EP Rules of Procedure, Rule 139: transitional arrangement concerning the official languages after the 2004 enlargement

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The committee adopted the report by Ingo FRIEDRICH (EPP-ED, DE) on amending Rule 139 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure (Transitional rules on languages).

The background to this report is the provision incorporated into the Rules of Procedure in 2004 which, in applying Parliament's rules on languages to the nine new languages added in May 2004, stipulated that "exceptionally, ... account shall be taken.... until 31 December 2006, of the availability in real terms and sufficient numbers of the requisite interpreters and translators". The current situation, however, is such that, even after the expiry of this transitional period, it will not be possible to apply the principle of full multilingualism (as provided for in Rule 138) to the full extent. Rule 139 on the transitional arrangements therefore needs to be extended beyond the end of 2006. Morevoer, the same problem arises with Bulgarian and Romanian (to be added on 1 January 2007), which must also be included in a new transitional arrangement. And on 1 January 2007 Irish will also become, with restrictions, an official and working language of the EU institutions and hence of Parliament.

The report proposed that Rule 139 be reformulated in such a way as to extend the transitional period until the end of the 6th parliamentary term. The amendment also clarified that the Bureau would have the power to adopt the necessary implementing rules and that the administration and the Bureau must examine individually, in the case of every official language concerned, whether and to what extent a derogation must be made from the full multilingualism arrangements. The situation should be reviewed every 6 months. Lastly, a new paragraph made it clear that Parliament would make use of the temporary special arrangements adopted by the Council on the drafting of legal acts in Maltese and Irish.