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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure

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on the European Union's language arrangements

Lapse date: 12.3.2006

Written declaration on the European Union's language arrangements

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles II-81 and II-82 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to Article 240 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas multilingualism constitutes a cultural value of the EU,
- B. whereas there have been repeated instances of discrimination in the use, translation and interpretation of EU official languages within the EU institutions, based on the supposed and entirely arbitrary distinction between 'official languages' and 'working languages', which is not backed up by any legal basis,
- C. whereas the Commission document COM(2005)596 on a strategic plan on multilingualism does not adequately deal with the issue of language arrangements in the Community institutions,
- D. having regard to the cuts which the Commission is planning in the volume of translations and number of translators of the EU official languages,
1. Considers that the absence of written rules on language arrangements, based on an appropriate legal basis, is giving rise to situations of linguistic discrimination in the EU institutions;
 2. Considers that this legal loophole and the repeated instances of discrimination are alienating citizens from the EU institutions;
 3. Calls on the Commission to submit, on the basis of an impact study and jointly defined criteria, a proposal for an interinstitutional agreement on a written legal framework for EU language arrangements, with due respect for the above principles and relating to a more balanced and correct use of the EU official languages;
 4. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to all the EU institutions, bodies, services and agencies, and the parliaments and governments of the Member States.