Subject: Promoting a European lingua franca

The European Union has 24 official languages but in practice English has become the working language of the EU institutions. While economic and political factors and its dominance around the rest of the world have caused English to reign supreme in the EU nowadays, this is not a true reflection of the number of EU citizens speaking it as their first language, and this will be even more so after Brexit as none of the Member States will then have English as their official language. The Irish opted for Gaelic, now their official language, and Malta for Maltese.

This situation reopens the debate on whether knowledge of a common language, a lingua franca that will not take the place of the others, should be encouraged among Europeans. An analysis of all the languages to be found in the EU shows that Latin is the one most widely spoken through its transformation across the ages into the Romance languages. Furthermore it is estimated that around 930 million people in the world speak Latin.

1) What will be the Commission’s approach to use of English within the EU institutions in the event that Brexit becomes a reality?

2) Does it consider that Latin could be the most suitable starting point for promoting a lingua franca for Europeans?