

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3327/06  
by Sylwester Chruszcz (NI)  
to the Commission

Subject: Protecting national minorities - Closure of another Sorbian school in Panschwitz-Kuckau, Saxony (Germany)

In April 2005 the Government of the German Land of Saxony decided not to authorise the opening of a fifth-year class in the Sorbian secondary school in Panschwitz-Kuckau (district of Kamenz), a decision that will result in the school being closed in 2007. The school is located on the edge of the Sorbian minority language area and plays an important role as an educational and cultural centre for this national minority, whose language is on the list of endangered European languages.

Sorbian schools in Germany are still not classified as national minority schools and the Saxony Government is actively seeking to dismantle the existing network of such schools. The schools in Crostwitz, Radibor, Schleifen and Witichenau are in the process of being closed or have already been closed. Statements by the European Parliament and protests from Sorbian organisations and community members aimed at finding a constructive way out of this situation are being totally ignored by the Saxony Government and the German Federal Government. It should be noted that the German Federal Government is a signatory to a large number of international agreements on the protection of national minorities, including the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Does the Commission consider the line of conduct adopted by the Saxony Government and the German Federal Government to be in keeping with European provisions on the protection of ethnic and national minorities and the European values of cultural and linguistic diversity? Does it see the action being taken by the Saxony Government and the lack of interest in the matter being shown by the Federal Government as a threat to the Sorbian people? Does it intend to take a stance on the closure of Sorbian schools in Germany?