries have operated exchanges, on a bilateral basis, since the turn of the century. However, at present only six Member States cooperate in schemes of this kind (the exceptions being Denmark, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). The Commission's idea is therefore to make use of and extend existing cooperation to the entire Community; the latter would contribute part of the expenditure which is at present borne by the countries exchanging teachers. The Commission's long-term aim is that every primary and secondary school should have the opportunity to accept at least one person having the required foreign language as his mother tongue.

23. In its communication, the Commission also emphasizes the importance of the exchange of pupils, in the form of group visits, vacation activities and field-study programmes. However, given the economic, administrative, linguistic and geographical difficulties, the Commission considers that support measures at Community level are not only necessary but would also be effective. It therefore proposes that a fund be established to assist Member States in developing a strategy both to compensate schools in localities which are geographically remote or otherwise disadvantaged and to ensure that the children of poor families are not excluded from the activities.

24. Vacation activities are proposed for pupils aged 16-19 on the basis of one common vehicular language. Such activities should take in other subjects in addition to language learning. The Commission assigns itself the role of coordinator, and would be responsible for contributing 50% of the travel costs of each participant.

25. The Commission programme also includes pilot projects covering the whole area of pupil exchanges. It feels that these pilot projects should focus on exchanges involving handicapped children, students engaged in technical and vocational studies and exchanges for much younger pupils (under 14 years). Here too the Commission will be responsible for coordination and for 50% of the costs.

26. Finally, the Commission proposes that the Member States which have not yet set up advice services should do so as soon as possible with a view to promoting group visits and pupil exchanges.

27. The Commission's communication devotes a special chapter to schools teaching through more than one language.

What it has in mind, apart from European schools and various international schools, are those at which foreign children are taught together with **indigenous** children. Under the 1977 Council Directive on the education of the children of migrant workers<sup>1</sup>, the Member States must take, within a four-year period, 'appropriate measures to ensure that free tuition to facilitate initial reception is offered in their territory to the children referred to in Article 1, including, in particular, the teaching - adapted to the specific needs of such children - of the official language or one of the official languages of the host 'State', (Article 2). Article 3 stipulates, moreover, that **Member States** must take 'appropriate measures to promote, in coordination with normal education, teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin for the children referred to in Article 1'.

The Commission's communication to the Council expands on these provisions by proposing that the directive should be complied with not by setting up new schools, but by adapting existing schools with a view to placing indigenous children in a natural bilingual environment.

28. These schools, which over an initial period would naturally be limited in number, would be included in a 'European Community Schools Scheme', the principle objectives of which would be:

- the pursuit of high quality in the teaching of Community and other relevant languages;
- to meet the linguistic, pedagogic, cultural and social needs of children from abroad;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No L 199, 6.8.1977, p.32

- to enrich the cultural, linguistic and social education of indigenous children through direct contact with foreign children;
- the incorporation of foreign teachers into the teaching staff.

29. It is hoped that the scheme would operate over an initial five-year period, by the end of which the Community should have specific plans for at least twenty European Community Schools. It should be emphasized that the scheme would initially be confined to secondary schools. Once again, the Community would contribute to the development costs of such schools, and would allocate grants for teaching materials and for meeting the cost of engaging teachers.

30. This concern to improve language teaching dates back some time. The European Parliament too has expressed concern on several occasions. The most recent example was the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Wawrzik and others on foreign language teaching in the Community<sup>1</sup>, which urged that one and the same language should be taught as first foreign language in all the Member States.

31. In 1975, the Economic and Social Committee, in an Opinion<sup>2</sup> on 'education in the European Community'<sup>3</sup>, also stressed the need to enable as many people as possible to communicate in a Community language other than their own and to comprehend a second language, and, in this connection, called for a comprehensive survey of new language teaching methods of all kinds and at every level.

32. Mention should also be made of the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Pisoni and others on the possible adoption of Esperanto as the working language of the European Community<sup>4</sup>. There was a broad consensus in the committee to reject this idea on the grounds not only that Esperanto was an artificial language but also that the addition of a further language would encourage rather than help reduce linguistic confusion.

