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on the use of languages in the Community

PART B: EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Language has many functions in society; it is, first and foremost, a means of communication between two persons or groups of persons. It is also the vehicle of a culture and reflects the thought-structures of a language group and of the individual within that group. It is a phenomenon which is both mechanical and highly sophisticated insofar as the ability to use a language is the outcome of a long period of training from childhood, a skill which undergoes constant change and is either enriched or impoverished during the whole life of an individual. Furthermore, language is not something fixed, it is rather in a perpetual state of flux; it may either form new coinages, in response to new needs of expression or, on the other hand, it may borrow words from another language and adapt them more or less well to the new linguistic and cultural context. Finally, it happens that certain words fall into disuse and lose their meaning.

A language also expresses power relations between individuals or groups of persons, both as regards culture and in the political and economic sphere. For example, history shows that the language which has tended to impose itself as a vehicle of communication in a given time and place has usually been that of the dominant civilization.

We can see how a society which was politically, culturally or economically dominant ensured or imposed the primacy of its language in its dealings with other societies. In France, for instance, as the nation state was built, the French language extended its influence to the detriment of the regional languages and cultures. To a lesser extent the unity of Italy was founded on the use of Italian as the language of politics and administration. Nineteenth century European colonialism was accompanied by linguistic colonialism: for instance, we still speak of 'English-speaking Africa' as opposed to 'French-speaking Africa' or 'Portuguese-speaking Africa'.

Language can be both a vehicle and an indication of social domination. For instance, French developed as an international language in seventeenth century Europe in the dominant aristocratic circles and the high bourgeoisie.

Finally, language can be the vehicle or the product of economic expansion. Following the development of international relations, of trade, of science and technology, are we not witnessing a standardization of concepts, of modes

of expression which goes beyond the imposition of a single language or the borrowing of words from another language?

The linguistic situation in Europe is particularly complex. Even if one accepts the principle that each language expresses a culture which has an intrinsic value, it is nevertheless clear that certain languages are more widely used than others, either because they are spoken by a greater number of persons or because they express a history and a culture which have at sometime been dominant. There is already within Europe therefore a distinction between so-called world languages and languages which are less used. Even within each country we should distinguish between the national language and regional languages, leaving aside the numerous dialects which are quite often the vehicles of an independent culture. Finally, we must distinguish between countries with one official language and countries with two official languages with all the cultural, political and economic consequences that this entails.

Since the second world war we have witnessed the expansion of trade and economic relations, the development of tourism, the massive increase in scientific knowledge in the field of communication, but these have not been accompanied by an equivalent effort to learn languages; thus linguistic diversity appears more and more as a handicap rather than an advantage in trade and economic relations as well as in the cultural sphere. Linguistic diversity can also create barriers to understanding between the peoples of Europe or simply create obstacles to daily life: how, for instance, can an imported product be used if the instructions for use are written in a foreign language with which the user is totally unfamiliar?

Finally, with the development of trade, a knowledge of foreign languages can no longer be the prerogative of a cultured elite but should be made available to the greatest possible number of persons. This democratization means that new methods should be used in language teaching to meet new needs and objectives: the emphasis is more on language as a means of communication than as a vehicle of learning.

As the number of students studying foreign languages has increased, audio-visual methods have been increasingly used and this has changed both the form and content of language teaching: the aim should be as far as possible to combine the rapid acquisition of a foreign language allowing a minimum of basic communication with a more thorough approach giving access to a foreign culture.

When the European Economic Community was established the signatory members decided to make their national languages the official languages of the Community: German, Italian, Dutch and French; after enlargement these were later joined by English, Danish and Greek¹. From the beginning therefore this was a political decision: on the one hand they refused to impose one or two dominant languages but on the other they also rejected Gaelic and all regional or minority languages.

In the first case this indicates a recognition of the cultural diversity of Europe and a desire to construct a Community of the peoples of Europe, without, however, imposing a dominant language which is a powerful instrument of integration as can be seen from the role English has played in the United States, for instance. Secondly, there were practical reasons for eliminating minority languages, since the automatic translation of all official texts into all the Community languages already poses serious problems and on the other hand, the Community wished to take the nation as the basic unit of European construction, a fundamental principle accentuated in some states by the fear of allowing any centrifugal element to develop in their midst. Beyond the Community institutions and regulations as such each European country maintains and intends to preserve its cultural and hence linguistic autonomy.

It is important to stress once more that, despite the difficulties this entails, Europe must preserve its linguistic diversity, which is the foundation on which its cultural wealth is built. This implies first and foremost that each European people must have a thorough knowledge of its own language and culture and that the means of propagating this language must be developed. Nevertheless, the cultural diversity of Europe can only be regarded as an advantage if it is shared. This means stepping up cultural exchanges and the development of foreign language learning to this end and spreading the cultures concerned by media such as books, films, the theatre, audio-visual media, etc.

We should also stress that given the cultural and historical background of each language it is unthinkable that an artificial system of communication such as Esperanto should be used however laudable the intentions behind it.

Let us now consider how European languages in the Community can be taught and propagated so as to enable the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe

¹ See Council Regulation No. 1 of 15 April 1958, as amended by the Acts of Accession of 1972, 1979 and 1981.

to enrich contacts between peoples rather than form a barrier to European integration.

I - LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Everyone is agreed that every European citizen should be able to learn a language other than his mother tongue because it is generally acknowledged today that everyone needs a knowledge of languages both at work and in daily life. Consequently, if Europe is really to become a dynamic force with its own original identity priority should be given to improving the linguistic skills of the peoples of the Community. However, so far the Community while acknowledging the priority of this issue has merely made declarations of intent or even worse decisions which have not been followed up.

A - In this connection we should refer to the important work carried out by international organizations such as UNESCO, the OECD and above all the Council of Europe. UNESCO has compared various methods of language teaching¹ and backed various international congresses organized by non-governmental organizations specialized in this sector. Among numerous projects in the field of education, the OECD has launched a study programme on education and linguistic and cultural pluralism. However, it is the Council of Europe which has done most in the field of language teaching.

On the basis of the European Cultural Convention of 1954 which committed the signatory states to encouraging their nationals to study the languages, the history and the civilization of the other contracting parties² and on the basis of the 1959 Convention which recognized the political necessity of learning foreign languages so as to promote mutual understanding and to reduce language barriers, in 1962 the Council for Cultural Cooperation (CDCC) was instructed to draw up projects for European cooperation in the field of modern language teaching.

