

**Question for written answer E-006783/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Herbert Dorfmann (PPE)

Subject: Rules on use of the Italian language hindering trade in South Tyrol/protection of minorities and consumers

EU legislation stipulates that manufacturers must provide information on products in an easily understood language. Despite the presence in Italy of a German-speaking minority in South Tyrol, all consumer information is relayed in Italian. Going over and above EU rules, this is also stipulated in Article 6 of the consumer protection law for operating instructions, sales descriptions and other related information, although Article 99 of the Statute of Autonomy of South Tyrol gives both languages equal status within the region and products comply with EU safety requirements. Inspection bodies object to products in German-speaking South Tyrol being systematically labelled in German. Distributors provide translations of safety advice and additional information, thereby assuming responsibilities that should rightly be the manufacturers'. However they lack the knowledge of technical and legal standards to do so.

The language rules are, therefore, standing in the way of the South Tyrolean German-speaking population accessing products from the German-speaking world and denying them the right, granted to the Italian population, to purchase products with operating instructions written solely in their own recognised mother tongue.

Could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Can recognised linguistic minorities, within a region inhabited by said recognised linguistic minorities, also lay claim to the right to information?
2. Can products be sold in a linguistic minority's region if their accompanying information – by analogy with the rules on the use of the language of the Member State – is only in the language of said officially recognised minority?
3. Can products written only in the language of the Member State be sold in a linguistic minority's region?
4. What solutions can the Commission suggest to each of the problems outlined herein, in particular since under Article 118za of Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 the compulsory and optional information for wine, for example, can be written in one or more official languages of the Community?