

## Newsletter

### Committee meeting 23-24 January 2017

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#### Constituent meeting

At the constituent meeting the Committee elected its new Chair and four Vice-Chairs by acclamation:

- Chair - Ms Petra KAMMEREVERT (S&D, Germany)
- 1st Vice-Chair - Ms Andrea BOCSKOR (EPP, Hungary)
- 2nd Vice-Chair - Mr Mircea DIACONU (ALDE, Romania)
- 3rd Vice-Chair - Ms Helga TRÜPEL (Greens/EFA, Germany)
- 4th Vice-Chair - Mr Stefano MAULLU (EPP, Italy)

Members were unanimous in thanking the outgoing Chair, Ms Silvia Costa, for her dedication to the Committee.



**Dear Reader,**

I would like to thank the Members of the Culture and Education Committee for placing their trust in me and electing me as Chair to serve for the second half of this parliament. It is an honour. I will do my utmost to pick up where my predecessor, Silvia Costa, left off. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Silvia for her work as Chair. Her dedication to the interests of the CULT Committee was there for all to see and the working atmosphere was always positive – political differences notwithstanding.

I intend to keep up Silvia's work in putting culture and education at the heart of EU policy-making. Their importance has perhaps never been greater as Europe and our Union faces challenging times. It is this ethos that will guide the Committee's work on the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, which, as we heard during the Committee meeting, is one of the most immediate challenges on our plate. But other areas remain vital – from ongoing work on the Audiovisual Media Services Directive to new work on the extensive copyright package.

As your new Chair, I very much look forward to working with and for you all.

With kind regards,

**Petra Kammerevert**  
Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education

## Presentation of the priorities of the Maltese Presidency

### Exchange of views



The two Maltese ministers with CULT-relevant portfolios, Mr Evarist BARTOLO, Minister for Education and Employment, and Mr Owen BONICI, Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government, began by making detailed presentations of the ambitious Maltese Presidency priorities for the upcoming six months. Particular emphasis was placed on education, culture, audio-visual services and youth.

Minister BARTOLO stated that the Maltese Presidency comes at a particularly sensitive moment, when populism and rising uncertainty about the future of the EU are spreading across Europe. In his view, coordinated and meaningful policies in the fields of education and culture can help in crafting a solution and delivering real results for EU citizens. For this reason, a key priority for the Maltese Presidency is to work on better education and skills for all, in line with the needs of the changing and diverse society of today. A particular focus will be given to young people – more vulnerable and exposed to the risk of unemployment and radicalisation. The aim of the Presidency is to prepare young people to be actively involved citizens.

Mr Owen BONICI continued by saying that a stronger focus would be given to AVMS Directive, where the Presidency will work on compromises to be presented soon. He also underlined that support would be given to move forward on the European Year of Cultural Heritage negotiations, by looking for practical solutions. The Minister also stressed the crucial role that cultural diplomacy can play in the development of a genuine intercultural dialogue – inside, as well as outside, the EU borders.

The exchange with CULT Members started with questions from Coordinators, followed by a series of questions from Members. CULT Members underlined the importance of stepping up progress on the AVMS Directive and moving towards the trilogue stage, as well as the need to obtain stronger financial support from the Commission for the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. Additionally, CULT Members underlined the centrality of the New Skills Agenda, and in particular the skills mismatch. Other topics brought up in the discussion were the importance of EU cultural diplomacy, the 30th anniversary of Erasmus, the recently announced specific actions on youth and, of course, the EU Solidarity Corps and its financing through the Erasmus+ budget. And here again, the Chair and Coordinators strongly opposed the Commission's intention to use the scarce resources of Erasmus+ to fund the new policy initiative.



## Implementation report on Creative Europe

Adoption of draft report (Silvia COSTA, S&D)

The report, which contained 11 compromise amendments, received strong backing from the Committee. In its assessment of the implementation of the Creative Europe programme to date, the Committee recommends that the programme be continued with the current structure, but further fine-tuned. The specific characteristics of the two sub-programmes should be better defined and the cross-sectoral strand strengthened.

