

## Euro politicians told to stop speaking English

8th February, 2016



The European Parliament's Secretary General, Klaus Welle, has urged Euro politicians to speak more slowly and to stick to their native language instead of using English. This is to

help the hundreds of interpreters who work at the institution. Mr Welle said many interpreters were encountering difficulties doing their job. He said: "It's extremely important that people do not speak too fast." He asked politicians not to use English if it was not their native language as this complicates things for the translators. He said "It's also extremely important for interpreters that people speak their own language. If the politicians speak a foreign language, the quality of interpretation goes down."

There are 24 official languages spoken at the European Parliament. The most recent additions are Croatian, Irish, Bulgarian and Romanian. A small army of 330 interpreters is employed to ensure everyone understands each other. The parliament employs an additional 1,800 freelancers. It also has about 700 translators, who translate over 100,000 pages each month. If everyone followed Mr Welle's request\*, only politicians from the UK would be allowed to speak English, even though many members are multilingual. Many prefer to speak in English to avoid the confusion of having several simultaneous interpreters. The parliament's annual budget for interpreters is \$50 million.

\* Assuming Irish politicians would have to speak Gaelic, and Maltese politicians must speak Maltese.

Sources: BBC / EUobserver.com / express.co.uk

## Writing

All international organisations should use English only. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*politicians / native language / interpreters / institution / difficulties / important / quality / official languages / army / freelancers / translate / multilingual / confusion / budget*

## True / False

- The European Parliament (EP) wants politicians to speak more slowly. T / F
- Many interpreters at the EU are having problems with their job. T / F
- The parliament wants politicians to stick to their native language. T / F
- The EP Secretary General said using English makes things easier. T / F
- There are 26 official languages in use at the European Parliament. T / F
- There are fewer than 300 interpreters employed by the parliament. T / F
- EP translators translate over 100,000 pages every week. T / F
- The European Parliament spends \$50 million a year on interpreters. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. urged        | a. confuses       |
| 2. instead of   | b. keep away from |
| 3. encountering | c. lessens        |
| 4. complicates  | d. yearly         |
| 5. goes down    | e. inclusions     |
| 6. official     | f. experiencing   |
| 7. additions    | g. encouraged     |
| 8. additional   | h. rather than    |
| 9. avoid        | i. extra          |
| 10. annual      | j. authorised     |

## Discussion – Student A

- How difficult is it for an organization to have 24 official languages?
- What will you need English for in life?
- How important is English in your country?
- What are the advantages of being multilingual?
- How would your life be different if you could not speak English?
- What advantages do UK politicians have in Europe?
- How important is your native language in the world?
- What questions would you like to ask the head of the European Parliament?

# BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

## Phrase Match

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. stick to their native language         | a. languages                |
| 2. encountering                           | b. speak their own language |
| 3. this complicates things                | c. lingual                  |
| 4. important for interpreters that people | d. instead of using English |
| 5. the quality of interpretation goes     | e. freelancers              |
| 6. 24 official                            | f. for the translators      |
| 7. The most recent                        | g. difficulties             |
| 8. employs an additional 1,800            | h. budget                   |
| 9. many members are multi-                | i. down                     |
| 10. annual                                | j. additions                |

## Discussion – Student B

- Would you be a good interpreter?
- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you know about the European Parliament?
- Should only English be used at the European Parliament?
- How important is English?
- How difficult do you think it is to be an interpreter?
- How would the world be different if everyone spoke the same language?
- What problems have you had interpreting things into English?

## Spelling

- The European rtnaeiPlam
- hundreds of rprnrsettej
- work at the ttsninuotij
- It's yeelxetmr important
- their vatnei language
- this oislamctepc things
- 24 fcaliiof languages
- an additional 1,800 elfearnrsec
- It also has about 700 sntrslroata
- many members are ullnlmtgiiu
- avoid the icofonnsu
- nnuaal budget

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. h	3. f	4. a	5. c
6. j	7. e	8. i	9. b	10. d

## Role Play

### Role A – Spanish

You think Spanish is the most important language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their languages aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): Arabic, Chinese or French.

### Role B – Arabic

You think Arabic is the most important language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their languages aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): Spanish, Chinese or French.

### Role C – Chinese

You think Chinese is the most important language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their languages aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): Arabic, Spanish or French.

### Role D – French

You think French is the most important language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their languages aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): Arabic, Chinese or Spanish.

## Speaking – Languages

Rank these with your partner. Put the most useful at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| • Spanish | • Chinese  |
| • French  | • Urdu     |
| • Arabic  | • Hindi    |
| • Swahili | • Japanese |

### Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	F	g	F	h	T
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.