

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3060/01
by Pere Esteve (ELDR)
to the Commission

Subject: Incorrect designation of the Balearic Islands (Illes Balears)

The name of the Spanish province formerly known [in Spanish] as Baleares [the Balearic Islands] was officially changed to [the Catalan name] Illes Balears by the Spanish government by means of Law No 13/1997 of 25 April 1997, as published in the Boletín Oficial del Estado [the official journal of the Spanish state], No 100, on 26 April 1997.

The single article of this law states that 'the province hitherto known as Baleares shall henceforth be officially called Illes Balears, in keeping with its cultural and historical tradition and in order to bring its name into line with that of the corresponding autonomous region'. The single implementing provision of the same law adds that it 'shall come into force on the day following its publication in the Boletín Oficial del Estado'.

The European Commission is systematically failing to implement this law, which forms part of the juridical order of the Spanish state. It habitually calls the Illes Balears 'Baleares' or 'Islas Baleares', in the maps it publishes and in its documents, and has done the same in its replies to the questions asked by the author of the present question in relation to this autonomous region.

In general, it is the Commission's habit to use the official names of other regions and cities of the European Union.

The author of this question is aware of the need to translate the official names of cities and regions into the language used in the text concerned. However, he does not believe that this practice can justify the systematic translation of Illes Balears as 'Baleares' or 'Islas Baleares'.

1. Will the Commission undertake to respect and use the existing official name, as laid down in law, of this autonomous region, i.e. Illes Balears?
2. Can the Commission state its position as regards its failure to comply with this law while the official names of other regions and cities in the Union are, by contrast, respected?