The report urges Member States to increase the Creative Europe budget to bring it into line with the ambitions of each subprogramme and with citizens' expectations. It stresses notably that the values of cultural production cannot be gauged merely in terms of economic figures. The report urges the

Commission to further simplify the financial aspects by extending lump sum payments and encouraging greater use of flat-rate reimbursements. It also insists that criteria are designed in such a way as not to hamper small projects' access to funding and that final payment are made as speedily as possible.

On MEDIA, the report recognises that support for European audiovisual production is needed particularly during the project development phase, which means also extending the training to cover more actions, and welcomes Commission efforts to modify the automatic points system in order to create a genuine level playing field.

The CULT Committee underlines the role of the stable and highly representative European cultural networks as coordinators of actions and promoters of culture and creativity and requests that they be supported with operational grants based on transparent selection criteria established up-front.

While recognising efforts made so far, the report calls on the Commission and the Agency to further improve communication and the exchange of information with Creative Europe Desks, notably on progress in terms of decision-making on financial instruments and cross-sectoral initiatives. The key point in this respect is the need to take into account the expertise of desks and to make the tools and documentation produced by the desks available online as good practice examples and therefore as helpful advisory tools for national applicants.

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## Implementation report on Europe for Citizens

Adoption of draft report (María Teresa GIMÉNEZ BARBAT, ALDE)

After a first exchange of views on 5 September and a lively debate during the presentation of the draft report on 8 November, the implementation report on the Europe for Citizens programme was adopted in CULT on 24 January by a very large majority (24 votes in favour/5 against/0 abstentions).

This reflects the desire to give political - and financial - support to this important programme, which aims to bring citizens closer to the European Union and is therefore particularly relevant in the current context.

One of the key conclusions of this report – which result from the excellent work done by the Rapporteur, Ms Giménez Barbat – is that the main obstacle to the successful implementation of the programme is its inadequate budget. As is underscored in the report, even if the programme seems to be running well, with

high-quality projects and sound and efficient project implementation, the overall MFF funding available to the only programme entirely dedicated to European citizenship (EUR 185.47 million) is too small to achieve the programme's ambitious goals. There is therefore a call on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to consider a total financial envelope of approximately EUR 500 million for the Europe for Citizens programme under the next MFF.

In the report, the Commission is also called on to build synergies with other EU programmes so as to improve impact, and gather all useful information regarding the EfC Programme, along with all the programmes that come under the umbrella of European citizenship in a single, user-friendly communication portal.

Participating countries which have not yet done so are urged to designate a national contact point (NCP), as these NCPs have an important role to play in raising awareness and providing guidance to potential applicants.

Last but not least, the report states unambiguously that the next generation of the Europe for Citizens programme should be adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure, putting Parliament on an equal footing with the Council. This is a clear message to the European Commission.

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## Unjustified geo-blocking

Adoption of draft opinion (Therese COMODINI CACHIA, EPP)

The opinion offers broad support for the Commission approach to preventing direct and indirect discrimination by traders based on a customer's nationality, place of residence or place of establishment (e.g. through unjustified forms of geo-blocking whereby traders either block access to a specific online interface or else redirect customers to a different online interface without prior consent). Key for the CULT Committee is the need to consider properly the specific nature of cultural goods and services in the proposed review of the Regulation, which is designed to assess whether the scope should be extended to electronically supplied copyright-protected services, such as e-books or music streaming. Beyond that, the opinion attempts to offer some legal clarity on what are "individually negotiated terms and conditions", what an "accessible" website should be understood to mean and on the fact that copyright law remains untouched by the new Regulation.