The resolution of the Committee of Ministers (69) 2, of 25 January 1969, laid down guidelines for language teaching³. One principle was that at least one major European language should be taught to all pupils from the age of

¹ VAN PASSEL (F) : 'A summary of new tendencies and experiments in foreign language teaching'. Paris - UNESCO 1982

² European Cultural Convention, series of European Treaties No. 18, Art. 2a.

³ Council of Europe

about 10; this should allow pupils at the end of compulsory education according to their individual abilities effectively to use the language to communicate with other speakers of this language both as regards the business of everyday life and to establish social and personal relations with other Europeans.

On the basis of these guidelines, a group of experts within the CDCC was instructed to draw up a programme defining the principles and objectives of a language teaching system based on the needs and the motivation of various categories of language students at all levels of education. This group of experts thus drew up models for modern languages teaching applied in the framework of pilot projects, aimed primarily at enabling students to communicate in a foreign language. This programme went beyond merely setting up models and promoting cooperation and exchanges of information. The results of this programme were presented in great detail in the report 'Modern languages 1971 - 1981' published by the Council of Europe in the series 'Education and Culture' (Strasbourg 1981).

Following the Conference on 'Vivre le multilinguisme européen-across the threshold towards multilingual Europe' held in Strasbourg in February 1982, the CDCC intends going from the experimental stage to a more widespread application of the method advocated by the Council of Europe. A new project '1982-1986' concentrates on the following key sectors: learning at school, the teaching of language to immigrants and their families, language acquisition by adults notably by audio-visual methods and, finally, the training of teachers in the new methods. In its Recommendation No. R (82) 18, adopted on 24 September 1982, the Committee of Ministers approved and strongly backed this project.

B - At Community Level, the Council of Ministers of Education adopted a resolution on 9 February 1976 comprising an action programme in the field of education¹, and thus laid the foundation for specific action. Paragraph 17 of this resolution lays down the following principles:

(1) all pupils should have the opportunity of learning at least one other Community language,

¹ OJ No. C 38 of 19 February 1976

- (2) before qualifying as a foreign-language teacher a student should have spent a period in a country or region where the language he is to teach is spoken,
- (3) the promotion (e.g. on radio and television) of language teaching outside the traditional school system, in particular to meet the vocational training requirements of adults.

Although these objectives were limited, they were accompanied by measures to be taken at Community level (the pooling of experience among language teachers - a study of research in this sphere, notably by the CDCC) and Member States were asked to organize stays abroad for language teachers and to encourage pupil exchanges.

As regards in particular the education of children of migrant workers the Council adopted a directive on 25 July 1977¹ laying down that Member States should aim by 1981 to provide children of migrant workers from a Community country with suitable instruction in the language of the host country and in their mother tongue and native culture by teachers with special training. A report will be drawn up by the Commission of the European Communities and presented to the Council and Parliament at the beginning of 1984 on the manner in which Member States have implemented this Directive.

However, even before this directive was adopted, on the basis of the Council resolution of 21 January 1974 concerning an action programme in favour of immigrants and the resolution of 1976 on the appropriations under Article 630 'Execution of the education programme', the Commission of the European Communities launched a number of initiatives: it organized meetings of experts, commissioned studies from experts and research institutes and set up a series of pilot projects in collaboration with Member States.

These concern principally the special training of teachers, teaching methods to be applied in initial schooling in the host country, the teaching of the mother tongue and native culture and the preparation and distribution of special teaching material. Moreover, the Commission organized seminars during which the organizers of these pilot projects were able to exchange

¹ OJ No. L of 6 August 1977

experiences and meet the national officials responsible for the education of the children of migrant workers.

Finally, the Commission assessed the results of the pilot projects.

On the basis of the resolution of 9 February 1976, the Commission of the European Communities presented to the Council in 1978 a Communication on an 'Education action programme at Community level - the teaching of languages in the Community' COM(78) 222 final. The Commission stated that it was aware of the efforts of Member States to strengthen language learning in the Community. However, it considered that a wide Community effort was needed to give a fresh impetus to these efforts.

The measures then proposed by the Commission were aimed at completing and, in certain cases, developing existing Community systems: Community programmes of exchanges of foreign language students and teachers, exchanges of teachers in the framework of continuing training, the drawing up of pilot projects with financial aid from the Community aimed at introducing another Community language in primary education throughout the Community. The communication from the Commission provided for other more specific measures: pilot projects for less able pupils, the study of foreign language requirements of the liberal professions now that some of them have achieved recognition of the right of establishment and the establishment of a Community-wide network of information services on education.

Certain points of this communication were taken up and developed by the Education Committee in a report approved by the Council of Ministers of Education held in Brussels on 27 June 1980. The Council of Ministers approved the main lines of this project based on the following principles:

- the equal status of all languages,
- the need to facilitate mutual understanding and cultural exchanges,
- the need for foreign language teaching in the context of vocational training,
- the need to make a special effort to promote the learning of minor Community languages.

The measures provided for were designed, on the one hand, to encourage initiatives taken by Member States to intensify and improve language teaching

and on the other hand, to carry out pilot projects at Community level over a five-year period. These projects concentrated on the following areas:

- the teaching of languages in the context of vocational training for adults,
- the teaching of languages throughout school and, in particular, at university level,
- initial and then continuing training of foreign language teachers, in particular by organizing academic visits to the country of the language taught by the teacher,
- the drawing up of a report on bilingual schools,
- special measures to spread the use of minor Community languages.

This report has been purely and simply buried.

In the meantime, in view of the lack of measures taken following the resolution of 9 February 1976, Parliament called on the Council of Ministers and the Commission to act, notably in the resolution tabled by Mr PEDINI on the meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Education (Doc. 1-473/79)¹, adopted by Parliament on 16 November 1979 and the resolution tabled by Mrs GAIOTTI DE BIASE on a subsequent meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education (Doc. 1-250/80)², adopted by Parliament on 20 June 1980. In these two resolutions, Parliament asked for the action programme approved by the Council, notably as regards language teaching, to be fully implemented.

Since then, the European Parliament has, on numerous occasions, stressed the need to take action at Community level in favour of the teaching and propagation of Community languages.

- In its report on a Community programme in the field of education (Doc. 1-845/81)³ adopted by the European Parliament on 11 March 1982, Mrs GAIOTTI DE BIASE recalled in paragraph 21 that 'language education is essential to enable the people of Europe effectively to exercise their right to freedom of movement and to improve mutual understanding'.

¹ OJ No. C 309 of 12 October 1979

² OJ No. C 175 of 14 July 1980

³ OJ No. C 87 of 5 April 1982

- In its resolution adopted on 11 February 1983 on the teaching of foreign languages in the European Community (Doc. 1-1256/82)¹, Parliament called on the Commission 'to do everything in its power to implement the objectives laid down in the chapter on language teaching in the 1976 action programme and to submit an additional programme taking into account the latest educational methods'.

