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Committee on Culture and Education

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Temporary Committee on Policy Challenges and Budgetary Means of
the enlarged Union 2007-2013

on Policy challenges and budgetary means of the enlarged Union 2007-2013
(2004/2209(INI))

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Temporary Committee on Policy Challenges and Budgetary Means of the enlarged Union 2007-2013, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

Heading 1(a): Competitiveness for growth and employment

Sub-heading: Education and training

1. Recalls the observations of the Kok report on the Lisbon process that 'lifelong learning is not a luxury - it is a necessity' and that 'Mobility throughout the Union should ... be strengthened to allow workers to benefit from new opportunities.'; underlines the increasingly important role of education and training in sustaining a competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in Europe; notes that, because of rapid technological development and long-term demographic trends, education and training systems are becoming increasingly integrated in a lifelong learning context; is persuaded that action at Community level in these fields has been effective and has offered demonstrable added value by providing an instrument for spreading innovation and good practice that would otherwise have remained locked within national borders; regards an extension of the programme as one of its political priorities in the current legislature; welcomes, therefore, the Commission proposal for an integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning (COM(2004)0474) since this offers the prospect of greater coherence and synergy, permitting a larger and more flexible range of actions to be supported more efficiently; stresses the importance for transparency and access to the sub-programmes of retaining well-established and well-known programme names (Socrates, Leonardo, Comenius);
2. Recalls the success of the Erasmus programme; believes that an increase in the average Erasmus student mobility grant (which has remained at EUR 150 since 1993 and has therefore fallen in value by one-quarter in real terms) is necessary if the aim of supporting two million more Erasmus students by 2011 is to be attained; considers that support for teacher mobility under the Comenius programme - an important means of promoting exchanges of good practice - needs to be reinforced; urges that the Comenius programme should aim to involve, over the lifetime of the programme, one pupil in ten (rather than the one in twenty proposed by the Commission) in joint educational activities; considers that these improvements to the programme require an increase of approximately one-quarter in the reference amount proposed by the Commission;

Heading 3: Citizenship, freedom, security and justice

Sub-heading: Culture

3. Recalls President Barroso's assertion at the Berlin 'Europe and Culture' conference in November 2004 that 'If we really want to go further than what the Member States can do ... if we want truly multilateral cooperation, the EU must have adequate resources for this mission'; welcomes the rationalisation of Community instruments in the field of culture envisaged in the Commission's proposal (COM (2004)0469) for a 'Culture 2007' programme; notes that the Commission proposal foresees extending the scope of the programme to actions hitherto supported from other parts of the Community budget and that, when account is taken of this, the reference amount proposed would provide for funding only 14% higher than that available under the current Culture 2000 programme; notes that if one-thousandth of the current annual Commission budget were to be dedicated to culture this would provide a budget of approximately EUR 700 million (EUR 100 million annually) over the lifetime of a successor programme; recalls that, the 'Sharing Cultures' conference which took place in Rotterdam in July 2004 in association with the informal Council of ministers of culture noted that an adequate budget for the Union's declared aspirations in the field of culture would amount to EUR 315 millions annually, rather than the EUR 408 million for seven years proposed by the Commission;
4. Notes the economic and cultural importance of the audiovisual sector, in particular the contribution that it will make to the creation of a knowledge-based economy with the digitalisation of development, production, distribution and collection of audiovisual works, and to the maintenance of cultural diversity and pluralism in Europe; recalls the effective and efficient contribution that the current MEDIA programme is making to supplement national and regional support for the development of the sector; notes that the Commission's proposal for a successor programme (COM (2004)0470) envisages its extension to cover, among other things, a continuation of the successful i2i initiative; stresses the importance of positive discrimination in favour of national industries with weaker production capacities and television distribution capacities; regards the proposed reference amount (EUR 1 055 million) as the minimum necessary if the goals of the programme are to be attained;
5. Notes the success of the current Community programme in the field of youth; believes that this programme has clearly demonstrated the added European value of Community action in organising multilateral youth exchanges, a European voluntary service, the networking of projects and European training for youth workers; welcomes the Commission proposal (COM (2004)0471) for a successor programme which aims at strengthening young people's active citizenship, fostering mutual understanding between peoples and promoting European cooperation in youth policy; welcomes the proposed rationalisation of Community instruments in this field; believes that a modest increase in the reference amount proposed is necessary if the goals of the programme are to be achieved;

