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Research Article

Avrupa Birliği'nde (AB) Katılımcı Demokrasinin Bir Aracı Olarak Çokdillilik Politikası

Policy of Multilingualism as a Tool for Participative Democracy in the European Union (EU)

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Abstract

In a European Union (EU) where democratic deficit is being more and more discussed, ways of increasing democratic legitimacy of the EU is a hotly debated issue. Accordingly, the EU policy-makers seek ways to promote a solid European public sphere with the introduction of diverse (legal) measures or organization of various activities, such as European Citizens' Initiatives (ECI), individual recourse to the Ombudsman or debate forums organized at the Union level. In all of these initiatives, language is a key issue and the most important medium through which EU citizens can express themselves. In addition to these more recent measures, community institutions have, since their establishment, formally adopted the policy of multilingualism and cherished it as a strong component of a Union "in diversity". Accordingly, the Treaty of Rome stipulates that all official languages of member States are also those of the EU itself, and every EU citizen has the right to use their own language and to be addressed in this language in dealing with or working in EU institutions. However, the policy of multilingualism as applied by the EU today shows us that the lack of proper application of multilingual policies as enshrined in treaties may potentially obstruct citizen participation in democracy as much as the EU institutions wish to. The article looks into the legal bases of multilingualism, regulations or pledges to promote it, discourses of EU officials on the issue, research conducted about different citizen-engaging activities/forums/processes organized at the Union level and relevant Eurobarometer surveys. It finds that multilingualism is regarded as more like an educational tool to promote language learning for citizens, who would ideally become competitive enough in the globalized world and European markets rather than a tool for democratic participation where they can effectively use any EU official language.

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Anahtar sözcükler: Avrupa Birliği, çokdillilik, katılımcı demokrasi

Öz

Demokrasi eksikliğinin gitgide daha fazla tartışıldığı Avrupa Birliği'nde (AB), AB'nin demokratik meşruiyetini arttırma yolları son zamanlarda çokça konuşulan bir mevzu hâline gelmiştir. Buna paralel olarak, AB'deki politika üreticileri Avrupa Vatandaş İnisiyatifi (ECI) veya Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu'na bireysel başvurunun önünü açma gibi girişimlerle sağlam bir Avrupa kamu alanı oluşturarak vatandaşların AB işlerine daha aktif katılmasının ve birbirleriyle/ kurumlarla daha iyi iletişim kurmasının yollarını aramaktadır. Bu çalışmada AB'nin mevcut çokdillilik politikası, vatandaşların siyasi karar alma aşamalarına çeşitli dereceler ile katıldığı katılımcı demokrasi çerçevesinden ele alınmaktadır. Roma Antlaşması'na göre üye devletlerin resmi dillerinin hepsi AB'nin de resmi dilleridir. Bunun yanı sıra, her AB vatandaşı bir AB kurumunda çalışırken veya bu kurumla iletişime girerken kendi dilini kullanma ve yazılı/sözlü bir başvuru yaptığı takdirde bu dilde cevap alma hakkına sahiptir. Ancak AB'de mevcut şekliyle uygulanan çokdillilik politikası, çokdilliliğin nasıl anlaşıldığının bağlamlara göre değiştiğini ve bunun antlaşmaların öngördüğü şekliyle çokdilliliğin uygulanmasına etki edeceğini, dolayısıyla vatandaş katılımını potansiyel olarak engelleyeceğini göstermektedir. Çalışmanın bu konuyu incelerken üzerinde durduğu kaynaklar arasında çokdilliliğin hukuki dayanakları, çokdilliliği teşvik etmek için AB düzeyinde yapılan düzenlemeler veya verilen taahhütler, AB yetkililerinin konu hakkındaki resmi söylemleri ve Eurobarometer anketleri yer almaktadır. Çalışmanın bulgularına göre AB düzeyinde çokdillilik vatandaşların istediği dilde demokrasiye katılımından çok, onları küresel piyasalarda ve Avrupa piyasasında yeterince rekabet edebilecek bireyler olarak yetiştirmeyi hedefleyen bir eğitim aracı olarak algılanmaktadır.

