

We pay € 17THOUSAND MILLION each year into the British economy!

Dear Member of Parliament,

October 2005 saw the publication of a particularly interesting report, accessible in French at http://cisad.adc.education.fr/hcee/documents/rapport_Grin.pdf, by the Swiss Professor François Grin. The most startling conclusion of the report is that, *due to the current dominant position of the English language, the United Kingdom gains € 17-18 thousand million each year, which is more than three times the famous British rebate, or 1% of its GNP.* In other words, each of the 394 million non-English-speaking citizens of the EU, including those from the poorest new Member States, are subsidising the British economy!

This amount comes from the sale of books and other goods relating to the English language, from the 700 000 people each year who go to Britain to learn English, as well as from the savings that stem from the neglect of foreign-language teaching in British schools. This does not account for all of the language-related economic transfers to the United Kingdom but for 75% of them, which the author sees as the fruit of the hegemony of English and not just of the demographic weight of the language itself.

François Grin who is a professor at the University of Geneva and a specialist in the economics of language, has released an extensive dossier in which he analyses the language policy of the European Union. The study was commissioned and published by the French *Haut Conseil de l'évaluation de l'école* (**High Council for School Evaluation**) - an independent public body which evaluates and analyses the state of teaching in France.

The report poses the question "*What would be the optimum choice for working languages in the European Union?*"

A more equitable system would save the EU at least € 25 thousand million annually!

The Swiss economist proposes a comparison between three possible scenarios:

1. *English as the sole language,*
2. *multilingualism,*
3. *Esperanto as an internal working language the EU institutions.*

The third option, Esperanto, comes out as the least expensive and most equitable, but Grin believes it is not currently viable because of the strong prejudices against Esperanto based on simple ignorance. He believes, however, that it is strategically possible for a new generation, on two conditions:

- a sustained large-scale information campaign throughout the EU about language inequality and Esperanto,
- the cooperation of all Member States in the campaign.

This could lead to **net annual savings for the EU of approximately € 25 thousand million!** "**That is directly and manifestly to the advantage of 85% of the population of the 25 states**", Professor Grin claims.

Yours sincerely,

Margareta Handzlik, Member of the European Parliament, mhandzlik@europarl.eu.int

Prof. Renato Corsetti, World Esperanto Association (UEA), Renato.Corsetti@uniroma1.it

Dr Seán Ó Riain, European Esperanto Union (EEU), sean.oriain@web.de

PS: Esperanto to help learn other languages: www.springboard2languages.org

Brussel/Bruxelles, 2006-05-29