

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0506/04  
by Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)  
to the Council

Subject: Language rules and enlargement

The forthcoming enlargement to 25 Member States will also entail changes in the rules on the use of languages by the Commission and Council. Apparently, COREPER has taken the following important decisions on the use of languages:

- a) Councils will continue to use all the languages (19-19 with Maltese where possible),
- b) 20 groups will receive complete interpretation (Art. 113, Art. 36, CSA, various third-pillar meetings, etc.),
- c) in addition to the 53 groups which currently work without interpreters, a further 25 groups will operate in the same way (Maghreb, Mashreq, ACP, etc.),
- d) in all other groups, an 'à la carte' system will be introduced at the request of the Member States, for which there will be a budget of EUR 1 million per half-year, and any Member States which wish to have more interpreting will have to pay for it from their national budgets.

Is this information correct?

Is it also true that, in the case of the groups referred to at (d), interpreting into/out of French, German, English, Italian and Spanish has been requested for all meetings?

In the case of Dutch, will all of the EUR 2 m budgeted be used?

Is it true that, as a result of this, the number of interpreter-days for Dutch at the Council will fall by an estimated 25%, while thanks to the number of new languages the total number of interpreter-days will rise by 35-40%?