1. INTRODUCTION

"The official languages and the working languages of the institutions of the Community shall be Dutch, French, German and Italian." says the Article 1 of the Regulation Number 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community (1958). Now amended to include other languages of other member states, this article, and the regulation it belongs to in general, stipulates that the languages of all member states of the European Union (EU) shall be considered official languages at the Union level. Indeed, language is a key factor for communication, and therefore for democracy, which puts –or must put- communication at its core with a view to allowing the demos to speak and participate in the process. This is especially important for the EU as a sui generis entity with 24 official languages. As the European Parliament (EP) puts it,

"[Multilingualism] also makes the European institutions more accessible and transparent for all citizens of the Union, which is essential for the success of the EU's democratic system" (European Parliament, 2015).

In this regard, participatory democracy that the EU tries to promote for its citizens plays a key role in today's politics as a tool to engage more citizens of the Union. There are various methods utilized by the EU to do so: adopting a multilingualism policy across all institutions, introduction and constant improvement of such measures as the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), or giving enlarged powers to the EP as a platform for citizens as deputies or where citizens are informed about discussions that shape their future.

For the purposes of this article, we understand "multilingualism" and its relation to citizen engagement in democracy in a broad sense. To clarify, this article not only considers EU citizens who participate in democracy as "ordinary citizens" living within the EU borders and who communicate with the institutions from time to time, but also the EU officials themselves who work in the EU institutions as citizens. Therefore, for this article, communicating with the EU institutions, taking part in citizen forums and initiatives, and working at the institutions as Eurocrats all fall under the category of "citizen engagement in democracy".

That said, we should ask whether multilingualism truly contributes to the European democracy now that it gives equal status to all national languages and the right to any citizen to speak their own language when participating in democracy. The question that this article asks, in other words, is thus the following: "Is the multilingual regime of the European Union i.e. the fact that official languages of the States are also official languages of the EU, necessarily a guarantee for citizen engagement in the democracy exercised at the Union level?"

2.METHODOLOGY

This article makes use of discourse analysis when analyzing the relationship between multilingualism and citizen engagement in democracy. Therefore, it takes into account official EU discourse –that of the institutions in the form of declarations, press releases or website information-, discourse of EU officials such as the Presidents/Vice-Presidents of the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament. It also considers relevant Eurobarometer surveys.

3.MULTILINGUALISM AS A TERM IN THE EU CONTEXT

It is useful to clarify that the term "multilingualism" in the European context may refer to different notions. To have a better idea, we can here refer to some of the scholars who have sought to define the term in the Union context. For example, Longman (2007, p.187) argues that there are three different notions about the term "multilingualism" in the EU discourse: Institutional, societal, and personal. There is thus the multilingual regime of the institutions which officially gives equal status to the national languages of member states, and the multilingual nature of the European Union as a territory hosting diverse populations- which we can equate with societal and personal multilingualism Longman talks about.

Another differentiation of the understanding of "multilingualism" on the European level is made by Kraus (2008). On the one hand, he talks about internal modes of communication, meaning how multilingualism is processed within the institutions, and external modes of communication on the other, meaning the way the institutions communicate with the citizens (p.112). Again, both modes serve as

catalyzers for participation in democracy. As for the official EU response, we can refer to the pertinent press release:

"What does 'multilingualism' mean?

- A situation in which several languages are spoken within a certain geographical area;
- A person's ability to master several languages;
- A policy requiring an organisation, company or institution to use more than one language for its internal and/or external communication.

Multilingualism is a key feature of Europe in all these senses." (European Commission, 2013).

As we can see here, the Commission also makes multiple inferences from the term "multilingualism". This is a point we return to in Section 4.1.

