

**Question for written answer E-004205/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Pál Csáky (PPE)

Subject: Restriction by a Member State of the rights of people with disabilities

The Slovakian parliament recently amended its law on sign language (and in that connection its Education Act)¹ to the effect that deaf people have the right to use Slovak sign language and to receive education in Slovak sign language, and are also entitled to obtain information on TV programmes and from public bodies with the help of Slovak sign language. The law emphasises the use of Slovak sign language over the use of sign language in general, and this represents a retrograde step in the protection of disabled people's rights.

The newly adopted legal text forgets that 20% of Slovakia's population belong to a linguistic minority, and their sign language differs from Slovak.

Compared to earlier amendments to the law, by mentioning Slovak sign language the legislator places deaf or hard of hearing Slovak nationals who are not native speakers of Slovak at a disadvantage as against those of the national majority, and thus excludes them from fully-fledged participation in society.

To what extent does the amended Slovak law comply with the administrative objectives adopted in the European Disability Strategy, particularly those relating to participation and equality?

What measures does the Commission propose to take to change the situation described above and allow people to exercise their right to use different sign languages without discrimination in the Member States?

¹ Act No 149/1995 on Sign Language for the Deaf and Act No 245/2008 on Upbringing and Education (the School Act)].