

## Newsletter

### Committee meeting 25 April 2017

#### AVMS Directive

Adoption of draft report (Sabine VERHEYEN, EPP - Petra KAMMEREVERT, S&D)

The CULT Committee adopted its report on the review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) review. More than 1300 amendments had been tabled to the proposal published by the Commission in May last year. The report as adopted is due to be announced in Plenary on 15 May. The Council plans to adopt its general approach on 23 May, so negotiations at inter-institutional level could start under the Maltese Presidency with a view to a first reading agreement.

The report introduces a number of changes to the Commission proposal and would include specifically:

- **A level playing field** for traditional and online audiovisual media services, including video-sharing platforms, with regard to their obligations on incitement to violence, hatred and protection of minors and with respect to commercial communications, in particular sponsorship and product placement.
- **New quantitative rules on advertising:** The daily proportion of television advertising spots and teleshopping spots cannot exceed 20% and Member States may also define a primetime window of up to four hours, during the proportion of advertising cannot exceed 20%.
- **New rules on commercial communications,** which must be readily recognisable and distinguishable from editorial content. Surreptitious or subliminal advertising, as well as advertising on cigarettes, tobacco products, electronic, medicinal products and medical treatment is prohibited. This is to be backed up by codes of conduct on the advertising of unhealthy food and drink to children.
- **Protection of minors:** Programmes which may impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, may only be shown provided that that minors will not normally hear or see them. The most harmful content, such as gratuitous violence and pornography, will be subject to the strictest measures.
- **Accessibility.** Audiovisual media services are to be made progressively more accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Promotion of European audiovisual works:** Providers of on-demand audiovisual media services must have at least 30% European works in their catalogue and ensure that these works are prominently displayed.

[Procedure file](#)



## VAT rate on books, newspapers and periodicals

Adoption of draft opinion (Bogdan ZDROJEWSKI, EPP)

The Committee unanimously adopted the opinion, which supports the Commission proposal to amend Directive 2006/112/EC (the VAT Directive) and thereby end the anomaly whereby books, newspapers and periodicals are eligible for favourable VAT rates only if they are in physical format. Henceforth, under the proposed Directive, e-publications would also qualify for the same reduced VAT rates as physical publications. The CULT opinion amends the recitals to the draft Council Directive, recalling the Parliament's position that all books, newspapers and magazines, regardless of format, should be treated in the same way for VAT purposes. It also stresses that the change to VAT rules should help promote culture in the digital environment, enhance digital learning and stimulate investment in content. The opinion also calls for any additional revenue stemming from the VAT reform to be reinvested in the sector, arguing that benefits should reach consumers and publishers. Finally, the opinion clarifies that adapted and audio e-publications would qualify for reduced VAT rates, thus ensuring that people with visual impairments can benefit from the change to VAT rule.

[Procedure file](#)

## Academic further and distance education

Consideration of draft report (Milan ZVER, EPP)



Members of CULT discussed the importance of academic further and distance learning as tools to help education systems respond to the profound and complex changes that our societies and economies are currently undergoing. Members recognised the value of such forms of learning in that they provide flexible formats and new learning opportunities for all irrespective of country, region, class, age or gender.

During the discussion, Members highlighted the need for national strategies to foster digital skills and help schools adapt to technological developments alongside academic further and distance education, with some advocating the creation of a user-friendly EU digital platform as a one-stop-shop to facilitate the exchange of best practice. While there was some divergence on the most effective means of regulating the lifelong learning framework, there was a consensus on the need to foster cooperation and the exchange of good practice between education systems. Members also raised concerns over the need to strike a balance between distance learning to help individuals adapt to the changing labour market and learning for personal enrichment.

- [Procedure file](#)
- Amendments deadline: 4 May 2017 at 14.00
- Committee vote: 21-22 June 2017

## Budget 2018

Consideration of draft opinion (Morten LØKKEGAARD, ALDE) and Exchange of views with Siegfried MUREȘAN, General Rapporteur on Budget 2018

There was broad consensus among CULT Members on the key priorities going into the 2018 budget procedure, as set out by the Rapporteur in his draft opinion. The opinion marks the first milestone in the annual budgetary procedure and gives the Committee a chance to convey its central messages ahead of the draft budget. It focuses on the lower than anticipated MFF funding increase for Erasmus+; the need to provide budgetary and legal clarity for the proposed new European Solidarity Corps; the ongoing funding challenges facing the Europe for Citizens programme and the Culture sub-programme under Creative Europe; the scope for greater use of EFSI for culture and education projects; and the imperative to earmark fresh money for a successful European Year of Cultural Heritage. Members echoed their support, underlining that Erasmus+ cannot be seen as an easy source of funding for every new idea that comes along.

In the subsequent debate with the General Rapporteur for the Budget, Siegfried Mureșan, Members put across the same key priorities and were pleased to hear how up to speed Mr Mureșan is on CULT concerns. They heard him state his overarching goals for the 2018 budget – “security of citizens” and “growth and jobs” – and were pleased to hear him single out Erasmus+ as a programme that has proved its worth and demonstrably improves job prospects for participants. Other issues discussed included the Youth Employment Initiative, Euranet Plus, the Creative Europe and Europe for Citizens programmes, the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the proposed new Solidarity Corps, the need to counter anti-EU misinformation, and budgeting for the LUX Prize and the House of European History.

- [Procedure file](#)
- Amendments deadline: 2 May 2017 at 11.00
- Committee vote: 30 May 2017

## Exchange of views on Euronews

### Joint meeting with the Committee on Budgetary Control

The joint CULT-CONT exchange of views on Euronews focused in particular on the recent and planned changes to its ownership structure, editorial independence and its European focus.

Euronews is an independent, pan-European news TV channel broadcasting non-stop in 13 languages. This includes eight official EU languages - English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Public-service broadcasters launched the channel in 1993. Since 2010, the European Commission has considered Euronews to have a mission of European general interest in the field of information, leading to a series of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) for the production and distribution of EU programmes for individual language versions. Despite severe budget cuts in 2014, the Commission has kept up its support. In 2015, the Egyptian businessman and billionaire, Naguib Sawiris, acquired a 53% share in Euronews with his company Media Globe Networks (MGN). Twenty-one public-service broadcasters from EU and non-EU countries and three local governments hold 47% of the shares. In the last quarter of 2016, negotiations between NBC and Euronews took place, with NBC signalling that its interest in acquiring between 15 and 30 percent of the share of Euronews.

Members questioned the Euronews' CEO, Mr Michael Peters, the Commission representative, Mr Giuseppe Abbamonte, and the Chair of the Supervisory Board of Euronews, Mr Paolo Garimberti, on recent media allegations as regards the editorial independence of Euronews and its specific European perspective. They all reiterated the full editorial independence and EU commitment, referring, for example, to two recent audits that raised no questions of editorial independence. The debate was at times fractious, with several Members not totally convinced by the all the answers provided. Most strikingly, concerns remain on the real added value of the EU's not inconsiderable financial investment.

### [Euronews presentation](#)

## Further reading

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

- [PISA 2015 Results \(Volume III\) - Students' Well-Being](#)
- [The Nature of Problem Solving - Using Research to Inspire 21st Century Learning](#)
- [Track how technology is transforming work](#)

### The next committee meeting:

4 May 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](#)

### About the editor

European Parliament  
Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union  
Secretariat on Culture and Education

### Subscription

To subscribe please contact the CULT secretariat:  
[cult-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:cult-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu)

