

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0537/04  
by Marco Cappato (NI)  
to the Commission

Subject: The role of Esperanto in maintaining language equality efficiently

During the debate on the Prets report (A5-0477/2003) which took place in Strasbourg on 13 January 2004, Mrs Viviane Reding, Commissioner, said that '...multilingualism includes languages which are not official ones, but certainly not Esperanto, since we have enough living languages which are in difficulty without creating artificial ones alongside them.'

Over the last 115 years, millions of people have learnt Esperanto, which is now a fully developed language, with a worldwide community of speakers and a full range of forms of expression, for which reason there is no question of 'creating' a new language, least of all an 'artificial' one.

At the 1954 UNESCO General Conference it was acknowledged that Esperanto reflects UNESCO's ideals and objectives. At the 1985 UNESCO General Conference a call was issued to the Member States and to international organisations, requesting them to promote the teaching of Esperanto in schools and the use thereof in international affairs.

In Europe, English is an immensely powerful language, dominating both the market in cultural products and the market in commercial consultancy, whereas the language policies hitherto followed by the Commission have consistently proved ineffective.

In view of the above considerations, how does the Commission intend to maintain linguistic and cultural equality in Europe?

What criteria does the Commission use in order to gauge the effectiveness of its language policies?

Does the Commission intend to urge the Member States - or does it intend in its own name - to take up the UNESCO General Conference's call (23 C/114) for language issues and Esperanto to be studied in schools and higher-education establishments?