


Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2006/2083(INI)	Procedure completed
Multilingualism: framework strategy for language learning and linguistic diversity		
Subject 4.40.08 Language learning, regional and local languages		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	CULT Culture and Education		23/01/2006
		Vers/ALE JOAN I MARÍ Bernat	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
European Commission	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	Commission DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	Commissioner FIGEL' Ján	

Key events			
22/11/2005	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2005)0596	Summary
06/04/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
09/10/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
23/10/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0372/2006	
15/11/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
15/11/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0488/2006	Summary
15/11/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2083(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/6/34557

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2005)0596	22/11/2005	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE374.485	29/06/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE376.698	01/08/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0372/2006	23/10/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0488/2006	15/11/2006	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2007)0054	11/01/2007	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2007)0079	05/02/2007	EC	

Multilingualism: framework strategy for language learning and linguistic diversity

PURPOSE: the presentation of a new framework strategy for multilingualism.

CONTENT: this Commission Communication is the first report to explore the role of multilingualism in Europe and reflects the fact that a European Commissioner has, for the first time, been given explicit responsibility for multilingualism. The report seeks:

- to reaffirm the Commission's commitment to multilingualism in the EU;
- to set out the Commission's strategy for promoting multilingualism;
- to propose a number of specific actions which stem out of this strategic framework.

The Commission reminds its readers that the EU is founded on the concept of 'unity in diversity', which naturally includes the twenty official languages of the Union as well as the 60 or so other indigenous languages and scores of non-indigenous languages spoken by the migrant community.

In this document, the term multilingualism is used to describe the new field of Commission policy that promotes a climate conducive to the full expression of all languages. As such the Commission's policy in this field is centred on three main objectives:

- to encourage language learning in society;
- to promote a healthy multilingual economy;
- to give citizens access to EU legislation, procedures and information in their own languages.

The Commission, however, reminds the Member States that progress rests in their hands – be it at a national, regional or local level.

In its conclusions, the Commission states that multilingualism is essential for the functioning of the EU. The Commission proposes that the current state of multilingualism can, indeed must, improve for the sake of job security and better jobs in a global environment. Within this context it urges the Member States to take additional measures to promote widespread individual multilingualism and to foster a society that respects all citizens' linguistic identities. In order to promote this issue the Commission will:

- set up a High Level Group on Multilingualism to provide support and advice on initiatives;
- organises a ministerial conference on multilingualism in order to allow Member States to share progress thus far and to plan future work;
- present a further Communication proposing a comprehensive approach to multilingualism in the EU.

For further information concerning the financial implications of this measure, please refer to the financial statement.

Multilingualism: framework strategy for language learning and linguistic diversity

The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Bernat JOAN I MARÍ (Greens/EFA, ES) on the Commission's new framework strategy for multilingualism. The committee pointed out that "multilingualism is a special feature of the EU" and a "basic component" of European culture. It welcomed the Commission's action to promote languages in the Community and reminded the Member States of the need to take suitable measures for a genuine policy of learning foreign language skills.

The report said that there was a lack of detailed and reliable data and appropriate indicators related to the current situation of foreign language competence in the Member States and therefore welcomed the proposal for a European Indicator of Language Competence. This should include all official EU languages and could be extended beyond the five widely-spoken languages to include the other EU languages, in order

to gain a true picture of language competence.

MEPs said that the widest opportunities should be provided for migrants to learn the language(s) of host countries. They also welcomed the greater use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), where pupils learn a subject through the medium of a foreign language. And they supported a European Standard for Translation Services and said that there should be a proactive policy for developing translation services for less widely used languages.

The report called for a clear, coherent EU language plan and EU language legislation, and also urged the European institutions and bodies to improve their communication with citizens in their own national language, regardless of whether the language has official status at Member State or EU level.

Lastly, the committee supported the proposals to develop language-related professions and industries, saying that "all European languages will need new technologies such as speech processing, voice recognition and so on, as well as work on terminology, developing language teaching, certification and testing; otherwise lesser-used languages will be left behind with their linguistic social space taken over by the more widely spoken languages - especially English".

Multilingualism: framework strategy for language learning and linguistic diversity

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Bernat JOAN I MARÍ (Greens/EFA, ES) on the Commission's new framework strategy for multilingualism. (For a summary of the main points of the report, please refer to the document dated 09/10/2006.) The report was adopted by 537 votes in favour to 50 against and 59 abstentions.