The European Parliament has also adopted various resolutions on the problem of teaching and the use of languages for special groups. The report by Mrs VIEHOFF (Doc. 1-329/81) adopted by Parliament on 30 June 1982² concerns the education of the children of migrant workers. The report by Mr ARFE' on a Community charter of regional languages and cultures and a charter on the rights of ethnic minorities (Doc. 1-865/80)³ adopted on 16 October 1981 calls on the governments of the Member States to take the measures necessary to enable regional languages and cultures to be taught and calls on the Commission 'to provide for pilot projects in the framework of language teaching aimed at developing multilingual teaching methods so as to ensure the survival of cultures and to open them to exterior influences'.

Finally, in its resolution on the content of the preliminary draft Treaty establishing European Union (Doc. 1-575/83) adopted on 14 September 1983, Parliament sets the Union the task of promoting by all appropriate means, the knowledge and use by citizens of the Union of the languages of the other Member States (paragraph 71 -).

It should be stated once more in this report that:

- the propagation of languages in the Community must be a priority in the construction of Europe because it is fully in line with the letter and spirit of the Treaty of Rome since it contributes to freedom of movement and right of establishment on the one hand and to peace and understanding among peoples on the other,

- the Council resolution of 1976 and the action programme adopted by the Council of Ministers on 27 June 1980 should at last be implemented,

¹ OJ No. C 68 of 14 March 1983

² OJ No. C 260 of 12 October 1981

³ OJ No. C 287 of 9 November 1981

- and the Commission should table new initiatives taking account of the latest innovations in teaching methods and in language teaching techniques.

II - THE LINGUISTIC PROFESSIONS

It is teachers, interpreters and translators - whose work is entirely concerned with languages - that are principally responsible for spreading the use of foreign languages in the Community.

A - Teachers

We have already seen that language learning plays an essential role in ensuring the widest possible knowledge of languages in the Community, and, with the exception of bilingual families, which are relatively rare, most people in Europe learn languages from teachers. The success of any project to improve the linguistic skills of European citizens depends on the training, the competence and the methods used by teachers.

Over the last few years there has been a change in our ideas concerning languages. There is still, however, considerable reluctance to adopt new methods and even the communication-orientated approach which is advocated. In most Community countries teachers are trained at institutes of further education where scholarship is still too often emphasized at the expense of pedagogical training. The 'classic model' as defined in the report on the modern languages programme of the Council of Europe's Council of cultural cooperation does not provide an appropriate basis for language teaching with a view to communication. It is also recognized that teachers for migrant workers and their families should be given special training (see Council Directive of 25 July 1977).

It is therefore important within the framework of the programme laid down in 1976 by the Council and in the report of the Education Committee of 27 June 1980 to enable language students and teachers to complete part of their studies in the country of the language concerned. It is also indispensable that during their initial training and then throughout their career language teachers should have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with new teaching methods and this could be greatly facilitated by the development of exchanges, the organization of training courses, etc.

Finally, long term reciprocal exchanges should be developed between language teachers of Community countries although it should not be forgotten that language assistants and lecturers who are native speakers can also play an important role in modern language teaching.

It should also be noted that there is unfortunately also a tendency at present to reduce the choice of languages taught. In France, for instance, except for border regions where the language of the neighbouring country is still, but to a lesser extent, the main language taught, English is increasing in importance at the expense of other Community languages. The same thing is happening in other countries too. This raises the question of an overall cultural loss insofar as it is the most useful language - from an economic point of view of doubtful validity - that tends to be taught. Moreover, this increases teacher unemployment.

Is it possible to reverse this tendency? Although we cannot force children or their parents to choose a given language, we must nevertheless, condemn the practice of some public authorities which, by means of circulars or the organization of teaching, have sought to establish a particular language as a priority language.

The only way in which a variety of languages in teaching can be preserved is by radically altering teaching methods so as to increase the motivation of students and to encourage them to develop their multilingual skills.

B - Translators

In a world where exchanges of information, texts and written documents are ever increasing, the professional translator plays an indispensable role in improving understanding and communication among peoples. This applies not only to international organizations and to the European Community in particular where each text must be translated into all the Community languages but also to cultural life and, increasingly, to business.

There is no standard, specialized training for translators. Some translators have university degrees and have received a broad arts education without, however, any special vocational training. Others are trained in special colleges where they receive training more geared to their future profession but again without any real specialization. This specialization - as regards the number of languages learnt or the acquisition of a highly

specialized vocabulary - is acquired at work and in response to requirements.

A translator trained in this way may opt for a post with an international organization or firm. Large multinationals with a large export section, usually have a translation service in their research and documentation, trade or publicity departments. There are, furthermore, a considerable number of independent translators working freelance or for translation firms which provide services for enterprises or administrations.

Translators are often members of national professional associations which protect the interests of the profession and provide continuing training services either by issuing various publications or by organizing colloquia and congresses.

Translation is an intellectual activity and consists in reformulating a text in another language rather than simply transposing word for word which would render the translated text unintelligible. The translator must take into account the general context (a political text cannot be translated in the same manner as a scientific text), the meaning and the nuances of the text but also of the style of language used. The translator must therefore adopt the same mode of expression as the author of the text and this applies particularly to literature. Finally, the translator tends to attach more importance to the written word and vocabulary than to oral expression. Generally, this work leads the translator to refine and improve his knowledge of his own language.

Translation is thus a purely intellectual task often carried out by individuals. Nevertheless, technical innovations and in particular information and office technology are destined to play an increasingly important role. So far, automatic translation machines can only be used on extremely specialized or repetitive texts. Machine translations of any other kind of text need to be revised. However, technology can assist translators in a variety of different ways: terminology data banks, multilingual thesauruses, automatized dictionaries and word processing machines, etc.

In this sphere, the Commission of the European Communities has just submitted a 'Third action programme for the improvement of the transfer of information between languages' (Sec(82) 1886 final). Following the first two programmes adopted in 1976 and 1980 this plan intends continuing and intensifying the action undertaken, notably in the sphere of the preliminary translation of texts in normal language (Systran), the enlargement of terminology data banks

(EURODICAUTOM), the setting up of multilingual macrothesauruses for agriculture and education and the organization of colloquia and seminars on the main problems of multilingualism through the publication of a periodical MULTILINGUA.

In this sector, as in many others, it is important to allow those concerned to become acquainted with the technological innovations so as to enable them to take advantage of the benefits these bring to working conditions. It is equally urgent that highly qualified persons should be trained to draw up special programmes and other very specialized terminological operations.

