Question for written answer E-003095/2022  
to the Council  
Rule 138  
Francesca Donato (NI)

Subject: English’s status as an official language despite not having been requested by a Member State

Article 8 of Regulation 1/1958 states that ‘if a Member State has more than one official language, the language to be used shall, at the request of such State, be governed by the general rules of its law’.

However, neither Ireland nor Malta have made a request for English to be used and the Council cannot arbitrarily grant itself the right to make such a decision as a way of justifying the continued use of that language when the only State that requested it has left the EU.

After Slovak, English – a language originally imposed on the Irish and Maltese by British colonisers – is now the EU’s 17th language, with around 5 million speakers. Yet, despite the many rules in place to maintain multilingualism and prevent language discrimination, the Council, contrary to any principle of democracy, uses it almost exclusively in communication, contrary to the law and against the interests of the 445 million non-native English-speaking EU citizens. In view of this, can the Council say:

1. When it will implement the requirements of Regulation 1/1958 and Article 8 in particular? If has no plans to do so, can it explain why given that the reasons provided to date have no legal basis?

2. When will it implement multilingualism by communicating with citizens democratically, i.e. in proportion to the number of native speakers in each EU population?

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2 In order: 1 German 92 898 566; 2 French 65 255 278; 3 Italian 60 480 665; 4 Spanish 46 776 338; 5 Polish 37 857 352; 6 Romanian 19 238 034; 7 Dutch 17 131 014; 8 Czech 10 710 432; 9 Greek 10 429 737; 10 Portuguese 10 199 257; 11 Swedish 10 095 005; 12 Hungarian 9 664 187; 13 Bulgarian 6 954 100; 14 Danish 5 789 709; 15 Finnish 5 540 792; 16 Slovakian 5 460 615; 17 English (Ireland and Malta) 5 382 028; 18 Irish 4 940 642; 19 Croatian 4 106 953; 20 Slovenian 2 079 390; 21 Lithuanian 1 963 870; 22 Latvian 1 887 408; 23 Estonian 1 328 108; 24 Maltese 441 386.

3 Respect for linguistic and cultural diversity is one of the pillars of the EU enshrined in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union, just as discrimination on linguistic grounds is explicitly prohibited under Article 21 of the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights.