Resolution on regional and lesser-used European languages

2001/2644(RSP) - 13/12/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a joint resolution on minority languages. 2001 had been declared the 'European Year of Languages'. Linguistic diversity constituted a fundamental legacy of the culture and history of Europe and 'minority' languages were used by 50 million citizens in the EU. In its resolution, the European Parliament stressed that language was part of identity and an expression of the richness of each people. It considered that the protection of cultural and linguistic diversity was a duty of the Union and a guarantee for the construction of a democratic Europe and it was therefore necessary to promote culture, which was 'something other than a simple commercial product subject to the rules of the market and of competition'. However, enlargement had given rise to certain declarations that sought to limit the number of official EU languages. The MEPs reaffirmed their commitment to linguistic diversity and reiterated their support for the equal status of the official languages and the working languages of all the countries that made up the EU. Any attempt to establish discrimination between the official languages and the working languages had to be resisted. The Commission was therefore requested to prepare specific measures to ensure a fair promotion of the languages of the Union and their use by the media, the publication of books and literary works, the revaluation of the study of foreign languages, and the implementation of specific programmes to support 'minority' languages in order to contribute to the enrichment of European diversity. It called on the Commission to extend the activities carried out during the European Year of Languages (2001), by presenting, before the end of 2003, a multi-annual programme on languages consisting in appropriations for regional or lesser-used languages. Lastly, Parliament called on the Member States which had not yet done so to sign and ratify the European Charter on regional and minority languages.