

**Question for written answer E-002184/2017/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE), Josep-Maria Terricabras (Verts/ALE), Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE), Ernest Urtasun (Verts/ALE), Alfred Sant (S&D), Marek Plura (PPE), Francesc Gambús (PPE), Maria Lidia Senra Rodríguez (GUE/NGL), Mark Demesmaeker (ECR), Matt Carthy (GUE/NGL), Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL), Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE) and Josu Juaristi Abaunz (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Language discrimination case: sanction for speaking in Catalan with Spanish policemen at Barcelona airport

Xavier Casanovas, a university professor, has been fined EUR 601 for having spoken in Catalan to a Spanish police officer at the passport control at Barcelona airport.¹ Agents justify the sanction by claiming that Casanovas 'disturbed their work addressing them in Catalan'. Catalan is an official language in Catalonia. The incident occurred in September 2016.

When the passport control agent ordered him to speak in Spanish, Casanovas refused, at which the police warned that he could miss his flight if he did not yield. The police officer told him that speaking in Catalan was 'disrespectful'.

Casanovas passed through the control, but the agent, accompanied by a policeman, went to look for him in the queue for boarding passengers, where they again asked for his passport in order to record his personal data.

Six months afterwards he was sanctioned 'in connection with the protection regulations of public security' – the so-called 'Spanish gag law'.

Discrimination on the basis of linguistic background is expressly prohibited under Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

1. What steps has the Commission taken, or will it take, to prevent such discrimination?
2. Is the Commission considering including a ban on discrimination on the grounds of language when implementing the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020?

¹ <http://www.vilaweb.cat/noticies/fined-601-euros-for-speaking-in-catalan-to-spanish-police-at-barcelona-el-prat-airport/?platform=hootsuite>