C - Interpreters

Interpreters will long remain the vehicles for oral comprehension among different peoples. This is because only a tiny privileged minority speaks all the Community languages. No one 'lingua franca' can be used at meetings, congresses and conferences either for practical reasons or as a matter of principle and because no machines sufficiently sophisticated to be capable of automatic interpretation have yet been designed.

Despite the increase in the number of interpreters in response to an increase in the number of meetings, conferences and international congresses, the profession of interpreter is little known. Interpreting calls for special skills on the part of the interpreter because whether it is consecutive or simultaneous, interpreting is an intellectual exercise which involves listening and remembering a speech in one language and at the same time translating it into another. Here again it is not a question of translating a speech verbatim, but rather of converting it intellectually from one language to another, which demands a thorough knowledge on the part of the interpreter of the cultural and sociological background of the languages he is called upon to interpret from. These two special skills make it difficult to envisage the sort of highly specialized vocabulary and language training suggested by Mr PATTERSON in his motion for a resolution on the provision and training of interpreters for special settings (Doc. 1-331/81). Specialization of this kind can only be acquired on the job and in response to requirements once the interpreter has acquired sufficient linguistic and cultural knowledge of the language from which he must interpret.

This is why it is so difficult to become a professional interpreter. A large proportion of students in interpreting schools fail to complete their courses. This is partly due to the underlying problem of methods of foreign language teaching.

The development of technical refinements (microphones, audio systems, etc.) has undoubtedly improved the quality of the service provided by interpreters but it has not always brought an equivalent improvement in working conditions and has certainly changed the fundamental nature of the job, with simultaneous interpretation in booths gradually replacing consecutive interpretation so that interpreters are increasingly becoming an anonymous cog in the administration.

Although interpreters have sought within the framework of the International Association of Conference Interpreters to protect their profession by establishing rules of professional conduct and drawing up a charter for interpreters, their working conditions remain difficult especially when the rules established by agreement between an employer (international administration or private enterprise) and the interpreters are not respected.

Interpreters play an important role in the use of Community languages, since without them some minor languages would otherwise have no chance of being used and recognized on a par with the major languages.

The European institutions in particular should recognize the indispensable role played by interpreters and accede to their requests, which, though they may seem excessive in certain cases, are justified by the difficulties of the profession.

III - LANGUAGE DISSEMINATION MEDIA

Language learning is the first precondition for a genuine transmission of Community languages and cultures among the citizens of Europe but material aids such audio-visual media and means of cultural expression such as the theatre, the cinema, books and publicity also play an important role. In these sectors where the cultural, economic and scientific fields are closely interlinked, significant cultural benefits could result from using them as much as possible. These means should be used to facilitate linguistic and cultural exchanges, not to unleash a struggle for domination between the various cultures and languages or to set up even more insurmountable barriers between states on the pretext of preserving the purity of a culture or language. In the worst case the purity of a language may become a pretext for reinforcing non-tariff barriers to trade. Flights of lyricism may thus be used to disguise a return to protectionism.

A - Means of cultural expression

The cinema, the theatre, poetry and novels are the main cultural vehicles for the transmission of languages. In this sphere, a knowledge of a language is the best introduction to a culture. It is always better to be able to watch a film in the original language. Novels always lose something in translation; this is even truer of poetry and theatre. However, if people are to attain this aesthetic and intellectual pleasure, language teaching methods must be improved. How many generations of schoolchildren have been put off Shakespeare, Goethe, Goldoni, Molière and others for life owing to the irksome translation exercises they were obliged to do in modern language classes? On the other hand an intelligent and lively approach to these works even in translation may provide a powerful motivation for learning a language.

However insurmountable linguistic difficulties may be, they should under no circumstances form an obstacle to the development of cultural exchanges. This is why artistic productions of Member States of the Community should be promoted so as to enable them to have the widest possible public. This is the standpoint taken by the European Parliament on the problems of publishing¹ and the cinema².

Finally, as regards cultural exchanges it should be pointed out that associations such as the Goethe Institute, the Alliance française, the Dante Alighieri Society, the Conradh na Gaeilge or the Gael Linn, etc. have been active in spreading their national language and culture and are a major forum for the meeting of cultures.

B - Audio-visual media

The rapid development of audio-visual communication techniques has radically changed the conditions of life in society and to a certain extent levelled the barriers between states. However, the cultural and economic stakes involved in these new means of communication are so high that they encourage states to control the new means of communication at national level

¹The BEUMER report on the fixing of book prices (Doc. 1-554/80) adopted by the European Parliament on

²The PRUVOT report on the cinema in Community countries (Doc. adopted by the European Parliament on

rather than entering into European cooperation which would serve the best interests of the peoples of Europe, would ensure a wider dissemination of languages and cultures and thus better mutual understanding; furthermore, this would facilitate financing and thus probably improve the quality of programmes.

(1) The principal way in which means of communication serve to spread the use of languages is, of course, language teaching by radio, television, video cassettes etc.

Language teaching by the new methods of communication varies according to whether it is designed for adults or schoolchildren, whether it takes place at school or at home in front of the television or radio. Nevertheless, some general lessons can be drawn from experience so far:

- the media stress the spoken language, replaced in the social and cultural context of the language taught,
- teaching by the media complements teaching from the teacher. Conversely it must be backed up by written teaching material,
- finally it injects new life into classical teaching methods.

However, media teaching faces a certain number of problems, notably:

- technical problems: production of programmes, the time and duration of programmes, the production and distribution of backing-up material,
- staff problems: the training of teachers in the techniques and new methods,
- financial and commercial problems, production followed by the exchange of programmes between countries.

Active support should be given at European level to:

- the co-production and the exchange of media language teaching programmes,
- the training and exchange of specialists in setting up programmes,
- the training of teachers in the use of these new techniques,
- examining experiments under way and assessing the results.

(2) Language teaching by the media is not the only way of spreading knowledge of a language and culture. Although the media are playing an increasingly important role in the cultural exchanges, they raise an increasing number of economic and political problems which can only be solved, if at all,

through European cooperation going beyond the boundaries of the Community.

This report is too limited in scope to allow us to examine in detail the technical, political and economic problems relating to the development of means of communication such as satellite television, cable television, video-cassettes, etc. Other reports by our committee have tackled these subjects in a detailed manner and we shall refer to them as far as possible.

In view of the struggle between European states for control of satellite television channels and of the scale of the financial problems involved and the potential power over means of information which this new technique represents insofar as it is not limited by national frontiers, the European Parliament adopted on 12 March 1982¹ a report tabled on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport by Mr HAHN calling for the immediate creation of a European television programme in close collaboration with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Parliament has since backed the plans for a European programme presented by the European Broadcasting Union because it considers that in future this will be an effective means of spreading a knowledge of the languages and cultures of our countries and the European ideals among the peoples of Europe.

