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No longer lost in translation

A press release by EFA MEP Tatjana Zdanoka (PCTVL)

New EU legislation to guarantee the right to translation in criminal proceedings in other member states are set to be approved by the European Parliament this week. The new rules were welcomed by Civil Liberties Committee Member **Tatjana Zdanoka**.

But speaking in the debate in parliament, Ms Zdanoka said she hoped that EU member states would accept that the new rules extended beyond the official EU languages to include minority and non-official languages of the European Union.

Parliament's rapporteur (the MEP responsible for steering the legislation through parliament) Baroness Ludford has said that defining which languages would be covered would be left to the member states.

Tatjana Zdanoka commented:

"It's clear that the scope of this directive could and should apply to non-official or minority languages. There is consensus that people involved in criminal proceedings abroad should be able to understand those proceedings. For that to happen they must be allowed translation in their own language - that's to say the language in which they are most comfortable. Otherwise they will be put at a disadvantage.

"Politics shouldn't come into this. Everyone has the right to a fair trial and to be treated fairly by the justice system wherever they come into contact with it. With this in mind, it should be incumbent on EU countries to allow translation in languages like Catalan, Russian, Welsh or Basque for those who find themselves caught up in the legal system whilst abroad."

Speaking in the debate in parliament, Ms Zdanoka said:

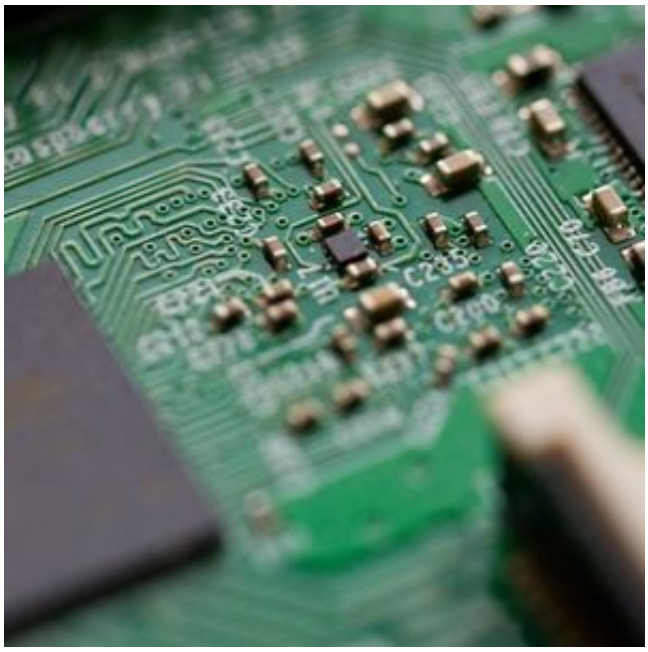
"On behalf of the European Free Alliance I stress that the directive applies also to non-official languages of the European Union. It means that the translation and interpretation referred to in the document should be guaranteed in regional and minority languages. For example, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages so justifies, the possibility to use such languages must be afforded.

"It's a pity that the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages is not yet the part of the acquis. But I'm sure that sometimes it will be, and the use of such languages in criminal proceedings will be provided for in a wider scope also by the EU law."

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