

**Question for written answer E-006152/2011  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Financial support to Frisian-language theatre

The Dutch government has announced its decision to stop its financial support to the only professional theatre company working in the Frisian language in that Member State. Tryater, the oldest theatre company working in the Frisian language in the Netherlands, is a theatre company in Leeuwarden (Friesland, Netherlands), founded in 1965. This decision is the result of financial cuts to the cultural sector in the Netherlands, and means that Tryater will not be able to continue in its present form.

It is important to stress the extent to which Europe's cultural diversity, in particular its rich linguistic heritage, constitutes an irreplaceable raw material for the cultural and creative industries. Accordingly, facilitating the learning process and increasing the legal recognition of minority and regional languages can only bring social and economic advantages. It is essential that, where two or more European languages coexist, citizens are able to communicate in both languages in an official and social capacity.

Under Article 12 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and Articles 5 and 15 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (which have been signed, ratified and put into force by the Netherlands), the Netherlands has a legal obligation to support this theatre company. In addition, following the ratification of the European Charter the Netherlands signed a covenant with the province of Friesland for the 2001-2010 period (extended to 2011), which explicitly states that Tryater will receive support.

Does the Commission agree that the Dutch Government has acted in breach of Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union? If so, will the Commission act urgently on this matter?