# European Year of Languages 2001

1999/0208(COD) - 28/03/2000

The committee adopted a report (codecision procedure, first reading) by Vasco GRAÇA MOURA (EPP /ED, P) approving, with amendments, the proposal for a decision on 2001: European Year of Languages. The report called for more people to be made aware of the advantages of knowing a foreign language and added that this skill should not be restricted to the privileged members of society, saying that not only EU citizens but anyone legally resident in the Member States should benefit from the programme and that children at pre-school and primary levels should start learning languages as a way of raising awareness of cultural diversity. The committee reminded the Council of its own resolution of March 1995 stating that pupils should as a general rule learn two languages for a minimum of two years. However, under the proposal Member States would themselves decide whether to include languages other than the official EU ones. The amendments adopted were the fruit of a compromise thrashed out following an informal meeting with the Commission and Council. The aim now was to have the proposal adopted after just one reading of the codecision procedure by the full Parliament and the Council, so that the programme was in place in good time. To show that European Year of Languages was in fact a joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe, the committee recommended the use of a common logo and slogan for activities by the two partners. It also wanted an interactive website to be set up. The committee called for special funding for innovative measures and to foster awareness of best practice, for example research into the learning of classical languages, whose value as a foundation for the learning of other languages was emphasised.