

27/04/2006: Mavrommatis Report for the creation of a European Indicator of Language Competence adopted in Plenary.

With 435 votes in favour from a total of 480 votes, Manolis Mavrommatis' (EPP-ED, GR) report on the "promotion of multilingualism and language learning in the European Union and the creation of a European Indicator of Language Competence" was adopted today at the plenary session in Brussels.

The rapporteur underlined that "in the enlarged EU, it is more important than ever that European citizens possess the necessary knowledge and skills to communicate effectively. The knowledge of a number of foreign languages facilitates mutual comprehension while encouraging us to be more open towards others and their cultures".

Referring to the aim of the Indicator, Mavrommatis said that it is to measure the foreign language qualifications of Europeans in four areas: reading, comprehension, speaking and writing. The Indicator should record the proficiency of a sample at each of the six levels on the scales of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe (this reference framework has gained wide acceptance and is already used in many Member States).

In the initial phase, it is proposed by the rapporteur that linguistic proficiency be tested in the five most widely-taught languages of the European Union (English, French, German, Spanish and Italian), possibly adding further languages at a later stage. According to recent research, 38% of Europeans speak English as a foreign language while the rate for the other 4 languages is: 14% for German, 14% for French, 6% for Spanish and 3% for Italian.

The rapporteur insisted that minority and regional languages not be included in this report as they are closer to the context of a new report on the Strategy for Multilingualism which the Culture Committee is preparing.

The Indicator will also be a very important and valuable technical instrument that will help the European Commission obtain reliable information concerning the linguistic proficiency of European citizens, in particular young people. It will also enable us to make comparisons between Member State policies in this area and will facilitate consultation regarding best practices, thereby giving fresh impetus to language teaching.

As this is the *European Year of Workers' Mobility*, Manolis Mavrommatis referred to the significance of the Indicator in this context. "Learning two languages in addition to the mother tongue will give motivation and opportunities to young people to exercise their right for free movement within the EU. They will have the chance to study and work in the EU25. This is yet another reason why we should have a common language test that will indicate the true language skills of Europeans".



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«Plenul Parlamentului European a aprobat o rezoluție prin care susține "multilingvismul" și evidențiază necesitatea ca locuitorii țărilor membre ale Uniunii Europene să vorbească cel puțin două limbi în afara celei materne. Textul, aprobat cu 435 de voturi pentru, 22 împotriva și 23 de abțineri, cere statelor membre să-și îmbunătățească politicile pentru învățarea limbilor străine de la vârste fragede. De asemenea, sprijină propunerea CE de a se stabili un indicator de competență lingvistică comun tuturor statelor membre, care să permită calibrarea omogenă a aptitudinilor în materie de limbi străine.»