

Voice of the People

Manuscript
EU and the minorities
With answers from politicians in Brussels
TVSYD, Denmark

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Duration: 6'51

Translation
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0'01

SIGN:

Around 115 minorities are situated within the European Union

0'06

Question, Mette Balsby, Kolding:

“Are you going to do the same as in France? Here they have on some schools forbidden all kind of religious things in order not to influence the pupils. They are not allowed to put up a crucifix and the teachers are not allowed to wear a scarf, if they are Muslims. Are you going to do like that because of the religious conflicts in Europe, or are you going to keep the culture in each country but say, that small minorities are not allowed to be there?”

0'32

Answer, Michel Ebner, Member of the Parliament, Italy:

In France we have had – since the revolution – a separation between church and state, and that has been a way to do things, which the Frenchmen do not wish to change. During our discussions about the new treatment, where quite a lot of the states wanted to include religion to the formulation; this was not possible cause of France. We will have those differences also in future, but during time you will see some adjustments. In some discussions one or another state will not harmonize and that is not all bad

1'29

Answer, Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne, Member of the Parliament, UK:

In the European Union well over ¾ of the people are Christians and I believe 2.9% are Muslims and around 1.9% is Judaists. I believe it's our duty therefore, if we belong to the majority and I do I am a Christian to make ever-possible effort to make the minority comfortable and happy. We have freedom to worship, but we must extend that further than just freedom to worship. We cannot have a les affaire policy, but a proactive policy that supports the differences in ways of approaching God. I don't exclude them, who don't have a faith at all. 12% of our population are humanists or atheists or agnostics

2'23

SIGN:

The language treaty and the frame convention are agreements between the member states, which are supposed to secure the existence of the minorities

2'32

Question, Sajid Latif, Kolding:

“Countries within the European Union are going to use workforces from other countries, so why not start now?”

2'40

Answer, Michel Ebner, Member of the Parliament, Italy:

If the guest workers from the new countries immediately got the possibility to go to the old member states to work, would those countries lose their potential, intellectual workforce. That would be a very bad thing, as they then would not have the possibility – after 40 years of communism – to get a new beginning with their own inhabitants. On the other side would the old member states be swapped with workforces and by that create social problems. This is why a transitional period for up to 7 years will make the situation better

3'48

SIGN:

Around 8 millions gypsies are living in Europe. This makes them to the biggest minority within the European Union

3'55

Question, Mogens Pedersen, Kolding:

“In outlying districts in Denmark they are getting financial support to make it more profitable for firms to place their businesses there. I don't know whether this is the fact for the European Union as well? If not I think this would be a good idea in order to spread out the activities all over Europe and not just around the capitals?”

4'25

Answer, Michel Ebner, Member of the Parliament, Italy:

The European Union wants to do as follows: We are going to help areas, which have a smaller income than 75% of the average; this is a very good social help in my opinion. On the other hand I also think, it's a good thing that the European Union allows the National states to make their own regulations for some areas in their own country.

5'22

SIGN:

Within the European Union live around 450 millions citizens. Around 1/6 of those live in Germany. Still Germany has from the 1st November 2004 only one commissioner

5'35

Question, Tove Traberger-Andersen, Århus:

“I think, it's important, that we as Danes will keep our status as a minority within the Union compared to bigger countries. How will you assure, that the minorities will be heard?”

5'54

Answer, Michel Ebner, Member of the Parliament, Italy:

The good thing about the Union is that neither the Germans, the Frenchmen, the Brits nor the Italians are a majority. All populations are minorities. Of course you have more Italians than Danes or more Germans than Irishmen, but the Union can only function, if you listen to the smaller states. I think the treatment – with the new ways of deciding things, which was difficult to get to - will guaranty the smaller states

6'28

Answer, Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne, Member of the Parliament, UK:

The system of voting, the system of election, the system of creating jobs for different countries and for different minorities within the European Union, that gives a voice to smaller people, and that is what is so important. So we have to work very hard indeed to improve the system