

Newsletter

Committee meeting 30 May 2017

European Solidarity Corps

Exchange of views with Commissioners Navracsics and Oettinger

Commissioners Günther Oettinger and Tibor Navracsics both attended an exchange of views with the CULT Committee in order to present in detail the Commission's proposal for a Regulation on the EU Solidarity Corps. The proposal had been adopted by the Commission in a written procedure just before the committee meeting. The fact that the proposal was presented to the CULT Committee immediately after adoption and before the official Commission press conference was appreciated by many Members and perceived as underlining that the Commission attaches considerable importance to the CULT Committee's role in this file.

Commissioner Oettinger highlighted the substantial potential and positive impact the Corps can have in getting young Europeans active in social and political life. Mr Oettinger stated that one of the main intentions of the proposal was to establish a clear legal and financial framework for the implementation of the Corps. Whereas during Phase I (2017) of implementation, the Corps relies exclusively on existing EU programmes and funds, during Phase II (2018-2020) it will have its own budgetary envelope of EUR 341.5 million. It is important to underline that, of this, some EUR 197.7 million will come from the Erasmus+ budget. Commissioner Navracsics underlined that the Corps is an important tool for building and experiencing EU identity through active involvement in volunteering – to which over 80% of the total budget will be allocated – and occupational activities (traineeships and apprenticeships) that will account for about 20% of the total.

In the very interesting subsequent discussion, Members demonstrated that their main concern is the budgetary impact that the new EU Solidarity Corps might have on existing EU programmes (especially Erasmus+). Indeed, Erasmus+ will be a big "contributor" to the new initiative. Several Members were not fully convinced by Mr Oettinger's assurance that the core parts of Erasmus+ (e.g. education and training activities) will not be affected by the Solidarity Corps. Other points of concern expressed by Members were cooperation with third countries and the co-existence or obsolescence of the existing European Voluntary Service.

The CULT Committee has appointed Helga Trüpel (Greens/EFA) as Rapporteur.

[European Solidarity Corps on European Youth Portal](#)



Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations

Adoption of draft report (Elmer BROK, EPP, and Silvia COSTA, S&D)

The vote took place in a joint Committee meeting co-chaired by the AFET and CULT Chairs. Members welcomed the 2016 Commission Communication, which the EP had called for back in 2011, leading to the 2013-2104 Preparatory Action "Culture in External Relations". However, Members criticised it for being too vague on concrete objectives and tangible actions and initiatives and lacking ambition, considering that the EU plays an ever-increasing role in world affairs.

Therefore, they call for:

- an effective EU strategy for international cultural relations, accompanied by an annual action plan;
- a separate EU budget line to support international cultural relations and launch an EU programme on international mobility and exchange for young cultural professionals and artists;
- the inclusion of culture in all existing and future EU agreements with third countries;
- a Cultural Visa Programme, along the lines of the existing Scientific Visa Programme, for third-country nationals, artists and other professionals in the cultural field;
- a "focal point" in each EU delegation to liaise with Member States' cultural institutes, as well as local civil society and actors.

The resolution on an EU strategy for international cultural relations was approved by 62 votes to 13, with 4 abstentions. The report will be voted on at the July plenary session in Strasbourg.

[Procedure file](#)

Legitimate measures to protect whistleblowers acting in the public interest

Adoption of draft opinion (Zdzisław KRASNODEBSKI, ECR)

The draft opinion was adopted with a relatively narrow majority (15 in favour, 9 against and 4 abstentions). The result of the vote reflects the essential role played by whistle-blowers in protecting the public interest, saving public funds, and ensuring transparency and integrity in public life. The text reaffirms the importance of putting in place legal instruments to provide a safe environment for whistle-blowers and to support awareness-raising and educational measures. It also calls on Member States to ensure that the right of journalists not to reveal a source's identity is effectively and legally protected. Finally, the EU institutions are encouraged to serve as a role-model with regard to whistle-blowing policy.

[Procedure file](#)

Budget 2018: Mandate for the trilogue

Adoption of draft opinion (Morten LØKKEGAARD, ALDE)

The Committee overwhelmingly backed the opinion on the mandate for the trilogue, which lays down the key CULT priorities going into the 2018 budget procedure. The opinion reiterates the Committee's commitment to properly resourced education, culture and citizenship programmes. With respect to Erasmus+, it deplores the lower than anticipated MFF funding increase and calls for a continued focus on sports funding, notably grassroots sport, through the programme. It also highlights the ongoing funding challenges facing the Europe for Citizens programme and the Culture sub-programme under Creative Europe. The opinion goes on to argue for greater use of EFSI for culture and education projects, insisting that the new scaled-up Advisory Hub in the EFSI 2.0 proposal can help to channel funds to the cultural and creative sector, and underlines the need to earmark fresh money for a successful European Year of Cultural Heritage and to ensure that funding for the EYCH does not impinge on either the Creative Europe or Europe for Citizens programmes. It also reiterates the value of Euranet+ in providing independent news coverage of EU affairs and calls for a sustainable budgetary foundation for the service.

Finally, with the new proposal for a European Solidarity Corps now published, the opinion insists on budgetary and legal clarity for the new Corps, notably with respect to its links to the European Voluntary Service. The opinion marks the end of the first stage of the budgetary procedure, which will now move into the core business of examining the Commission's draft budget.

[Procedure file](#)

European Capitals of Culture 2020-2033: inclusion of EFTA/EEA countries

Adoption on the provisional agreement (Santiago FISAS AYXELÀ, EPP)

The CULT Members unanimously approved the agreed text between Council and European Parliament on the "European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033". The modification of Decision No 445/2014/EU will make it possible for cities from EFTA/EEA countries that participate in the Creative Europe programme to apply for the ECOC title. The positions of the Council and of the Parliament were so close that formal negotiations at a trilogue meeting were not necessary. Only minor technical modifications were needed to reach a provisional agreement.

[Procedure file](#)

European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

In April, following a successful co-decision procedure, the European Parliament adopted its position at first reading on the decision to designate 2018 the European Year of Culture Heritage (EYCH). Subsequently, during the May plenary session in Strasbourg, the joint LEX text, of the EYCH 2018 was signed by President Antonio Tajani and Minister Carmelo Abela from the Maltese Presidency. CULT Chair Petra Kammerevert and Rapporteur Mircea Diaconu were present at the signature ceremony.

The purpose of the joint signing of the LEX text serves to demonstrate that the two co-legislators have formally adopted the legal acts.



The next committee meeting:

Wednesday, 21 June 2017 at 9.00-12.30 and 15.00-18.30 and

Thursday, 22 June 2017 at 9.00-12.30

Useful links

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