For the present, given the varying legal status of radio and television companies (state monopolies or private companies), regulations concerning advertising, financing, royalties and access to self-employed activities in this sector, regulations should be harmonized so as to create in this sphere a real common market respecting the free movement of words and ideas.

C - Languages in scientific and trade relations

It is here that the use, more than the propagation, of the Community languages poses serious problems. It would be unfair to caricature the position of certain Member States which, by arbitrarily insisting on the use of their language, are allegedly engaged in a more or less hopeless rear-guard action to stem the rising tide of English today. At the same time we should not accept as a fait accompli that one language alone should be the language of technology, science and the new means of communication.

¹ OJ C 87 of 5 March 1982

According to the experts this kind of specialization among languages - such as the widely-held view that German should be the language of law, French the language of diplomacy and English the language of trade and technology - makes no sense from a linguistic point of view.

It is nevertheless true that English occupies a dominant position in economic relations in the widest sense of the term. It is also true that English expressions are being increasingly used and English itself is used as the language of communication in whole sectors of economic life - in commercial techniques and aviation for example; this is more than just a passing fashion whereby useless and absurd barbarisms find their way into everyday language.

As we mentioned in the introduction to this report this is not just a matter of using a given language; rather it leads progressively to a standardization of concepts and modes of expression. We believe this tendency is the expression of the present-day dominance of American civilization, based on its position as an economic superpower.

(1) This preponderance of English in economic life, science and technology may be seen as a potential threat to the languages and cultures of Community countries and, if so, we should consider what measures can be taken against this.

The regulations concerning languages laid down in the constitutions, the basic laws or other laws of states in general merely state the official language or languages of the country. In some countries there are special provisions governing certain regions with large linguistic minorities such as the Valle d'Aosta, Trentino in Italy, Friesland in the Netherlands, etc. Most of the Member States have legislative or administrative provisions relating to the use of languages in law. In most cases they lay down the conditions governing the use of translations or interpreters in cases involving foreigners. Finally there are very few Community countries where legislation has tried to regulate the use of languages in other sectors such as trade and advertising.

France has a whole arsenal of laws, decrees and circulars in this field, notably the law of 31 December 1975 which prohibits the use of any foreign

term if there is a French equivalent¹. The field of application of this law is enormous because it concerns consumption (labelling, advertising, instructions for use, guarantees), contracts, job advertisements, and notices by the public authorities. The aim of making the use of French compulsory in this way is to allow consumers and users to be better informed. Exceptions are however provided for, notably when the application of these provisions is contrary to international commitments.

Despite this proviso, the measures taken under the law of 31 December 1975 and notably the circular of 20 October 1982 which made the use of the French language compulsory in all documents used in commercial transactions, in all texts appearing on products and packaging and in all advertising for all products imported into France, constituted an infringement on the part of France of common market regulations. Although this particular affair was resolved when the Commission instituted proceedings against France and the latter amended the law in question, it nevertheless shows that the difference between the legitimate desire to protect the interests of French consumers and the reinforcement of tariff barriers, whether deliberate or otherwise, is extremely narrow.

Although we have gone into this particular case in some detail it should not be forgotten that France is not the only country to resort to procedures of this kind - which some see as new methods of protectionism - and that the question of protecting consumer interests is a real problem which will inevitably become more serious as trade becomes freer and some professions are accorded the right of establishment. As regards the health sector, the potential risks are obvious if a patient totally fails to understand the instructions for use of medicine if these are written in a foreign language. We could mention other examples which show that apart from the need to defend language and culture, the development of trade relations may entail dangers for the public in their daily lives.

¹ French-speaking countries appear to be the only linguistic entity which seeks to preserve the integrity of its language. The International Council of the French Language set up in 1976 seeks to preserve the quality and unity of modern French by enriching it with welcome neologisms and ruthlessly rooting out barbarisms.

On the other hand it has been proposed that - in the interests of aviation safety - one language alone should be used in communications between pilots and air traffic controllers. We do not wish to go into the old arguments as to whether using one language alone reduces the risk of air accidents or whether the use of English threatens the cultures of other Community countries. However, it is clear that a subject of this kind should be examined with a great deal of caution since it is such an emotive issue in some countries¹.

We should perhaps reflect in general on the real impact on culture of high-handed provisions of this kind aimed at restricting the use of another language or at least the borrowing of words and expressions from a foreign language. If we take the French law mentioned above as an example it is clear that there are numerous instances in which it is not being respected: in advertising, in signs and notices for example. The law has only a limited effect because it provides that a foreign term may be used providing its French equivalent has not been fixed by decree; and it is clear that, on the one hand, French government officials do not possess an encyclopaedic knowledge of language and, on the other hand, the French Academy cannot keep pace with the speed at which English is infiltrating into everyday language. Moreover, this law is not really a linguistic law but a law protecting consumer rights.

The case of France seems to show that high-handed regulations governing the use of a language can only have a limited effect; for language is a social phenomenon, in a state of perpetual change and subject to external and internal factors which it is not possible to control. The only angle from which one might be tempted to influence the development of language is indeed that of the defence of consumer interests and safety. However, even in this context high-handed measures have only a limited effect or lead to unfair competition when taken in one country alone. Moreover, the Member States have widely differing views regarding the defence of their various languages and so it is not possible to envisage Community measures governing the use of national

¹ This issue is not really in question because the Chicago Convention of 7 December 1944 lays down that radio and telephone communications in aviation should be carried out in the language normally used by the ground control bases and that until such time as a better form of communication is developed for general use, English is adopted as the second language and ground control bases must be able to use this language at the request of any aircraft unable to communicate in the first language

languages. If, however, action was limited simply to measures making it compulsory, for example, for export companies to provide a correct translation of the instructions for use for products in the language of the country of sale, this would only make more binding a practice already observed by numerous enterprises and which is obviously in their commercial interests.

In our technical, 'post-industrial' society, a number of distorting professional jargons are developing in all languages. Frequent attacks have been launched on the misuse of professional jargons which often render more difficult communication between scientists - or what passes for scientific language - and the man in the street. It is clear that each profession requires a specific and precise vocabulary to express particularly elaborate knowledge and concepts. These professional jargons which exist in all languages are thus not an impoverishment of the language. It is merely necessary to popularize these jargons as far as possible - and this is not meant in a pejorative sense - so as to enable the greatest number of people to have access to this knowledge.

