

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

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ORAL QUESTION (0-118/77)

with debate, pursuant to Rule 47 of the  
Rules of Procedure

by Mr FIORET, Mrs SQUARCIALUPI, Mr ALBERTINI,  
Mr CIFARELLI, Mr AMADEI, Mr COVELLI, Mr PISONI,  
Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO CERRETTI, Mr VERNASCHI,  
Mr RIPAMONTI, Mr LIGIOS, Mr SANDRI, Mr LEZZI  
and Mr VERONESI

to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject: Working languages of the European  
Parliament

The problem of the official languages of the Community and the recurrent proposals to reduce to only three the languages used for the simultaneous drafting of the working documents of the Assembly has caused considerable perplexity, as is shown by the fact that in little more than a year there have been six questions to the Commission on this subject, of which four were written and two oral.

Although the Commission has officially acknowledged that, under the terms of Article 217 of the EEC Treaty, 'the rules governing the languages of the institutions of the Community shall ... be determined by the Council, acting unanimously', there has in fact been no lack of unfortunate statements by influential Commissioners who have dismissed the problem in an offhand manner, terming it 'a question of linguistic prestige'.

Considering that the question of working languages is of political and practical relevance

- because it arouses negative psychological reactions in the public mind with respect to the relative standing of the individual Member States, bearing in mind that the language distribution of Members of the future European Parliament will be as follows:

French	:	98
English	:	96
German	:	81
Italian	:	81
Dutch	:	38
Danish	:	16

- because it represents a handicap, in the exact interpretation of working texts, to parliamentarians of a different mother tongue to the officially accepted ones,

is it not the corporate view of the Commission that this subject should not be dealt with in off-the-cuff statements, and that it should leave this delicate question to be dealt with by the European Parliament elected by direct universal suffrage, which will be in a position to order its own work according to criteria of operational efficiency and with due regard to the requirements and numerical preponderance of the Members elected to the future Assembly?