4. LITERATURE ON MULTILINGUAL EUROPE THROUGH THE LENS OF CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

The issue of multilingualism and citizen engagement in the EU has been a hotly debated one in the literature. There are various proposals or suggestions to change/adapt the current regime as well as criticisms and support for it. The jargon of the debate is rich, with the proposals ranging from implementing a regime based on a lingua franca, a pure full multilingualism, to partial or asymmetric multilingualism. However, we can categorize the camps in this debate into roughly two: Supporters and adversaries of the multilingual system. While supporters of the current regime think that having many languages is beneficial to the EU and allows for wider public participation (e.g., Doerr, 2009; Ginsburgh, & Weber, 2005), the adversaries point to difficulties and obstacles on various levels, such as logistics of translation services or the philosophy about the concept of European demos (e.g., Van Parijs, 2011). The arguments are indeed rich on both sides, taking into account different phenomena such as language disenfranchisement, cost of translation/interpreting services, feasibility of different linguistic policies, and the EU's institutional stance towards official languages. However, our aim in this article is not to provide yet another suggestion or comment on which proposal has the best standing. Rather, we will be interested in whether the current multilingual regime of the EU provides a tool for citizen engagement as the institutions or its members argue.

As to the relationship between language and collective identity, or societal and personal multilingualism in the EU, Buchmüller-Codoni (2012) argues that some see the absence of a European demos as a result of the Union's language policy and, in parallel to this, multilingualism as an obstacle to integration. Although language alone cannot be shown as the cause for lack of demos and low levels of integration, we cannot dismiss altogether the role that it can possibly have. Indeed, language is a factor that has its effect on many areas, ranging from democracy, politics, and most importantly tying people together, in this case diverse European peoples. We can assume that the unity that is supposed to emerge from diversity has been the victim of a counter-effect, at least in some cases, and now what we have is a "union of diversity", as Kraus (2008) puts it, rather than the epitome of the official motto of the EU, which foresees "unity in diversity".

Some authors go as far as to show that there is an inverse correlation between the lack of a common language and democracy, among them Grimm who says: "There can be no European democracy because there is no European public sphere; there can be no European public sphere because there is no European people (in the sense of a demos possessing a collective identity that would serve as a frame for political unity); and there can be no European people because there is no common European language" (as cited in Kraus, 2008, p. 23). Here, the common language is regarded as a prerequisite to a collective identity, and that, in turn, a prerequisite to the existence of a public sphere. Although we may be skeptical as to the intense and straightforward tone of this citation, which seems to be clearly dismissing any possibility by saying "cannot", we shall not overlook the importance of language as an obstacle to the creation of a European public sphere. Indeed, it is a known fact that the formation of a European public sphere is not easy for many reasons, and that some institutions, particularly the Commission, fund some projects or research in order to find ways as to better understand perceived lack of legitimacy of the EU by the citizens, and thus address the problems. All in all, although European citizens surely belong to diverse political cultures and identities, which is certainly a reason

for the lack of a Europe-wide political debate, language is without doubt another factor affecting intra-EU citizen communication.

5. DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Democratic deficit is considered to be a vital issue for European democracy, especially in recent years and has been discussed ever since by many scholars (e.g., Moravcsik, 2002; Follesdal, & Hicks, 2005). Since that phenomenon became the subject of more and more discussion and exacerbated recently by rising Euroscepticism and the issue of opt-outs like Brexit, the authorities seem to be more concerned about transparency, ensuring participatory democracy, giving voice to citizens, and providing them with the right to have access to documents and so on. Involvement of citizens and the civil society in European policy making is indeed seen as a solution to democratic deficit (Balosin, 2014, p. 287). Language can be considered here as a crucial aspect since it is the very tool that citizens will use to get informed, participate in democracy and use their rights or methods at their disposal to make their voice heard. The EU seems to be willing to include citizens more in the community affairs to "close" the gap between them and the EU, including measures to work on language so as to increase communication (European Commission, 2006). No doubt that there is even a higher need to treat this matter with an ever-enlarged EU.

5.1. Measures taken by the EU and how effective they are in terms of citizen engagement

A step in increasing citizen participation was the introduction of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) in 2011. It consists of an invitation by 1 million citizens to the Commission to propose legislation, which is seen by most as a direct tool for citizen engagement since it allows them to "shape" Europe or "influence EU policy-making", to use the wording of the European Commission on several sections of the website designed for the Citizens' Initiative (n.d.).

Apart from the view of the Commission on the ECI, we can consider how the European Parliament also associates the initiative with "participatory democracy", defining it as,

"The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is an important instrument of participatory democracy in the European Union, allowing one million EU citizens residing in at least one quarter of the Member States to invite the Commission to submit a proposal for a legal act to implement the EU Treaties." (European Parliament, Fact Sheets on the European Union, n.d.).