It is an entirely different matter in some sectors which have greatly expanded recently and are destined radically to transform our conditions of life and cultural exchanges: data processing and its derivatives. In the near future data processing will be a common means of communication in everyday life. This spread of data processing will profoundly alter our education systems, our language and our modes of thought. It will enormously increase information networks world-wide regardless of distances and frontiers. Although these means of communication are welcome they are so powerful that they provoke fears as regards individual liberty.

In this report we do not wish to dwell on this type of problem which the European Parliament has already tackled¹ but to draw attention to the impact information technology will have on our cultures and on Community languages.

The languages at present used in data processing are COBOL, FORTRAN and BASIC and are coded simplified languages based on American-English and adapted to machine use. They are made up of words from everyday language

¹ Resolutions on the protection of the rights of the individual in view of technical progress in the field of data processing (OJ C 140 of 5 June 1979 and OJ C 087 of 5 April 1982)

in a sense derived from everyday usage and of neologisms created by combinations of concepts or expressions and by signs of the alphabet and numbers. These technical languages, which are at present used only by data processing experts, will gradually be transformed so as to adapt them for use by an increasing number of users without any special training. We shall be given a translation into everyday speech as it were of the concepts, expressions and words used by the machine. We cannot yet assess the effects this penetration of the language of data-processing will have on our modes of expression and thought and on our own languages. However, it is reasonable to assume that this language which is precise and concise and intended for the most direct and effortless form of communication at the least possible effort will have a dramatic effect on traditional writing which is the most elaborate form of cultural expression and will lead to a general cultural impoverishment.

We have deliberately painted a bleak picture of the situation so as to draw attention to the gravity of the problem and to the urgent need to reflect on the development of the languages and cultures of our societies to prevent them losing their substance and becoming dead languages.

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* *

In conclusion we should like to stress a few major principles:

- all languages and cultures have their own intrinsic value,
- each individual has the inviolable right to think and express himself in the language of his choice,
- the cultural wealth of Europe resides in the diversity of its cultures and languages,
- European integration will only be possible on the basis of mutual comprehension and cultural exchanges.

We must, therefore, promote the use of Community languages in a spirit of trust and cooperation so that linguistic differences are no longer insurmountable barriers but bridges serving the construction of a European identity.

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1980 - 1981

18 September 1980

DOCUMENT 1-412/80

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr HABSBURG, Mr FANTON, Mrs AGNELLI,
Mrs SPAAK, Mr ESTGEN, Mr BUCHOU,
Mrs CHOURAQUI, Mr CLEMENT, Mrs CRESSON, Mr DEBRE,
Mr DELORS, Mr GENDEBIEN, Mr ISRAEL, Mrs MOREAU,
Mr MOTCHANE, Mr d'ORMESSON, Mr PRUVOT, Mrs ROUDY,
Mr SARRE, Mr Konrad SCHÖN, Mr SEITLINGER and
Mr SUTRA

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure
on the use of European languages in air transport

The European Parliament,

- whereas there is a growing reluctance in more and more sectors of economic and social life to use a number of European languages,
 - whereas the air transport sector is particularly affected by the increasingly widespread use of Anglo-American language in a world without frontiers in which languages are sacrificing their individuality to internationalism,
 - disturbed by the consequences of this development for the continued existence of the culture and the heritage of the European nations,
 - whereas most of the Member States are affected or will be affected by this situation,
1. considers it necessary for Europe to initiate a common policy and common action to cope with this new problem
 2. calls upon the Member States and the Ministers meeting in political cooperation to address themselves to this problem and to consider what measures are needed to fill the legal vacuum that today affects the linguistic rights of the peoples of Europe;
 3. requests the Commission to draw up a proposal for harmonizing the relevant laws;
 4. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and to the Ministers meeting in political cooperation.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1980 - 1981

7 February 1981

DOCUMENT 1-930/80

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr HABSBURG, Mr FANTON, Mrs PRUVOT,
Mr BERKHOUWER, Mr BEYER de RYKE, Mrs CHARZAT,
Mr DESCHAMPS, Mr ESTGEN, Mr FERRI, Mrs FOURCADE,
Mr FERNANDEZ, Mr ISRAEL, Mr MAFFRE-BAUGE, Mr MOTCHANE,
Mr d'ORMESSON, Mr PANNELLA, Mr PROUT, Mr PULETTI,
Mr RADOUX, Mr SARRE, Mr SCHALL, Mr Konrad SCHÖN,
Mrs SPAAK, Mr SUTRA, Mr TURCAT and Mr VIE

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on the use of European languages within the
Community

The European Parliament,

- referring to the work and conclusions of the parliamentary study group on the development and use of the French language,
 - emphasizing the fundamental importance of knowledge of European languages if the peoples of the Community are to get to know and understand each other,
 - considering that the aim of foreign language teaching must be to increase possibilities for communication within the European Economic Community,
 - noting, however, that language teaching in most of the Community countries is so organized that pupils can choose only one of these languages,
 - convinced that more widespread teaching of French within the Community would help to promote the other Community languages,
1. Considers that all European languages should be promoted without distinction as a matter of policy;
 2. Stresses the value of French as a language of reference;
 3. Asks the Ministers of Education of the Member States to adopt a policy for expansion of modern language teaching, including French, at the various levels of education and adult education, so as to allow pupils a free choice of languages;
 4. Considers that an information programme supplemented by exchange schemes for pupils and teachers, and a reinforcement of the role played by cultural institutes, are indispensable for the development of the linguistic abilities of Community nationals;
 5. Recommends that the Community Institutions should encourage the Member States to publish more scientific and cultural material in their own languages;
 6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1981 - 1982

19 June 1981

DOCUMENT I-331/81

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr PATTERSON

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on provision and training of interpreters for
special settings

The European Parliament,

- aware that the increasing mobility of citizens within the European Community will result in a higher frequency of social and legal problems encountered by workers temporarily resident in a Member State of which they are not nationals,
 - aware that language barriers already prevent many Community nationals from making full use of medical, social and judicial services to which they are entitled in another Member State,
 - noting that most Member States have large numbers of migrant or immigrant workers who, especially among women and children of first generation, retain their own language and therefore suffer from communication problems with welfare and social workers of the State who may try to help them,
 - considering that it is impossible for every Social Service Department, Probation Office, Hospital or Social Work Agency to have personnel able to communicate adequately in all languages used by the inhabitants of their area,
 - considering that voluntary non-specialist linguists or compatriots of the patient or client are insufficiently qualified, in terms of specialist knowledge of the setting and understanding of the needs of the situation, to satisfactorily interpret in delicate social or legal problems,
 - pointing out that political reasons may inhibit expatriates from expressing their views in front of Consular staff, and that Court interpreters often act for both prosecution and defendants which also results in reticence on the part of the individuals concerned,
1. Considers that a regional panel of skilled interpreters trained for work in social, medical or legal fields would greatly help to solve communication problems in these fields;
 2. Points out that skilled interpreters with special training could, where necessary, give both a literal translation of what the client or patient has said, and an explanation in terms of his culture and customs;
 3. Considers that skilled interpreters with some knowledge of social, medical or legal agencies and their functions, who can work with them in a sensitive and confidential role when interviewing across language barriers, would facilitate the representatives of these agencies to carry out their jobs to the fullest extent;