33. At meetings where the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education discussed education policy in the European Community, there was particular interest in the teaching of languages.

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 118/78,

<sup>2</sup> OJ No C 255, 7.11.1975, p.9

<sup>3</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, supplement 3/74

<sup>4</sup> Doc. 178/78, 28.6.1978

34. The rapporteur feels that it is quite right to give high priority to foreign language teaching, as this is essential to ensure improved understanding among the citizens of the Member States. But this does not mean that we should strive for uniformity throughout Europe. On the contrary, the existing languages and cultures must be preserved, now and after enlargement. The committee feels therefore that every child in the Community should be given an opportunity to acquire a sufficient knowledge of at least one Community language, in addition to his or her mother tongue, to enable him or her to use this foreign language in contacts with other Community citizens.

35. It should not, however, be overlooked here that there is a large category of people who either have special difficulty, or show little interest, in acquiring foreign languages. The committee feels therefore that special priority needs to be given to the pilot projects concentrating on foreign language teaching and that the Community should support such projects.

On a final point, the committee wishes to draw attention to the fact that some 30 million Europeans in the Community do not even have an official Community language as their mother tongue and so, when endeavouring to introduce common means of communication, one should not lose sight of the important task of preserving the great wealth of language and culture represented by the many ethnic and linguistic minorities in Europe.

#### IV. THE STUDY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup>

36. As in the case of the abovementioned communication on foreign language teaching, the Commission's communication on the study of the European Community is a follow-up to the action programme in the field of education<sup>2</sup>, although it also embodies several demands made in the past year by the European Parliament for action in this specific sphere.

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<sup>1</sup> COM(78) 241 final, 26.6.1978

<sup>2</sup> OJ No C 38, 19.2.1978



37. The most recent occasion was the debate in the European Parliament on 14 March 1978<sup>1</sup> on the oral question by Mr Meintz and others on introducing Community policy into education (Doc. 572/77), in which all speakers expressed support for action to ensure that citizens were better informed and educated about the European Community.

38. The same views were expressed in connection with a motion for a resolution (Doc. 548/75) and an oral question (Doc. 491/75) on the Community action programme in the field of education<sup>2</sup>.

39. The Economic and Social Committee also strongly advocates greater study of the European Community. In its Opinion on Education in the European Community<sup>3</sup>, it stresses that 'educational institutions at every level should increasingly include in their teaching a large European and international component to allow a more intimate knowledge of the history of other Member States and a better appreciation of that history within the broader European and international context' (point 9.6). However, in the Committee's view, this should not imply the imposition of a single system. On the contrary, diversity is desirable, although cooperation and coordinated policies in some areas of education are also desirable and important.

40. Finally, the Commission also advocates improving teaching on the Community in schools in its report on the establishment of a European Foundation<sup>4</sup>. In Chapter III, paragraph 3 of this report, the Commission, referring to this Foundation, the establishment of which was first proposed in the Tindemans report<sup>5</sup> and which is designed to improve understanding among the peoples of the Member States, affirms that it 'could play an important part by providing support for activities organized by governments, the Community institutions and private organizations to improve teachers' understanding of the Community, to promote the production of teaching materials and to encourage experimental schemes'.

41. The Commission's latest contribution - i.e. the communication under consideration - accepts the absence of any great political desire to coordinate teaching about the Community. It therefore proposes that, in the course of their schooling, pupils should be taught the following main subjects:

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<sup>1</sup> OJ ANNEX 228, March 1978, p.32

<sup>2</sup> OJ ANNEX 202, April 1976, p.145

<sup>3</sup> OJ No C 255, 7.11.1975, p.9

<sup>4</sup> COM(77) 600 final, 17.11.1977

<sup>5</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, supplement 1/76

- the Community in its European context, with emphasis on the historical and political context which gave rise to its creation;
- the Community in action - its powers, achievements and problems;
- the Community vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

42. It should be emphasized that the Commission expressly states that it is not aiming at any standard pattern of study, but proposes the formulation of a strategy at both national and Community level.