Also, in the ECI Factsheet (2019), the former Commission First Vice-President Timmermans argued about the ECI as such:

"9 million Europeans from all 28 Member States have already spoken up through the European Citizens' Initiative. But we can do better if more citizens use this instrument for democratic participation at EU level. [The simplified] rules […] make it easier for European citizens to make themselves heard. They will now have an easily accessible and user-friendly tool at their disposal to ask the EU institutions directly to act on the issues they really care about."

However, one needs to be aware of some linguistic obstacles, among the more clearly acknowledged difficulties, to formulate and actually succeed in one's initiative. Since only about half (54%) of Europeans speak a language other than their own and 46% do not speak a foreign language at all according to the Special Barometer (European Commission, 2012), Kjaer and Adamo (2011, p.3) argue that the ECI is most likely to be used by citizens who speak common European languages with enough fluency to actually engage in a cross-border debate with other Europeans to then formulate and submit their initiative. Therefore, although the EU citizens are formally given the right to submit a legislation proposal in any official EU language by way of this new tool, we can be almost sure that the proposal will be formulated by a citizen who speaks at least one foreign language, thus excluding 46% of monolinguals- unless of course s/he chooses to benefit from the service of a translator/interpreter during the whole process. This is not to say that such a measure as the ECI should be abolished just because it fails to give voice to all citizens, which is not its fault in any case. However, it means that the multilingual nature of the EU constitutes an obstacle to a level-playing field for citizens and that multilingualism policies do not necessarily guarantee citizen engagement in democratic affairs.

We can also talk about transparency as key to democracy, and discuss the issue of the right of EU citizens to have access to documents of the Commission, the Parliament and the Council as per

Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 (European Parliament and the Council, 2001). This right can be said to reinforce their democratic participation, even if that participation may stay only at a superficial level of just "being informed". After all, they have a right to know what policies the EU follows and how the institutions speak on their behalf on both supranational and international level, as required by the notion of democracy.

Concerning the right of citizens to be informed, we can say that the multilingual regime of the EU is well implemented, at least in most cases. The citizens have "the right to petition the European Parliament, to apply to the European Ombudsman, and to address the institutions and advisory bodies of the Union in any of the Treaty languages and to obtain a reply in the same language" (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 2012). The Parliament, on its website section about multilingualism, also acknowledges the right of citizens to read legislation that affects them in the language of their own country (n.d.). Moreover, there are efforts on the part of the institutions, such as the Commission, to communicate better with the citizens, as evidenced by many of its activities pursued by the DG Communication, a matter which is also related to the efforts in general to increase the legitimacy of the Union.

However, things begin to change when we step out of the safe zone of formal, distanced, usually-written communication between citizens and institutions. For example, concerning the institutional implementation of the multilingual regime, some argue that it is only formal in essence and not always, or usually, implemented. The criticisms following that line argue that the EU sticks to multilingualism just for the sake of formality, on a symbolic level, and with the aim of protecting national languages from the dominance of such global languages as English (Liddicoat, 2003, p. 6). Therefore, it does not seem to respect all official languages as being totally equal and give them equal footing in every institutional context, as required by the ambitious claim to engage citizens within the multilingual nature of Europe. Indeed, we can see that it is actually the case for internal/institutional matters since, in the institutions, there are usually only a couple of official languages used, or in some cases only one.

Regarding the implementation of the multilingual regime in institutional cases, let us first consider the linguistic regimes of the institutions. To concern ourselves with this point we can consider the Commission, the Council and the Parliament in turn. In all of these institutions, 24 national languages are all to be used, in line with the Regulation Number 1 (1958) as mentioned in the Introduction. However, when it comes to the use of language at work, i.e. matters not related to such formal procedures as passing a legislation or taking decisions, there is usually a difference in use between "official" and "working" languages, which can be extrapolated to mean the difference between de jure and de facto languages. To say the least, some languages seem to be the primus inter pares within the EU institutions.