4. Calls therefore upon the Commission
 - a) to undertake research into the viability of a project to train and set up panels of specialised interpreters in urban areas throughout the Community, from which qualified interpreters in a range of languages could be drawn as and when needed,
 - b) to explore the possibility of establishing pilot certificate courses in conjunction with appropriate organisations for suitable linguists to fill such panels holding recognised qualifications,
 - c) to approach colleges already offering language, social and legal studies with a view to setting up such certificate courses;
5. Instructs its President to forward this Resolution to the Commission.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1981 - 1982

20 August 1981

DOCUMENT 1-446/81

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr TURCAT, Mr HABSBURG, Mr FANTON,
Mr PROUT, Mr ESTGEN, Mr PONIATOWSKI,
Mr FERRERO, Mr SARRE, Mrs SPAAK, Mr FERRI,
Mr MOTCHANE, Mrs CARETONI ROMAGNOLI,
Mrs BADUEL GLORIOSO, Mr RADOUX, Mr BEYER DE RYKE,
Mr MICHEL, Mr PANNELLA, Mr D'ORMESSON, Mr SCHALL
and Mr SEITLINGER

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on data processing and telematics in Europe

The European Parliament,

- whereas the intrusion of and fantastic progress made in data processing and telecommunications has radically changed public and private life,
 - having regard to the possible impact of such innovations on human and cultural identity,
 - whereas microprocessing and telematics networks are now open to an increasingly wide public rather than merely to specialists,
 - whereas the uniform use of a basic American computer language thus represents a threat to the individuality and cultural identity of the countries of Europe,
 - whereas there is no need for costly or lengthy technical efforts to devise diversified and possibly simplified basic languages adapted to the needs of non-professional users, particularly if European languages are used,
 - whereas such developments will help to make data processing accessible to the public at large,
 - whereas the processing and memory capacities expected in the years to come will make it possible to contemplate routine use of the human voice to communicate with the individual computer and, through the telematics networks, with multilingual European data banks,
 - whereas, of all the European languages, French is undoubtedly the most widespread and in the best position to combat the Americanization and standardization of the conversational computer languages,
1. Calls on the Commission to invite tenders without delay, under Article 370 (Item 3702) of the budget for the development of data processing or any other financial framework it might consider more appropriate, for designed and prepared software for use with mini- or microcomputers (made in Europe) in the form of basic conversational languages based on European languages, and primarily on French;
 2. Suggests that, as part of a medium-term plan, the Commission should invite tenders for a research and development project for easily marketable voice-operated modules for use with mini- and microcomputers and to communicate with European data banks via the European networks and, via Eurotra, with the Community's data banks;
 3. Hopes that European financial assistance will provide sufficient incentive for the major minicomputer manufacturers as well as the most inventive smaller firms to submit projects with a reasonable chance of success;
 4. Instructs its President to forward this motion for a resolution to the Commission and Council of the European Communities and to the governments of the Member States.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1980 - 1981

24 September 1981

DOCUMENT 1-514/81

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr SARRE, Mr HABSBURG, Mr FANTON,
Mrs SPAAK, Mr FERRI, Mr PROUT, Mr de COURCY LING,
Mrs CHARZAT, Mr DESCHAMPS, Mr DONNEZ, Mrs FOURCADE,
Mr GEURSTEN, Mr ISRAEL, Mr MICHEL, Mr d'ORMESSON,
Mr PANNELLA, Mr PONIATOWSKI, Mrs PRUVOT, Mr RADOUX,
Mr SCHALL, Mrs SCRIVENER, Mr TURCAT

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the use of national languages in publicity and
trade

The European Parliament,

- whereas there is a growing and undesirable tendency to use foreign words in publicity and trade in the countries of the Community,
 - whereas the press, radio, television, popular songs, and above all, commercial advertising have been invaded by a 'patois-jargon' which bears no relation to Anglo-Saxon,
 - whereas the use of 'Franglais', 'Deuglisch' etc. represents a threat to the purity and intelligibility of English,
 - condemning these practices, which are impoverishing European languages and undermining cultures,
 - whereas only Belgium and France have taken legal action in response to this proliferation of terms which do not make sense in any language,
 - whereas these laws relate solely to the requirement to use the national language for bills, receipts, guarantee certificates, operating instructions, labels and packaging and do not cover the trade names of companies, associations and foreign trade marks,
 - whereas the numerous abuses recorded are subjecting all the EEC's languages to a process of deterioration which is growing steadily worse,
 - whereas it is essential for the languages of the Community to be used correctly,
 - having regard to the report to the French National Assembly,
1. Calls on the Council of Ministers and, in particular, on the Ministers for Education and Culture to place on the agenda for their next meeting the problem of the use of national languages in publicity and trade;
 2. Calls on the Commission to deal with this question in view of the fact that the linguistic integrity of each Member State and the cultural independence of the EEC as a whole is severely jeopardized by this situation;
 3. Requests that in its proposal for a directive on trade marks the Commission should make provision for the description of and operating instructions for products on the market to be given to the consumers of all Community countries in their own language;

Hopes that the Commission will draw up a directive on the matter on a preventive, rather than prescriptive, basis;

Calls on the Commission to take preventive measures in the Community to prohibit the use of foreign words for marketing and distributing products in the Member States of the EEC;

Recommends that a European control body should be set up to ensure that these measures are implemented;

Requests that in cases where Community injunctions are not complied with and pending the implementation of the procedures laid down by the Treaties, the Member States should be authorized to impose sanctions in the form of fines, distraint orders or bans on marketing in respect of products or publicity which break the law;

Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Education Ministers and the governments of the Member States.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1982-1983

24 November 1982

DOCUMENT 1-920/82

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr GLINNE, Mr KEY and Mr ROGALLA

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the advisability of including the international
language Esperanto as an optional subject on
secondary and higher education syllabuses in the member
countries of the European Community

