

**Question for written answer P-007264/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE)

Subject: Discrimination on the basis of language regarding ERDF aid in Catalonia (Spain)

The rules governing the granting of aid from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to companies running entrepreneurship projects were published this week by the Catalan Regional Government. In addition to meeting the criteria laid down in EU legislation and the requirements of the Jeremie initiative, the regional government has also stipulated that Catalan is the only language that can be used and that the Law on Language Policy must be observed. It is thereby excluding Castilian Spanish, Catalonia's other co-official language, which under the Spanish Constitution is an official language throughout the whole of Spain, as well as being one of the 24 official languages of the European Union (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – TFEU).

While Member States do have exclusive competence in determining the legal status and use of national, regional and minority languages, as is recognised by the Commission (E-003876/2016, E-013754/2015), this particular case concerns the granting of EU funds and therefore EU law should apply. The facts as described above may constitute discrimination on grounds of language, something that is prohibited by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Article 21) and Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

1. Does the Commission consider that the language criterion laid down by the Catalan Regional Government nullifies the aim of this aid, namely to encourage competitiveness and create jobs, and constitutes a form of discrimination?
2. What steps will it take to prevent discrimination on the basis of language in the granting of aid from the Structural Funds?