

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

*Committee on Petitions*

17.04.2008

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

**Subject:** **Petition 0602/2007 by Simeon Stavrakidis (Greek), on behalf of the 'Logos tis Pellas' weekly newspaper, on the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages (EBLUL)**

### 1. Summary of petition

The petitioner objects to the activities of the EBLUL, including the publishing of a Macedonian language textbook entitled 'Abecedar', the content of which he considers to be anti-Greek. The EBLUL has initiated legal proceedings against the above newspaper following the publication in it of an article by the petitioner. The petitioner also observes that the EBLUL receives EU funding, which means that Greek citizens have indirectly been subsidising the publication of 'Abecedar'. He is accordingly seeking action by the European Parliament to end the anti-Greek activities of the EBLUL.

### 2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 5 November 2007. Information requested from Commission under Rule 192(4).

### 3. Commission reply, received on 17 April 2008.

The European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL) was set up on the initiative of the European Parliament in 1982 (Arfé Resolution<sup>1</sup>) to represent the interests of the regional and minority language communities in the European Community. Its activities were co-funded by the European Commission until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 287 of 09/11/1981, pp 106-107

EBLUL is an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) based on a network of Member State's Committees. Among the 19 National Committees in activity there is a Greek Committee. EBLUL's Member State Committees are autonomous and independent bodies and they develop as state-based NGOs. They represent the lesser-used languages in the relevant state.

Among its main activities EBLUL represents, through its network of Member States Committees, the regional and minority language communities of the European Union. It promotes their common interests at European and international level and acts as a channel of communication between them and European and international bodies. It provides advice and information on regional and minority languages and linguistic diversity to policy-makers, the media, the academic community and the general public. It supports regional and minority language communities in their initiatives with advice, information and networking services and facilitates their access to European funding:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages/langmin/ebul\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages/langmin/ebul_en.html)

EBLUL was co-funded by the European Commission, at European Parliament's request (Resolutions Arf , Kuijpers, Morgan, Ebner) between 1982 and 2006. The European funding ended on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006. From 2007 on the projects and networks to promote linguistic diversity can be submitted to the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 and, if selected, receive European co-funding.

Before 2004 the support for EBLUL was assured under former budget line A-3015 which provided annual operating grants to organisations pursuing an aim of general European interest. Over the period 2004-2006 the funding was provided under Decision n  792/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a community action programme to promote bodies active at European level in the field of culture (budget line 15040101 for the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity).

The Commission's co-funding was granted to EBLUL on the basis of an annual programme and budget approved by the Commission. In the period 2004-2006 the funding was granted after consultation of the Culture 2000 Management Committee (written procedure on the funding of organisations in the framework of the Community Programme to promote bodies active at European level in the field of culture – Part 1). The European Parliament was also informed under its "droit de regard".

According to the information provided in the petition, it appears that the book was not published by EBLUL, but by a national organisation, EBLUL's Greek National Committee. There is therefore no evidence that the publication of the book was co-funded by the European Commission. In any case, EBLUL is no longer funded by the Commission since 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006.

## Conclusion

The facts to which the petitioner refers fall within national competence. Therefore, he is advised to make use of the means of redress provided by the national legislation.