

**Question for written answer E-6055/2010  
to the Council**  
Rule 117  
**Christophe Béchu (PPE)**

Subject: French and the official EU languages

The European Union has an express responsibility to ensure respect for the linguistic and cultural diversity of the European public.

It is absolutely necessary for the EU, while recognising the emergence of English as the language that is most widely spoken, to ensure quite specifically that its use does not restrict cultural diversity within the Community's borders.

A Eurobarometer survey of 2006 showed that most people feel that English is the first foreign language that should be learned, followed by French and then German.

The Commission is known to work in these three main languages. The European Parliament has developed a system of translation based on these three 'pivot languages'. Interpreters at the European Institutions use a similar system when interpreting from one of the 23 languages into another, using one of these three 'relay languages'.

French, German and English undisputedly form the linguistic tripod of the Union.

Hence, faced with the rampant expansion of English in official and unofficial Community communications, to the detriment of French and German in particular, can the Council indicate how it will endeavour to defend and promote the historical linguistic heritage of its founders and foundation, ensuring a balance between the EU's three main official languages?