WHEN IN ROME....

Posted on October 1, 2009 by Eddie

Category: Observations

I must admit to being more than a little embarrassed by this report about a BBC journalist from the Independent:

> *Dr Guido Westerwelle, head of the Free Democrats party in Germany, has just found himself in the effective position of kingmaker after the German elections, second in power only to Angela Merkel. He was in confident mood at his first press conference, and when the BBC reporter called out a question in English, he had no doubt on what to do. "If you would be so kind as to ask in German, since this is a press conference in Germany," he said in German. "Excuse me, I understand that you are from England, but just as you speak English in England, so one speaks German in Germany."*

There are very few British politicians who could field questions in other languages and the idea of a French of German journalist calling out a question in their own language at press conference in Westminster is laughable. There is some suggesting that as Dr Westerwelle is hoping to be foreign minister he should have answered the question in English. I agree that this would be fair enough in the UK or US (and if he had agreed to do so).Â But surely an organisation the size of the BBC has journalists who can ask questions in German and then translate the answers for us.