



0041/2016

27.4.2016

WRITTEN DECLARATION

submitted under Rule 136 of the Rules of Procedure

on functional illiteracy

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Lapse date: 27.7.2016

Written declaration, under Rule 136 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, on functional illiteracy¹

1. A functional illiterate is a person who, even though he or she might have completed compulsory schooling, is incapable of using or analysing structured information and finds it difficult to understand written texts or carry out arithmetical calculations.
2. A poor command of these basic skills affects a person's work and private life: it limits job opportunities, leads to financial insecurity and social marginalisation, and makes it impossible to handle technological tools in the proper way.
3. According to a recent OECD study, the Survey of Adult Skills, up to 27.7 % of adults have inadequate reading/writing ability and up to 31.7 % lack the necessary numeracy skills. Technological illiterates in the 16 to 65 age group number less than 7 % in Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden, whereas the figure is above 23 % in Italy, Poland, and Spain.
4. The Commission and the Council are therefore called upon to:
 - (a) encourage an exchange of information among Member States with a view to promoting adult literacy in those Member States most affected by functional illiteracy;
 - (b) devise campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of lifelong learning, which is essential if people are to be active citizens in the knowledge society.
5. This declaration, together with the names of the signatories, is forwarded to the Council and the Commission.

¹ Under Rule 136(4) and (5) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, where a declaration is signed by a majority of Parliament's component Members, it is published in the minutes with the names of its signatories and forwarded to the addressees, without however binding Parliament.