6. EU INSTITUTIONS AND MULTILINGUALISM

In this section, we consider how different EU institutions view and apply multilingualism. There are roughly two modes of multilingualism in regards to the institutions that this article will look into. Following Kraus (2008), the first one could be viewed as the internal model, i.e. multilingualism applied within a certain institution, such as Commissioners interacting with each other during sessions. The second one could be called the external mode, i.e. when citizens interact with institutions and vice versa. However, one must not forget that even the internal mode could involve "citizens" interacting with each other rather than "the bureaucrats in Brussels", since this article considers EU bureaucrats also as EU citizens who have the right to speak/use their own language at work. In short, there might be some grey areas one needs to consider when analyzing multilingualism at the EU level from the perspective of citizen engagement in democracy, especially with regards to the European Parliament where deputies are both considered EU officials as well as being citizens who represent their constituencies at the broader European level.

6.1. European Commission: A contradictory view on multilingualism?

To begin with, the Commission is an ardent supporter of multilingual policies and voices its support for any mode of multilingualism among other institutions and organs of the EU. Indeed, it was a Commission division that directly targeted multilingualism with the appointment of Leonard Orban as Commissioner for Multilingualism in 2007 as well as articulating ideas about multilingualism in various documents. However, this article argues that the Commission seems to be more interested in multilingualism as an educational tool for citizens in the globalized world and a tool for self-

improvement rather than a tool for democratic participation, if one analyzes statements, surveys or speeches by the Commission or its members especially since early 2000s.

Let us begin by a statement of Ján Figel (2006), the then Member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism before Orban's appointment in 2007:

"Our commitment to institutional multilingualism is essential for the Union's democratic legitimacy and the transparency of its decisions. Its cost, so frequently discussed in the papers, amounts to a few euros per year per European citizen."

We see that the application of multilingualism at the institutional level is associated with democratic legitimacy in the statement, which came in an early period when multilingualism policies were newly being discussed by the Commission. Apart from the fact that institutional multilingualism is in fact seldom applied to its full extent as we will see below, the statement also seems to differ from others when it comes to assigning an aim to the multilingual regime.

For instance, if we analyze Orban's speech (2009) titled "The benefits and challenges of linguistic diversity in Europe", which he gave within the framework of the launch of the civil society platform, we can see that he understands multilingualism more on personal and societal modes, i.e. diverse peoples of Europe speaking different mother tongues, rather than a tool to increase citizen engagement. In his speech, Orban makes multiple references to "how language skills help us cope with the changing times that we live in", the fact that "multilingualism can play a key role in intercultural dialogue; in creating more cohesive and more sustainable societies" and that "each of the many national, regional, minority and migrant languages spoken in Europe adds a facet to our common cultural background. But they also offer us many other rewards: in social cohesion, prosperity, employability - and better relations with our partners across the world. We want to make our European motto "Unity in Diversity" the daily reality of our continent" (p.2). Throughout his whole speech, Orban makes reference to ideas of democracy or citizen engagement only within the framework of migrants learning the official language of the country they live in, and that is only with the aim of "access(ing) to jobs" and "becoming active citizens" (p.2).

Indeed, Orban's other speeches or declarations point to the same mindset: that multilingualism policy of the EU is understood in a broad sense, that it is understood to include many issues like employability, globalization, intercultural dialogue, communicating with citizens etc., in short, a pragmatic view (see Orban interviewed by Euractiv in 2008).

Following this line, the Commission (2008) argues:

"A successful multilingualism policy can strengthen life chances of citizens: it may increase their employability, facilitate access to services and rights and contribute to solidarity through enhanced intercultural dialogue and social cohesion."

It continues to adopt a similar view in 2013 in a MEMO:

"EU language policies aim to protect linguistic diversity and to promote knowledge of languages for reasons of cultural identity, social integration and because multilingual citizens are better placed to take advantage of education and job opportunities in the Single Market."