Sub-heading: Press and communication

6. Recalls that successive surveys have revealed that a high proportion of European citizens know little about the European Union, its institutions, and policies; underlines the importance of an adequately-funded information and communication strategy, based on pluralism and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, in informing citizens about all aspects of the European Union and its policies;

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BACKGROUND NOTE

1. The Financial Perspective (a needlessly literal translation from the French *Perspectives financières*) is essentially a multi-annual framework budget for all Community expenditure agreed by the Parliament and the Council.

2. The Commission budget (which accounts for about 98% of all Community expenditure) is divided into headings (e.g. agriculture; structural funds; internal policies; administration) and sub-headings.

e.g. Under the current framework budget, which covers the years 2000-2006, most of the policies and programmes for which this Committee has special responsibility are under three sub-headings in Heading 3 Internal Policies: education, training, youth; culture and audiovisual media; information and communication.

The framework budget sets annual ceilings for each of the headings and sub-headings: it is the framework within which the annual budgetary procedure takes place.

3. Clearly, a multi-annual framework budget makes it easier to plan expenditure which will stretch over several years. But each of the two arms of the budgetary authority - the Council and the Parliament - has its own reasons for wanting to negotiate an agreement. Under the Treaty, the Council has the final say on 'compulsory' expenditure (essentially, agriculture); the Parliament has the final say on 'non-compulsory' expenditure (everything else).

- The Council wants to limit non-compulsory expenditure and increase its say in the overall allocation of resources between policy areas.
- The Parliament wants to make sure that the annual budgets are adequate to finance policies it considers important, and to exercise some control over agricultural expenditure.

4. By its decision of 15 September 2004, the Parliament set-up a 'Temporary Committee on Policy Challenges and Budgetary Means of the enlarged Union 2007-2013'. The job of the Temporary Committee (FINP) is to:

- define the Parliament's political priorities for the future Financial Perspective
- propose a structure for the Financial Perspective in line with these priorities
- estimate the necessary expenditure
- 'to propose an indicative allocation of resources between and within the different headings of the financial perspective in line with the priorities and proposed structure'.

In brief, its job is to fix the Parliament's negotiating position on the next Financial Perspective: it will report to the plenary in May 2005.

5. Each of the standing committees has been invited to draw-up an opinion for the Temporary Committee by early February 2005. The draftsmen and chairs of the permanent committees are invited to attend the Temporary Committee whenever it discusses an area of

the budget of direct relevance to them: the rapporteur for the Temporary Committee (Mr. Böge) must be invited to the permanent committees whenever they discuss their draft opinion.

6. Our committee has recently begun work on the Commission's proposals for the next generation of education, culture, youth and media programmes:

- Lifelong Learning (with a proposed budget of more than EUR 13 800 million) - the successor to Socrates - rapporteur: Mrs. Pack
- Culture (EUR 408 million) - Mr. Graca Moura
- Youth (EUR 915 million) - Mrs. Gröner
- Media (EUR 1 055 million) - Mrs. Hieronymi

7. In order that work on current legislative proposals should not compromise the position that the Parliament will take on the Financial Perspective, the President of Parliament (who is the chair of the temporary committee) has written to the chairmen of the permanent committees suggesting that the legislative process can continue, but there should be no discussion in plenary of the budgets of future multi-annual programmes until after the Temporary Committee has reported.

8. The Temporary Committee will report to plenary on 11 May 2005 and the Committee can then proceed to adopt reports on the four proposals for codecided programmes listed in paragraph 6 above: the Parliament's first readings on these proposals might take place in September 2005. The Council will then have to try to reach common positions. It would be most unfortunate if, because of the absence of an agreement within the Council on the next Financial Perspective, there were a long delay before these common positions were agreed: this would almost inevitably slow the start of the new generation of programmes, disappointing all of those - young people, students, higher education institutions, cultural organisations, media operators - at whom the programmes are aimed.
