

Newsletter

Committee meeting of 10 October 2017

European Solidarity Corps

Public hearing



The joint CULT-EMPL public hearing on the European Solidarity Corps - one of the priority legislative files of the Parliament - set out to provide a critical assessment of the Commission's proposal and help formulate the Parliament's position. The hearing provided an opportunity for a number of experts, covering a wide range of fields and sectors, to pinpoint some of the strengths, but also many of the shortcomings, in the legislative proposal and its rationale.

The public hearing started with a statement by Commissioner Navracsics who stressed that the Corps can have a major impact on strengthening solidarity by boosting volunteering in Europe. He mentioned that 38,500 young people have already enrolled in the Corps through its portal. He also reiterated that concerns surrounding the quality of jobs and traineeship placements could be dealt with through the quality label and national labour legislation.

In general, the experts were of the opinion that the European Solidarity Corps could deliver clear European added value by better matching supply and demand.

However, to do so, its legal framework should establish clear definitions and operational rules, especially regarding solidarity activities and the quality label.

The need for more fresh money was also mentioned by experts and Members of both committees. There is a desire to avoid a situation in which existing programmes, such as Erasmus+, "pay" for new initiatives.

Many experts also questioned whether the occupational strand would produce a real benefit in terms of employment and underlined that it might lead to possible misuse and cause more uncertainty.

During the discussion, most Members agreed with the experts' conclusions and asked whether, in order to fight youth unemployment, it would be more appropriate to reinforce existing programmes such as the Youth Guarantee and to focus the ESC exclusively on volunteering.

The CULT Committee will vote in January 2018 on its position on the European Solidarity Corps, drafted by Helga Trüpel (Greens/EFA).

European Solidarity Corps

Consideration of draft report (Helga TRÜPEL, Greens/EFA)



Following the public hearing on the same topic, the Rapporteur, Ms Trüpel, presented her draft report on establishing the legal base for the European Solidarity Corps. As well as proposing that the “corps” change its name to become an “initiative”, she removes the occupational strand altogether from the legislative proposal, arguing that the move will reinforce the ESC by ensuring the quality of placements and the value of volunteering as a whole. In addition, Ms Trüpel highlights the concept of solidarity in the proposal and questions whether working in a profit-oriented company is compatible with that concept. Last but not least, Ms Trüpel emphasises the inclusion of disadvantaged young people.

A lively discussion followed the presentation with a majority of Members supporting the position of the Rapporteur and asking in general for a stronger focus on volunteering and solidarity, more “fresh money” (rather than redeployed funds) to support this initiative and robust quality control mechanisms to ensure high quality placements.

- [Procedure file](#)
- Amendments deadline: 20 Oct at 11.00
- Committee vote: January 2018

EU Citizenship Report 2017

Adoption of draft opinion (Krystyna YBACKA, S&D)

The opinion focuses on the role of education and educational institutions in raising awareness among young people of their rights and on active citizenship as a means of enhancing citizens' political engagement in the democratic life of the EU. It stresses the need for a common framework for learning about the EU at school and encourages Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure that the topic is included on school curricula. The draft opinion was adopted by a large majority.

[Procedure file](#)

Implementation of the European Disability Strategy

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

The opinion urges Member States to ensure, among other things, that children with disabilities get access to quality inclusive childhood and primary education, and to further explore the opportunities offered by lifelong learning. It also calls on Member States and the Commission to promote the participation of young people with disabilities in mobility schemes and extracurricular activities, and to pay special attention to the difficulties they encounter in their transition from secondary and university education and/or vocational training to employment. The draft opinion was adopted with 26 votes in favour and only one abstention.

[Procedure file](#)

The next MFF: Preparing the Parliament's position on the MFF post-2020

Consideration of draft opinion (Helga TRÜPEL, Greens/EFA)

The Rapporteur underlined that the unprecedented context of this MFF (the impact of Brexit) could also provide fresh opportunities. She called for an increase in the budget for programmes that tackle the societal challenges that Europe is facing. In the following debate, it was stressed that it is crucial to seek to begin work with the Council on the structures and content of the future programmes (such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe) even before an agreement on the exact figures of the MFF have been agreed upon. Members also highlighted the need to review the position of Creative Europe within the MFF structure, arguing that it would sit more logically with other economic development and jobs creation programmes.

- [Procedure file](#)
- Amendments deadline: 17 Oct at 11.00
- Committee vote: 4 Dec 2017

Exchange of views with the Director of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union, Ms Maire Killoran

Following on from the committee's recent decision to engage more closely with the Translation Centre and draw up an opinion on the 2016 discharge procedure, CULT welcomed the Centre's Director, Ms Maire Killoran, for an exchange of views. Ms Killoran set out the Centre's history, current work patterns and activities and plans for the future. The Centre was created in 1994 to deliver an efficient translation model for the EU's various bodies and agencies, subsequently also acquiring the role of providing back-up translation services during peak periods to larger institutions with their own in-house translation departments. Ms Killoran explained the Centre's ambition to become a centre of excellence for the provision of language services to the EU's agencies and bodies by 2020. As well as day-to-day translation services, this also involves working with agencies and other institutions to develop effective cooperation. Its terminology database (IATE) is a notable example, as well as more recent collaboration projects with the Chemicals Agency and the Asylum Support Office.

The Centre operates an outsourcing model for translation, with its in-house team of translators quality-assuring the work of external contractors who themselves are selected through tender procedures and in line with specific policy area needs. It is self-funded through the fees it charges for its translation work and is committed to multilingualism and equal treatment of the EU's official languages – pricing is consistent across languages regardless of actual cost. Historically, its budget and staffing levels broadly increased in line with the rise in the EU's official languages, although staff numbers have been cut in line with the 5% reduction target for all EU institutions and agencies, plus a further 5% for those agencies at "cruising speed". Ms Killoran made clear that further budget cuts would inevitably impact on the Centre's work. Finally, she explained that the Centre has – in part by introducing new pricing in 2015 – run a budget deficit in recent years to whittle down the budgetary surplus in line with the request of the budgetary authority, though she cautioned that prices would inevitably have to rise at some stage.

In the subsequent debate, Members welcomed the opportunity to engage with the Centre and restated the Committee's commitment to multilingualism in the EU. They also stressed that actively using all the EU's languages and continuing to develop specialist multilingual terminology is a critical part of effectively engaging with citizens. Members took a keen interest in the Centre's budget and staffing levels, quality assurance procedures, emerging translation technologies and internship opportunities for young people.

The next committee meeting:

Thursday, 19 October 2017 at 9.00-12.30

Useful links

- [CULT Committee website](#)
- [Meeting documents](#)
- [Calendar of meetings](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Policy Department Publications in the EP](#)
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