We can see that a pragmatic view on multilingualism continues in both of the most recent Special Eurobarometer surveys on Europeans and their languages, that is, the Eurobarometer 243 (2006) and the Eurobarometer 386 (2012). The surveys refer to the usefulness and benefits of learning languages and hardly mention the relationship between multilingualism and democracy or citizen engagement. Indeed, in the Eurobarometer 243, there is only 1 mention of the words "democracy" and "transparency"; and no mention at all in the Eurobarometer 386. Indeed, this Eurobarometer (2012) opens with almost the same sentences as the MEMO above:

"The EU […] is committed to safeguarding this linguistic diversity and promoting knowledge of languages, for reasons of cultural identity and social integration and cohesion, and because multilingual citizens are better placed to take advantage of the economic, educational and professional opportunities created by an integrated Europe" (p. 2).

These are clear examples that the Commission understands multilingualism differently in different cases, and it does not necessarily wish to harness the power of multilingualism as a tool for citizen engagement in every context, as in some cases it argues (although Eurobarometer surveys do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission, we can safely use data given in the surveys since the Commission is elsewhere openly). In other words, it seems to confuse multilingualism as a tool for citizen engagement with being a quality that benefits Europeans for the globalized world. At this point, one even wonders if the Commission is genuine in its inclusion of "democracy" or "transparency" in the surveys mentioned, seeing that there is no substantial interpretation of these terms but only a mention in passing.

Another point to bear in mind would be about whether the institutional multilingualism, the mode that we would expect to be more applied than others, is fully applied or not. Indeed, even though there are 23 official languages of the EU and the Commission seems to advocate for their full equality, we know that for its internal procedure, it usually works with three "working", or "internal procedural", languages- English, French and German- in line with the Council Regulation Number 1 Article 6, which states "The institutions of the Community may stipulate in their rules of procedure which of the languages are to be used in specific cases" (1958). As the Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure states: "The agenda and the necessary working documents shall be circulated to the Members of the Commission (…) in the working languages (…) (2000).Additionally, in its the "Internal Procedural Languages" section of its Antitrust Manual of Procedures, the Commission (2012) argues:

"In practice, it is impractical to work internally in all the official languages. Therefore, internally, the Commission works in only three procedural languages, English, French and German (so-called "working languages"), and material generated inside the Commission for internal use only is drafted in one or more of these and, if necessary, is translated only between those three. This limited working language regime is dictated by the imperatives of speed and efficiency; it is nevertheless without prejudice to practising full multilingualism in the Commission's external communications."

As we can clearly see, the Commission, the ardent supporter of multilingualism, gives up on the ideal of equal footing for all official languages as working languages, and even potentially closes down its doors to EU citizens to become commissioners if they do not speak English, French or German fluently. Even though it highlights that it adopts a full multilingualism policy during its communication with citizens, we can argue that commission members who are also citizens cannot rely on the principles of multilingualism if they happen to work at the Commission.

Apart from that, some argue that there is an increasing use of English in the Commission especially due to market forces (see, Phillipson, 2011, p. 60). The organ has also opted to use English even when communicating with the then candidate states like the Czech Republic during negotiations, showing the increasing importance of English (p. 60). There is also an example given to symbolize the mindset of the Commission regarding the official languages, which is the fact that the signs at the entrance of the Berlaymont Building read in French and Dutch, rather than all of the official languages. To conclude, we can say that the Commission in most of the cases opts for three working languages on daily level, and adopts multilingualism in cases of formal occasions, external communications, and formulating legislative initiatives (Fidrmuc, Ginsburgh, & Weber 2010, p. 262), thereby not harnessing the multilingual policy as a tool for citizen engagement in democracy.

6.2. Council of the European Union

As for the Council, the multilingualism is applied at least for the legal level –paper format as opposed to oral discussions-, since legislation has to be passed only after it appears in all of the official languages. As the Article 14 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council states, "(…) the Council shall deliberate and take decisions only on the basis of documents and drafts drawn up in the languages specified in the rules in force governing languages" and "Any member of the Council may oppose discussion if the texts (…) are not drawn up in such of the languages (…) (2009). Therefore, there is a clear requirement to respect the official languages of the EU in matters of adopting legislation, and rightly so considering the gravity of the matter. The symbolic example for the Commission holds also true for the Council, but this time the latter seems to have stayed away from "preferring" one language over another by instead opting for Latin for the buildings and its name, Consilium. However, the Council is very vague when explaining its working languages. We do not really find information as to whether

Eurocrats working at the Council can use any language of their choice, and the Council only mentions the use of languages on its website, or access to meeting information on its webpage titled "Language policy" (European Council, Council of the European Union, n.d.). In other words, it abstains from speaking about the oral language use of its members.

