

Patterson

through a real policy for language teaching in the European Community!

Mr Ephremidis (COM). — (GR) Mr President, In such a wide-ranging debate as this on culture and cultural heritage I would draw your attention to our resolution 1261, which concerns the return of the Elgin Marbles to the Acropolis. I would remind the House that at the meeting of Community ministers of culture in Naples last September the Greek delegation put forward this demand and was broadly supported by most of the other delegations.

Firstly, I should like to stress that the return of the Elgin Marbles to the Parthenon is not simply the satisfaction of a legal claim to the national heritage of the Greek people. In the museums of many countries there are foreign works of art which have nevertheless been acquired by legal means. But the Elgin Marbles were removed from the Parthenon illegally and in a way which was technically unacceptable. Secondly, the Elgin Marbles have no separate artistic identity like that of a statue such as the Venus di Milo, but constitute an integral part of the Parthenon. They are works of sculpture to complement the architectural creation. I would even say that they constitute the particular and inseparable aesthetic quality of the Parthenon as a creation.

Ladies and gentlemen, imagine Notre Dame Cathedral without the famous sculptures on its facade and without its unique stained-glass windows. Imagine the Sistine Chapel without Michelangelo's splendid frescoes.

Ladies and gentlemen, help to bring about the restoration to the Parthenon of its statues. The Parthenon can be neither moved to nor accommodated in the British Museum, but the Elgin Marbles can be returned to the Acropolis. I address myself particularly, Mr President, to the British Members of this House and to the British Government. I sincerely believe that they can support the Greek claim. In doing so they would be performing an honourable act which would erase from the historical record the barbaric act committed by Lord Elgin.

Mr Hume (S). — Mr President, the importance of the issue of minority and lesser-spoken languages in the European Community has been well demonstrated by the reaction in this Parliament itself, and by the amount of support from the different groups and the different nationalities in this directly-elected Parliament for the protection and the development of minority cultures and languages in the European Community. It is also, of course, an important issue because, in fact, it affects directly some 30 million people in the European Community whose mother tongue is not the dominant tongue in the country in which they live.

It is also important because of the rich diversity of cultures which exist in the European Community and the need to protect and develop such diversity. Since the

original resolutions were put in this Parliament, some modest progress has been made. We have had a budget heading opened by the Commission, which is very welcome, but it is only a small beginning. Outside of this Parliament, in reaction to the actions taken by the Parliament, there has also been an important development in that the representatives of the different lesser-spoken languages in the European Community have come together to form a European Bureau for Lesser-spoken Languages. This is a development which those of us who have been promoting this issue in this Parliament ought to welcome, and indeed the Commission itself should welcome and take note of the setting up, on a voluntary basis of a European Bureau for Lesser-spoken Languages. Indeed it is a body which the Commission might well use as a sounding board for the development of its policies and projects on lesser-spoken languages. It should consult them and also consider ways in which it can help that body, both financially and otherwise, to be more effective in its coordinating role.

I think also it is in the interests of the Commission and the Community in general to recognize that it is from the areas where there are strong and powerful minorities who feel threatened that at times has come the most energetic opposition to the whole idea of a European Community, largely because they feel that the creation of this Community threatens further their identity and their very existence — and this particularly at a time when they are suffering an immense onslaught from the mass consumer culture — if I may use the word 'culture' in that sense. If this Community can demonstrate, as is its duty, that the rich diversity which exists in the European Community, particularly among those peoples who speak what we describe as the lesser-spoken languages, is going to be not only protected but helped to flourish within the European Community, then we can also harness the enormous energies that those minority groups generate in support of the European ideal, rather than the opposition which, because of justifiable fears, has come from those quarters in the past.

I would ask the Commission in particular, as I say, to show positive encouragement to the voluntary setting up of the European Bureau for Lesser-spoken Languages, because in effect goodwill in these matters can often achieve a great deal more than finance.

Mr Turner (ED). — Mr President, may I first thank you very much for granting me what *Gauleiter* Simmonds of my own group would not.

I wish to speak for a moment on the Remilly oral question on 'humanizing' Europe. Paragraph 4 refers to 'the construction of accommodation centres flying the European flag'. There is a rapporteur who has made a report to the European Parliament that we should have the Council of Europe flag, which is blue with a circle of gold stars, and that is fine. I regret that we have not gone for a stronger flag than that. The rapporteur agrees, and I hope that all of you will agree, that one can put in the middle of this circle of stars our own particular motifs. One might put in the