

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001485/26
to the Commission**

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(13 April 2026)

Subject: What place is there for Romance languages in the EU institutions?

Spanish and French have become, respectively, the third and fourth most spoken languages in the world, after Mandarin and English ⁽¹⁾, while Portuguese comes in sixth. Worldwide, there are 600 million Spanish speakers ⁽²⁾, 396 million French speakers and around 275 million Portuguese speakers ⁽³⁾.

When Italian and Romanian are added to the mix, around 210 to 215 million EU citizens — almost half of them — have a Romance language as their mother tongue or main language.

However, Romance languages are being steadily marginalised within the EU institutions, where speaking English is a must despite Brexit and the gradual breakdown of transatlantic relations. This marginalisation has become the symbol of a technocratic European Union that is far removed from its citizens.

1. What effort is the Commission making to promote Romance languages within the EU institutions?
2. Is the systematic translation of working documents into the 24 official languages, at every stage, still an objective?
3. Should the Commission and its agencies not prioritise recruitment and promotions favouring staff who speak one or more languages other than English, including Romance languages?

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Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(17 July 2026)

The Commission is committed to the active promotion of multilingualism, both within the institution and in its relations with the other institutions, Member States and the public. The Commission does not actively promote the use of any particular language.

In line with Regulation No 1 from 1958 ⁽¹⁾, EU legislation is published in all EU official and working languages. On its main website ⁽²⁾, the Commission provides information in all EU official languages.

Practical information on citizens' rights and administrative and legal procedures is also provided in all EU official languages ⁽³⁾. When information is particularly relevant for speakers of a specific language, it is usually drafted and published in that language or translated into it. In such instances, other languages may be provided through machine translation.

This balanced approach ensures that the Commission's online communication with citizens fully adheres to the principle of multilingualism.

The Commission's recruitment policy aims to secure the highest standards of ability, efficiency and integrity, while recruiting from the broadest possible geographical base of Member State nationals.

To be recruited, staff must provide evidence of knowledge of one EU language and satisfactory knowledge of another. Before their first promotion, EU officials are required to demonstrate the ability to work in a third language among those referred to in Article 55(1) of the Treaty on European Union.

¹ <https://www.lefigaro.fr/langue-francaise/actu-des-mots/le-francais-devient-la-quatrieme-langue-la-plus-parlee-au-monde-20260317>.

² <https://www.la-croix.com/international/congres-hispanophone-5-chiffres-qui-montrent-la-place-de-la-langue-espagnole-dans-le-monde-20250901>.

³ https://www.axl.celan.ulaval.ca/Langues/2vital_inter_portugais.htm#:~:text=%20274%20671%20325.%20*%20218%20millions.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:01958R0001-20130701>.

⁽²⁾ <https://commission.europa.eu>.

⁽³⁾ <https://european-union.europa.eu>, <https://europa.eu/youreurope> or <https://e-justice.europa.eu>.