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## Digitising European industry

Adoption of draft opinion (Angel DZHAMBAZKI, ECR)

The opinion, which received unanimous backing by the Committee, underlines the importance of digital skills, calls for media and digital literacy to be incorporated into education curricula, and supports the updating of teaching methods and the provision of increased innovative digital and distance learning opportunities

It also backs enhanced protection and promotion of cultural heritage, in particular through the use of 3D technologies. Finally, the opinion underscores the potential of digitisation for the cultural and creative sector and calls for targeted support for the sector to go digital.

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## Budget Discharge 2015

Adoption of draft opinion (Silvia COSTA, S&D)

The opinion provides the CULT Committee input into the annual discharge procedure in the Budgetary Control Committee. It focuses on the three CULT programmes, highlighting the ongoing resource challenges they face and highlighting specific problem areas (e.g. "youth" under Erasmus+). The opinion also emphasises the need for the EACEA Executive Agency to simplify procedures and improve communication with applicants and beneficiaries and calls on the European Schools to act on recommendations from the Court of Auditors.

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## European Semester: Employment and Social Aspects

Adoption of draft opinion (Julie WARD, S&D)

As part of the effort to increase the relevance of education and culture in the European Semester, the opinion on the Annual Growth Survey 2017 analyses the negative impacts and trends of macro-economic policies, and the ensuing austerity approach, on education, training, culture and youth policies.

It recommends increased investment in culture and education policies, as well as training and research, with a particular focus on youth, upgraded human capacity, support for an inclusive labour market and tackling social inequalities.

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## Academic further and distance education as part of the European lifelong learning strategy

Public hearing and exchange of views



The objective of this public hearing was to collect ideas on a particularly promising instrument to promote lifelong learning – academic further and distance education – and to take the opportunity to hold an exchange of views on the INI report on the same subject.

In order to gather inspiration and to collect ideas for the ongoing report, CULT invited four experts in the field of lifelong learning, whose presentations dealt with the diverse features related to the topic, as follows:

- *"How digitalisation shapes the future"* by Mr Helmut HOYER, former Rector of FernUniversität in Hagen
- *"Lifelong learning: the role of part-time education in widening access and enhancing employability"* by Mr Kevin HETHERINGTON from The Open University (UK)
- *"Academic continuing education as a strategic response to demographic and strategic changes"*, by Ms Margot KLINKNER, Centre for Internet-Based Distance Learning Courses at Universities of Applied Sciences
- *"The inhibiting effect of legislative and regulatory frameworks on online and distance education"*, by Mr George UBACHS, from the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU)

For the EU labour force to remain competitive in an ageing society, to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth, and to give both low- and high-skilled workers the best chance of success, economies need to offer training and career-focused education throughout people's working lives.

The traditional approach of "get as much formal education as you can early in life, and reap corresponding rewards for the rest of your career" does not seem to be working as planned. A college degree at the start of a working career does not answer the need for the continuous acquisition of new skills, especially as careers tend to be longer.

In this context, it does not seem like an over-statement to argue that lifelong learning is increasingly becoming an imperative both in social and economic terms.

Lifelong learning is about meeting the diverse and context-specific learning needs of all age groups, including the acquisition of basic literacy and technical skills through both formal education and effective alternative pathways to learning. Adult learning and education, vocational education and training, and literacy all represent significant components of the lifelong learning process.

During the debate, Members also recalled that fully exploiting the potential of lifelong learning requires not only a new way of learning, but implies a new way of teaching as well – both of which necessitate corresponding quality assurance mechanisms. Another aspect mentioned was the importance of distance learning as a means of guaranteeing that women keep their skills up-to-date whenever they have to leave the labour market for a certain period of time.

In response, the Commission welcomed the hearing and the report and ensured the Committee that many of the issues raised will be taken into consideration in the ongoing work on the renewed education modernisation agenda. This will include measures to support higher education institutions in digitalisation, teaching and lifelong learning.