The European Parliament,

- A having regard to the linguistic problems which arise in the European Community among the populations of the different Member States,
 - B believing that linguistic and cultural divisions separate peoples more strictly than do national frontiers,
 - C considering that at the present time the physical, social, economic and political rapprochement of peoples is each day becoming a matter of increasing urgency,
 - D noting that such rapprochement is obstructed by a diversity of languages, none of which can claim pre-eminence, that repels a growing need for a common language of communication,
 - E bearing in mind that the general conference of UNESCO has acknowledged that the results obtained through Esperanto in international intellectual exchanges and in the cause of rapprochement among peoples are in conformity with the aims and ideals of that organization,
 - F bearing in mind that a draft law was tabled in the National Assembly of the Fifth French Republic during the first ordinary session of 1979-80 with a view to including the international language Esperanto as an optional language in higher education,
1. Calls on the Council of Ministers to consider, at a forthcoming meeting of ministers and those responsible for education policy in the States, Länder and cultural communities of the EEC, the advisability of introducing Esperanto as an optional language in secondary and higher education in all the Member States of the Community;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and Council of Ministers.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ^{ANNEX VII}

PETITIONS

pursuant to Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure

Petition No. 75/80

by the Western European Interregional Committee of the International Federation of Teachers of French.

Subject: Study of at least two languages as part of the general curriculum

As foreign languages play an essential role in the education of the individual and the citizen, it is the wish of the Western European Interregional Committee that:

- 1) it should become the general practice for at least two languages to be studied from as early an age as possible in countries where this is not already the case;
- 2) the practical means of achieving this will be effectively guaranteed;
- 3) such teaching will be aimed at enriching the individual and developing an independent and critical spirit just as much as linguistic skills.

Luxembourg, 5 February 1981

Western European Interregional Committee of the International Federation
of Teachers of French
Orchislaan 9
3233 VE OOSTVOORNE
Netherlands

This petition bears 8 signatures

Opinion of the Committee on Transport

Draftsman: Mr C. Ripa di Meana

On 5 December 1980 the Committee on Transport appointed Mr RIPA di MEANA draftsman of its opinion.

The Committee considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 20 February 1981 and adopted it unanimously the same day.

Present: Mr Seefeld, chairman; Dame Shelagh Roberts, Mr Carossino, vic. c. men; Mr Gatto, draftsman, Mr Buttafuoco, Mr Moreland, Mr Moorhouse, Mr Vo. zis.

INTRODUCTION

1. In the motion for a resolution by Mr HABSBURG and others anxiety is expressed at the increasingly widespread use of 'Anglo-American language' at the expense of the other European languages in more and more sectors of economic and social life, in particular in air transport.
2. The proposers call upon the Member States to address themselves to this problem, and ask the Commission to draw up proposals for Community harmonization of the relevant legislation.

LANGUAGE USE IN AIR TRANSPORT

3. The language used in air traffic control is at present governed by approved standards and recommended practices established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

The ICAO recommends that radio communications between pilots and air traffic controllers should be conducted in the language of the air traffic control centre, which is not necessarily the language of the country in which the centre is located. The ICAO also recommends that, pending improved radio communication arrangements, English should be the working language, and that all control stations responsible for international air traffic should be in a position to operate in English.¹

The ICAO recommendations also leave open the possibility of regional agreements being concluded to allow the use of a second language in addition to English in air traffic control.

4. In short this means that the local language is used in addition to English in certain countries.
5. With a view to preventing fatal misunderstandings between pilot and air traffic controller, the ICAO has also produced a long list of standard phrases.

The existence of such a list points clearly to an urgent need for uniformity in radio communications in civil aviation.

¹ See Annex 10 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation: International Standards and Recommended Practices for Aeronautical Telecommunications, Vol II, third edition, July 1972, para. 5.2.1.1.

6. It is patently obvious the misunderstandings in the transmission of instructions or information can have catastrophic results, witness the collision over Zagreb on 21 October 1976 and that at Tenerife airport in March 1977. The use of a foreign language was partly to blame for both these disasters.

7. This led Mr NOE', in his own-initiative report on behalf of the former Committee on Regional Policy, Regional Planning and Transport on the promotion of an appropriate air traffic control system, to point to the considerable pressure for a single language to be used in communications with aircraft. Mr NOE' also considered there to be a need for further study of the dual problem of language and terminology in air traffic control.¹

8. In a letter to the chairman of your committee, the IATA stressed the danger of misunderstandings resulting from the use of more than one language. In the IATA's view it is desirable for all air-to-ground communications in air space used by international traffic to be conducted in English.²

9. Language problems are also important in the context of cabin service. Most airlines realize the importance of this and, as far as possible, ensure that cabin staff are able to cover the language needs of passengers. However, cases still arise whereby cabin staff are not sensitive to language difficulties. The Committee therefore urges airlines and IATA to pay particular attention to improve the language facility of cabin staff.

CONCLUSIONS

10. The Committee on Transport appreciates the initiative by Mr HABSBURG and others to preserve the cultural inheritance of the European nations. It believes, however, that, for safety reasons, English should be the working language for exchanges of instructions and information between pilots and air traffic controllers in international air transport, and requests the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport to incorporate this recommendation in its motion for a resolution.

¹ Doc. 49/78, para. 69 of the explanatory statement.

² Letter from the IATA to Mr SEEFELD of 31 October 1980.

ANNEX

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOC 1-412/80) tabled by
Mr HABSBURG, Mr FANTON, Mrs AGNELLI, Mrs SPAAK, Mr ESTGEN,
Mr BUCHOU, Mrs CHOURAQUI, Mr CLEMENT, Mrs CRESSON, Mr DEBRE,
Mr DELORS, Mr GANDEBIEN, Mr ISRAEL, Mrs MOREAU, Mr MOTCHANE,
Mr d'ORMESSON, Mr PRUVOT, Mrs ROUDY, Mr SARRE, Mr Konrad SCHÖN,
Mr SEITLINGER and Mr SUTRA
pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure on the use
of European languages in air transport.

The European Parliament,

- whereas there is a growing reluctance in more and more sectors of economic and social life to use a number of European languages,
 - whereas the air transport sector is particularly affected by the increasingly widespread use of Anglo-American language in a world without frontiers in which languages are sacrificing their individuality to internationalism,
 - disturbed by the consequences of this development for the continued existence of the culture and the heritage of the European nations,
 - whereas most of the Member States are affected or will be affected by this situation,
1. considers it necessary for Europe to initiate a common policy and common action to cope with this new problem;
 2. calls upon the Member States and the Ministers meeting in political cooperation to address themselves to this problem and to consider what measures are needed to fill the legal vacuum that today affects the linguistic rights of the peoples of Europe;
 3. requests the Commission to draw up a proposal for harmonizing the relevant laws;
 4. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and to the Ministers meeting in political cooperation.