

Procedure file


Basic information

INL - Legislative initiative procedure	2003/2057(INL)	Procedure completed
Regional and less-used languages in Europe in the context of the enlargement and cultural diversity		
Subject 4.40.08 Language learning, regional and local languages		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport		28/11/2002
		PPE-DE EBNER Michl	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Key events

15/05/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
08/07/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
08/07/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0271/2003	
04/09/2003	Debate in Parliament		
04/09/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0372/2003	Summary
04/09/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2003/2057(INL)
Procedure type	INL - Legislative initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Request for legislative proposal
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 47
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/5/19507

Documentation gateway

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0271/2003	08/07/2003	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0372/2003 OJ C 076 25.03.2004, p. 0243-0374 E	04/09/2003	EP	Summary

Regional and less-used languages in Europe in the context of the enlargement and cultural diversity

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Michl EBNER (EPP-ED, I) on European regional and lesser-used languages - the languages of minorities in the EU - in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity. Pointing out that around 40 million people in the EU were estimated to use a regional or minority language regularly in addition to the official language(s) of their country, the report criticised the lack of EU legislation on such languages. A budget line introduced in the 1980s by Parliament to support these languages was currently a dead letter because the Commission had been unable to use the funds following a 1998 ruling by the Court of Justice that there was no appropriate legal basis for the policy. To overcome this problem, the committee called on the Intergovernmental Conference which would be discussing the draft constitution proposed by the Convention to include in the provisions on EU culture policy a reference to the promotion of linguistic diversity, including regional and minority languages as an expression of cultural diversity. MEPs also made a number of other recommendations to the Commission, calling for: a feasibility study on the creation of a European Agency for Linguistic Diversity and Language Learning; a multi-annual programme on linguistic diversity (including regional, minority and sign languages); and financial measures to promote acceptance of multilingualism, including co-existence between official and "co-official" languages. They added that the budgetary impact of these measures should be compatible with the ceiling of Heading 3 of the budget (internal policies) without a reprogramming of existing policies. In addition MEPs argued that since the EU had adopted a mainstreaming strategy in its funding policy, the goal of promoting and protecting regional and minority languages should be clearly stated as part of the objectives, "at least of all the language and content industry related programmes".?

Regional and less-used languages in Europe in the context of the enlargement and cultural diversity

The European Parliament adopted an own-initiative report with 431 votes in favour, 30 against, and 23 abstentions, criticising the lack of EU legislation on regional and less widely-used languages. The rapporteur was by Michl EBNER (EPP-ED, Italy) on European regional and lesser-used languages. (Please see the summary of 08/07/03.) Parliament pointed out that despite the very considerable differences that sometimes exist between the social, economic and political factors involved in their use, Europe's regional and minority languages have many features in common throughout the EU and a European dimension. This makes them a matter of interest for the whole of Europe. In some communities regional or minority languages straddle the frontiers of Member States, and there is a tradition of long-standing cultural and historical links between other such communities. These links are important and continue to be promoted at interregional level, almost all these regional and minority language communities share a strong interest in the survival and development of their language and culture, as well as in making full use of their potential in the EU. Regional and minority languages are a major cultural treasure trove and support to foster them should be improved constantly and at every level. Parliament therefore called on the Commission, to submit to it by 31 March 2004 legislative proposals on language diversity and language learning. It also asked the Commission to provide scientifically based criteria for a definition of a minority or regional language for the purposes of the possible programme for linguistic diversity.?