

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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ORAL QUESTION (O-11/79)

without debate pursuant to Rule 46 of the Rules of Procedure
by Mr MASCAGNI, Mr MASULLO, Mr PISTILLO, Mr SPINELLI and Mrs SQUARCIALUPI
to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject: Teaching of languages in the Community countries by persons
specially trained to teach their native language

The teaching and learning of the most widely spoken languages in the Community Member States are of decisive importance to the process of integration which, in addition to the economic and political factors involved, calls for the establishment of far closer relations through the expansion of areas of common knowledge and mutual understanding and improved contacts between different cultural groups.

1. Would the Commission not agree that, in the teaching and learning of languages, far more progress would be achieved by using the services of persons who are specially trained to teach their native language and also possess a good knowledge of the language of the countries in which they are employed (e.g. the teaching of English in France by English teachers who have an adequate knowledge of French, the teaching of German in Italy by German teachers who have an adequate knowledge of Italian, etc.)?
2. Does the Commission think that such a radically new scheme, worked out at Community level, subsequently discussed and approved by the individual Member States and then reconsidered and finalized by the responsible Community bodies, could be progressively implemented and, if so, what kind of appropriate action would it be able to take?

3. Would the Commission not agree that, given the foreseeable objective and subjective difficulties of such a scheme, it should initially be introduced on a trial basis and with a view to stimulating the interest of the teachers concerned so that, once adequate experience has been gained, the requirements can be more realistically assessed?
4. Does the Commission not think that, with the agreement of Parliament and on the basis of a suitable preparatory document, the Member States should be consulted on this matter?
5. In the Commission's view, what steps could be taken in the near future to encourage the employment of the abovementioned teachers in those regions in which the population is made up of different ethnic and linguistic groups and in which, as is well known, the linguistic barriers to mutual understanding are most acute and have to be overcome in the interests of peaceful and fruitful co-existence?