

(2002/C 147 E/023)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2519/01**by Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL) to the Commission**

(18 September 2001)

Subject: The battle in Chroscicy to maintain the use of Sorbian in education and administration for the Sorbian population which has traditionally lived in Upper Lusatia, Saxony

1. Is the Commission aware that in the village of Chroscicy (Crostwitz), situated between the towns of Budyšin (Bautzen), Kamjenc (Kamenz) and Wojerecy (Hoyerswerda), in the Dresden district of Saxony, 90 % of the population have always spoken Sorbian, a Slavonic language, but that, just as happened earlier in the northern part of the Sorbian language area around Chóšebuz (Cottbus) in Brandenburg, the provision of secondary education in Sorbian is declining or even disappearing completely?
2. Is the Commission also aware that this state of affairs has, since 8 August 2001, led not only to daily demonstrations featuring the blue, white and red Sorbian flag, the singing of the Sorbian national anthem and the wearing of traditional costumes, but also to civil disobedience, with pupils being taken away from official schools so that they can be taught by retired Sorbian-speaking teachers?
3. What view does the Commission take of the fact that, instead of efforts being made to safeguard and maintain the rights of a traditional linguistic minority in the face of falling numbers of school-age children, pupils are being forced to continue their education at German-speaking schools, that school absenteeism is punished and that the government of Saxony takes no account of the demands made by Domovina, the Sorbian political and cultural umbrella organisation?
4. In the case of the 60 000 Sorbians, what can the Commission do to help avoid polarisation in their relations with the German-speaking population group, which dominates the fields of education and administration, and what can it do to eliminate sources of ethnic conflicts within EU Member States generally?

(2002/C 147 E/024)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2520/01**by Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL) to the Commission**

(18 September 2001)

Subject: The exemplary value of allowing the use of local languages in education and administration as a means of preventing the emergence of nationalistic conflicts.

1. Is the Commission aware that two thirds of Europe's current 48 countries, including six of today's EU Member States: Greece, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Finland and Ireland, as well as Norway, Albania, Poland, Lithuania, Iceland, Malta, Slovenia, Ukraine, Moldova and the Czech Republic, came into being only after the Congress of Vienna attempted to fix the borders of the countries of Europe once and for all in 1815, the decisive factors being confirmation of the outcome of wars, royal marriages and treaties on the use of mountain ranges or rivers as national borders, rather than the linguistic and cultural boundaries perceived by local inhabitants?
2. Is it also aware that, in most cases, the social discontent that led to the establishment of new states and the amalgamation of existing states was caused by the fact that in a great many areas it was not the local language but a 'foreign' language that was used by princes, officials and the military for administrative purposes and in education, resulting in a division into first-class and second-class citizens, and that this state of affairs in many cases brought forward nationalist movements and subsequently also led to violent conflicts in some cases, before administrative changes were made with the creation of federal states and the adjustment of borders?
3. Does it agree that the unrestricted use in education and administration of indigenous local or regional majority languages is the best means of preventing the emergence of nationalistic conflicts, that we could learn much to foster the peaceful and mutually respectful coexistence of neighbouring peoples in Europe from the changes that have been made in recent decades following linguistic conflicts in Flanders,

Friesland, Catalonia, the Basque Country and South Tyrol (Alto Adige), and that such positive examples are now relevant for example in the case of the southern fringes of Slovakia, the northern fringes of Serbia, central Romania and north-western Macedonia?

4. Does it regard a situation such as that now unfolding in Chroscicy (cf. Question E-2519/01) as a good example of how future EU Member States should treat the rights of peoples who constitute a majority regionally or locally and use a minority language?

**Joint answer
to Written Questions E-2519/01 and E-2520/01
given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission**

(6 December 2001)

In relation to the case mentioned by the Honourable Member, the Commission has no information to indicate a failure to implement Community law or a serious and persistent breach within the meaning of Article 7 (ex Article F.1) of the Treaty on European Union. The Commission refers the Honourable Member to Article 149 (ex Article 126) of the EC Treaty, according to which each Member State is responsible for the organisation of its education system and for linguistic diversity. The Commission would also point to the efforts made to promote linguistic diversity, especially through the European Year of Languages, and the Community's contribution to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity, in accordance with Article 151 (ex Article 128) of the EC Treaty.

For further details, the Honourable Member is referred to the Commission's answer to Written Question E-2538/01 from Mr Modrow⁽¹⁾ on the same subject.

⁽¹⁾ See page 27.

(2002/C 147 E/025)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-2535/01
by Gabriele Stauner (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(11 September 2001)

Subject: Submission of the results of analyses concerning adulterated butter

Until mid-2000, members of the Italian mafia were involved in the large-scale adulteration of butter, adding animal and vegetable fats and chemical substances to it before marketing it through Belgian, German, French and Italian firms. It is believed that a total of 100 000 tonnes of adulterated butter was produced and that it was mainly used in bakery products. Following the discovery of the fraud, some 200 tonnes of what was left of the adulterated butter was seized in Belgium, France and Italy. The Member State concerned were called upon to carry out chemical analyses in order to clarify whether there were any risks to health.

In a letter of 17 August 2001, the German Minister for Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture informed me that the results of the analyses Belgium, France and Italy had been asked to carry out had not yet been presented to the Standing Veterinary Committee and could not be inspected or evaluated by the Federal Government.

Will the Commission state why these findings have still not been submitted?

Will it say what steps it has taken, or proposes to take, in order to make the Member States concerned submit the results of the analyses?

Will it indicate the findings on which it was actually basing itself when, in the 2000 annual report on the fight against fraud⁽¹⁾, it wrote that, 'so far, the analyses conducted by the experts on the seized goods have not established any direct hazard for the consumers' health'?

Will it provide the names and indicate the official positions of the experts it referred to and present copies of the results of the analyses it mentioned?

⁽¹⁾ COM(2001) 255, p. 25.