Elements of this strategy would be:

- the introduction of teaching about the Community into the curricula of all schools in the Community;
- the implementation of pilot projects to work out new teaching methods;
- teacher training programmes;
- provision of the necessary teaching support facilities.

43. In conclusion, the Commission proposes that the Council, at its meeting in November 1978, should approve the principle that the study of the Community should be regarded as an essential element in the education of all pupils in Community schools, and that these pupils should therefore be given the opportunity to undertake such study at secondary level.

44. The Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education, was, however, very sceptical about the study of the European Community in schools. Although members were not against schoolchildren being given more information on the European Community, they felt that information on political and economic problems should be extended to the whole world, and not be concentrated on just a small part of it.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education sets great store by a continuing dialogue with the Commission on educational matters where the Community can play a positive and practical role.

However, these discussions must not become too general in nature, but must always concentrate on specific well-defined topics.

As a start there should be a searching debate on the whole question of language teaching. The action taken by the Commission, in the form of pilot projects, seminars, and the production of documents is therefore welcome, and ample funds should be set aside for the purpose. In particular, the highest priority must be given to solving the problems of children of migrant workers, whether they come from Member States or from outside the Community.

However, if this desirable cooperation with the Commission is to yield benefits commensurate with the efforts put into it, it is essential that the Commission, when working out a timetable for the production of its documents, should not regard the date of the relevant Council meeting as its only criterion, but should also make greater allowance for the European Parliament's need for reasonable time to consider the Commission's various proposals

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc.118/78)

tabled by Mr WAWRZIK, Mr SCHYNS, Mr FUCHS, Mr FRÜH, Mr AIGNER, Mr JAHN, Mr SCHWÖRER, and Mr H. W. MÜLLER

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure  
on foreign language teaching in the Community

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the imminent enlargement of the Community,
  - having regard to the difficulties which this confusion of tongues will make for millions of Europeans,
1. Urges that one and the same language should be taught as the first foreign language in all of the Member States in order to bring about better understanding between Community citizens and establish a common means of communication;
  2. Expects that in those countries whose language is chosen as the first foreign language another Community language will be taught;
  3. Requests the Council and Commission to draw up concrete proposals to this effect and to submit them to Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 178/78)

tabled by Mr PISONI, Mr ZAGARI, Mr BERSANI and Mr FIORET

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on the possible adoption of Esperanto as the working language of the European Community

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the constant increase in relations at personal, cultural, political and commercial level and the implications of the international proliferation of the means of mass communications;
- having regard to the fact that the implications are all the more far-reaching for the European Community where a high degree of commercial interdependence is accompanied by a process of economic integration consolidated by the progressive implementation of Community policies;
- having regard to the fact that elections to the European Parliament by universal suffrage will be a contributory factor in transferring to Community level the problem of mass participation in the decision-making process which is currently confined to national level;
- having regard to the fact that the above considerations highlight the need for a functional and practical linguistic instrument to solve the problems arising from the coexistence of several Community working languages and further the process of integration;
- having regard in particular to the difficulties caused to the functioning of the Community Institutions through having to resort to complex simultaneous interpretation and translation services;
- having regard to the fact that enlargement of the Community will increase the number of official languages, further aggravating the above-mentioned phenomena, entailing more cumbersome procedures and increasing the relative costs of implementation;
- having regard to the fact that a different approach to the language problem could reveal the advisability of adopting an easily learnt language with a simple grammatical structure;
- having regard to the fact that such a language should not be chosen in a discriminatory fashion or on the basis of personal relations or relations between the States;

1. Invites the Commission of the European Communities:
  - (a) to carry out detailed surveys and comparative studies in order to establish whether, on the basis of the above-mentioned requirements, Esperanto could be effectively adopted as the working language of the European Community;
  - (b) to carry out, with the aid of Esperanto associations, practical experiments in simultaneous interpretation and translation as has already been done successfully during international meetings and at other international events;
  - (c) lastly, to submit a report on the results of the studies and experiments carried out;
2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.