

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0984/01
by Ulpu Iivari (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Poor quality of text used in an information campaign supported by the EU

The European Union and an organisation called Intercitrus are cooperating in the running of a marketing campaign to encourage the consumption of citrus fruit, part of which takes the form of the website www.orangefruit.net. The whole of the Finnish-language text on this site is linguistically clumsy and in many respects totally substandard. Even the European Union is referred to there as 'Euroopan yhteisyys'. [Translator's note: The correct term for 'European Community' in Finnish is 'Euroopan yhteisö'. The term used here may perhaps be best rendered 'European Commonwealth' – the point is that it is a valid term, but the wrong one in context.] The following excerpts give the flavour of the whole:

'Since 1998, the European Commonwealth and Intercitrus have placed a bet on health, they have made different campaigns advertising the healthy and tasty qualities of natural oranges and clementines.' [Translator's note: On the English-language page of the website, this paragraph is in fact in correct English. The text here is a deliberately literal translation so as to reflect the poor quality of the Finnish]

'Disseminating the qualities of oranges and clementines and explaining the advantages of eating them to the customers, these are the objectives of the campaign, funded by Intercitrus and the European Commonwealth is also involved in the funding.' [Translator's note: This paragraph has no equivalent on the English-language page. This is again a literal translation.]

According to the website, at least EUR 4.6 m have been spent on the campaign. It is running in eight Member States.

In the light of the above:

1. What measures does the Commission propose to take to improve the quality of the language used in this campaign?
2. What measures does the Commission propose to take to ensure that the language used in all campaigns receiving support from the European Union is error-free and comprehensible and thus that these campaigns also promote, inter alia, the objectives of the European Year of Languages 2001?