

ORAL QUESTION H-0683/08  
for Question Time at the part-session in September II 2008  
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Michl Ebner  
to the Commission

Subject: Achieving the '1+2' objective in European language policy

Multilingualism in the European Union is a central component of European diversity. In particular, learning new languages not only represents a competitive advantage, but is also culturally enriching.

The objective of European language policy is what is termed the '1+2' strategy, under which, every EU citizen should learn two other Community languages in addition to his or her mother tongue.

While this programme is to be welcomed in principle, serious shortcomings are becoming evident in practice as far as implementation is concerned. Some regions in which learning languages is especially important because of their geographical situation continue to exclude learning neighbouring countries' languages from their curricula. This omission not only has consequences for individuals' competitiveness on a globalised market, but erects long-term barriers to the free movement of workers in the regions concerned because of a lack of language knowledge.

How is the Commission verifying realisation of the multilingualism objectives laid down in the 1996 White Paper? What EU funds are available to national authorities for education policy reorganisation, especially in border regions?

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