6.3. European Parliament

Lastly, we can consider the Parliament and its linguistic regime as a body which gathers diverse deputies, all concerned to make their "national" voice heard. To repeat the point we made in the beginning of Section 4, it is useful to consider EU Deputies both as EU officials -since they work in an EU institution- and EU citizens -since they take local issues to the European platform as representatives- for the purposes of this article. In that sense, they can be likened to the commissioners.

The Parliament is where the nationality matters most. Word choice, emphasis, and efficient use of time are all matters that count during the sessions. It is also a forum which is widely- and sometimes more easily- followed by an average EU citizen to get informed about the policies in contrast to the Council or the Commission, often seen as a bureaucratic and formal level. It is also a forum used to prioritize the national views and voice the anti-EU sentiments, especially lately as the trend goes. In addition, the procedure to be elected as a deputy is not to be forgotten. According to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union, every citizen of the EU has the right to stand as a candidate at elections in the Parliament (as cited in Buchmüller-Codoni, 2012). The Parliament is, therefore, the place where nationality matters most, everyday politics "talk", and which is more in touch with citizens than other institutions.

Nevertheless, things are not the same in theory and in practice as we already claimed above. Although the Parliament is the institution in which multilingualism is practiced more than the others with the famous interpreting service going on at full speed, the globalized world has its say there too. For example, the deputies may opt for using English as a strategic choice, in order to get across their message to the widest audience possible. There is also the issue of time, where the deputies are restricted to a couple of minutes to get their message across. In this case they are even more likely to resort to a "common" language understandable by most/all so that their audience concentrates on only them but does not have to worry about the interpretation which comes. Another point is that while multilingualism is respected during plenary sessions of the Parliament, which are made available to the public, the situation is not exactly the same when it comes to the committee meetings (Athanassiou 2006, p. 18). Since in those meetings it is mostly English and/or French which are used, some deputies whose linguistic repertoire does not cover these two languages may be at a disadvantage during discussions (Kraus 2008, p. 127). Since we can consider the deputies as citizens directly participating in the democracy via the forum of a parliament, we can claim that their right to participation is harmed if they are confronted with a situation in which they have to use a particular language in order to stand better chances to be understood or be more effective.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the answer to the question we asked at the outset of this article is that multilingualism does not necessarily provide a guarantee for democratic participation at the EU level, since it is understood more like an educational tool to be more competitive in the globalized world rather than a tool to participate fully in EU-wide democracy. In this article we abstained from offering a solution to the perceived problems of the current multilingual policy of the EU and do not argue whether it is efficient in terms of communication or not. In other words, the aim here was not to offer yet another "solution" such as the degree of multilingualism to be adopted. Rather, we argue that multilingualism policy of the EU is not necessarily a guarantee for citizen engagement in democratic affairs as many EU institutions or its members argue.

Concerning the institutional multilingualism, this article has looked into both internal and external implementation of multilingualism. It has found that neither of them is always implemented, although clearly the external case seems to be respected more. Therefore, some languages continue to dominate over others in the institutions as opposed to the multilingual policy applied today. As for the societal and personal multilingualism, the issue of participating in democracy may prove to be problematic for citizens, such as when they formulate their proposal for the ECI, want to participate in Europe-wide debates or work in the EU institutions due to language obstacles. It seems, therefore, that

accepting all national languages as official does not necessarily help contribute to democratic participation, both because it is not implemented as stipulated formally, and maybe more importantly cannot be implemented as a result of infeasibility, and because the multilingual nature of citizens in the EU create obstacles for their engagement in democracy.

The article analyzed official EU discourse as regards multilingualism and citizen engagement, and more profoundly it considered the European Commission's views as the institution who advocates for multilingualism in most cases. It found that the Commission acts in contradiction to its own views in different statements, and sees multilingualism as more like an educational and/or pragmatic tool to promote language learning for citizens, who would ideally become competitive enough in the world and European markets rather than a tool for democratic participation where they can effectively use any EU official language.

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