Court of Auditors' special report No 9/2006 on the translation expenditure incurred by the Commission, the Parliament and the Council

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The European Parliament adopted the resolution based on the initiative report by Mr. Alexander **STUBB** (EPP-ED, FI) on the translation expenditure incurred by the Commission, the Parliament and the Council. It accepted the recommendations made by the committee responsible on the following issues:

- **Cost of translations**: MEPs stress that the total cost of all the linguistic services of the EU institutions – translation and interpretation combined - represents merely 1 % of the total EU budget. In 2005, the volume of translations was 1 324 000 pages in the Commission (1 450 translators), 1 080 000 pages in the Parliament (550 translators) and 475 000 pages in the Council (660 translators). It is surprised that institutions have so far calculated neither their total translation costs, nor their costs per page. The Parliament welcomes the fact that the Commission and the Council have managed to limit the increase in translation volume after the EU-10 enlargement. It also notices that the prices it paid for freelance translators were on average 12 % higher than the prices paid by the Commission. The three institutions are called upon to establish clear and comparable cost parameters with a view to ascertaining both the total cost of translation and the price per page. The Parliament agrees on the principle that verbatim reports of proceedings in the plenary should be published as a multi-lingual document in which the statements of the speakers only appear in the original language of the statement., on the understanding that filmed versions of the debates, together with live interpretation into all the official languages be made available free of charge to the general public on demand on an appropriate technical platform and that only the original text is authoritative. It requests the Secretary-General to draw up a formal proposal implementing that decision of principle.
- **Quality of translations**: although the Parliament welcomes the fact that the quality and timeliness of translations into the EU-15 languages is considered generally satisfactory, they remain concerned about the considerably lower quality of the EU-10 translations in some institutions in 2004, mainly caused by a lack of qualified translators. It calls on the Council, the Parliament's administration and the Commission, therefore, to report on measures taken to monitor and improve the quality of translations.
- **Procedures for managing translation demands**: criticisms have made about the ambiguous procedures for requesting translations, and also unclear guidelines with regard to what documents must be and need not be translated. The Parliament recommends that greater use be made of documents that are limited in length and written summaries. Parliamentary committees and delegations are urged -whenever possible - to provide texts only in the languages of committee and delegation members and their substitutes.
- **Efficiency of the translation process**: the institutions should develop qualitative and quantitative performance indicators with a view to facilitating the monitoring of translation processes for management purposes. Parliament regrets that its translation service does not yet make systematic use of translation tools and calls on its management to take the necessary steps to ensure the systematic use of such tools, in particular translation memory systems (i. e. Euramis), in which the potential for re-use - and hence for qualitative gains - is high. The Parliament, the Council and the Commission are called upon to make efficient and effective use of the internal and external resources, such as data bases, computer-assisted translations, teleworking and outsourcing. Lastly, MEPs welcome the improving inter-institutional cooperation between the translation services of the different institutions, in particular the creation of a common terminology data base.