[Presentations](#)

- [Procedure page](#)
- Amendments deadline: 30 March (tbc)

- Presentation of draft report: 22-23 March 2017
- Committee vote: 30 May 2017

## European Capitals of Culture

Consideration of draft report (Santiago FISAS AYXELÀ, EPP)

The aim of the draft report is to modify Decision 445\2014 by giving EFTA\EEA countries (Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein) access to the European Capitals of Culture scheme (ECoC) and to update the calendar for the order of Capitals accordingly. During the exchange of views, Members underlined the role that ECoC can play in cultural diplomacy and in driving urban regeneration.

The question of whether the UK will participate in the programme post-Brexit was raised by some Members. They expressed support for continued UK participation under new conditions, still to be defined.

## European Gigabit Society and 5G

Consideration of draft opinion (Silvia COSTA, S&D)

In her draft opinion, the Rapporteur welcomed the plan to provide ultra-fast internet in schools and libraries across the Union, underlining the benefits of faster and better connectivity in developing high-quality educational services online, enhancing teaching methods and improving digital skills and media literacy. She also stressed the need to reduce the digital divide among citizens and highlighted the importance of 5G and ultra-fast internet connectivity in offering new ways of disseminating cultural and creative content and products as well as in creating new opportunities for cultural and creative industries,

There was a brief exchange of views with Members, who welcomed the Rapporteur's approach.

- [Procedure page](#)
- Amendments deadline: 30 January at 12.00
- Committee vote: 28 February 2017
- Vote in plenary: tbc

- [Procedure page](#)
- Amendments deadline: 30 January at 16.00
- Committee vote: 22 March 2017
- Vote in plenary: tbc

## Marrakesh Treaty

Consideration of draft opinions (Helga TRÜPEL, Greens/EFA, and Angel DZHAMBAZKI, ECR)

There was a large consensus among Members on the benefits of the Marrakesh Treaty when they discussed the two closely interconnected legislative proposals, which would implement the Treaty in EU law (the proposal for a Directive on "Permitted uses of works and other subject-matter protected by copyright and related rights for the benefit of person who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled" (Rapporteur: Helga TRÜPEL) and the proposal for a Regulation on "Cross-border exchange between the Union and third countries of accessible format copies of certain works and other subject-matter protected by copyright and related rights for the benefit of person who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled" (Rapporteur: Angel DZHAMBAZKI).

The Marrakesh Treaty was adopted in 2013 at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and aims to facilitate the availability and cross-border exchange of books and other print material in accessible formats around the world. It was signed by the Union in April 2014. The Rapporteurs, supported by the Shadows, underlined the need to speed up the process so that the provisions of the Marrakesh Treaty can enter into force without further delay for the benefit of blind, visually impaired and otherwise print-disabled persons. The need to align the Directive and the Regulation – in particular with regard to the definitions – was also repeatedly stressed.

The vote is scheduled to take place at the end of February.

- [Procedure page 2016/0278 \(COD\)](#)
- [Procedure page 2016/0279 \(COD\)](#)
- Amendments deadline: 26 January at 14.00

- Committee vote: tbc
- Vote in JURI: tbc
- Vote in plenary: tbc

## Further reading

In this non exhaustive list you can find recent articles/publications which might be of interest to you:

- [World Economic Forum: Realizing Human Potential in the Fourth Industrial Revolution - An Agenda for Leaders to Shape the Future of Education, Gender and Work](#)
- [World Economic Forum: How can we help kids protect themselves online?](#)
- [Online Learning Insights: Pew Research Reveals Three Barriers to Lifelong Learning](#)
- [Analysing the regional geography of poverty, austerity and inequality in Europe: a human cartographic perspective](#)

**The next committee meeting:**  
**27 February 2017 at 15.00-18.30 and**  
**28 February 2017 at 9.00-12.30**

## Useful links

- [CULT Committee website](#)
- [Meeting documents](#)
- [Calendar of meetings](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Policy Department Publications in the EP](#)
- [European Parliament - Think Thank](#)
- [DG EAC Newsletter](#)
- [The Maltese Presidency of the Council](#)

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