

Newsletter

Committee meeting 9 November and 22-23 November 2017

Charlemagne Youth Prize winners

The CULT committee welcomed the winners of the 2017 European Charlemagne Youth Prize. Although it has become customary that the winners present their projects before CULT Committee, this year was special as it marked the 10th anniversary of the prize. Many winners from previous years were therefore also present.

As usual, the projects focus on European integration, intercultural dialogue and identity. The winning project, *“Erasmus Evening”*, presented by Gabriela Jelonek from Poland, is a cycle of radio broadcasts to promote the “Erasmus experience”. The project aims to encourage young people to exercise mobility as a way to break barriers, connect and cooperate with others and ultimately understand diversity in its complexity.

Similarly, the runner-up aims to increase citizens’ support for, and engagement with, the European Union in northern Denmark. The *“Re-Discover Europe”* project, presented by Monika Elend, organised debates, street parades and other discussion forums to bring together different communities and stimulate pro-European attitudes and political participation among the most Eurosceptic citizens.

The third contender, the *“Are we Europe”* project from the Netherlands presented by Ties Gijzel, is an online platform providing opportunities for young writers, journalists and creative individuals to write about the Europe they know and love with the aim of creating a new, positive narrative on Europe.

A very stimulating discussion followed, in which many Members commented on the outstanding value of these projects, developed and implemented by young people. CULT Members underlined the need to further support such initiatives and boost young people’s engagement both through targeted support from programmes such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe and Europe for Citizens.

[Charlemagne Youth Prize](#)



EU-Africa cooperation in education, culture and political participation of youth

Exchange of views



As part of the “Africa Week” initiated by President Tajani, a series of events took place in the European Parliament during the week of 20-24 November. The objective was both to increase the visibility of the Parliament within EU-Africa relations and to contribute to the preparation of the 5th Africa-EU Summit on 29-30 November in Abidjan, with “youth” being the central theme of the summit.

All committees were invited to participate in this “Africa Week” by discussing a dedicated point on Africa in their respective committee meetings. The CULT Committee held an exchange of views on EU-Africa cooperation in the field of education, culture and the political participation of young people. During a 2-hour event, several experts presented their views on recent developments in the Africa-EU partnership in these fields.

More specifically, we heard speeches by:

- Claire Morel - DG EAC, Head of Unit for International Cooperation on the *Renewed impetus of the Africa-EU Partnership*
- Jacqueline AmonginN - MP Uganda and Pan-African Parliament on *Enhancing youth participation in political life: the cases of Uganda and the Pan-African Parliament*
- MacDonald K. Munyoro - Programs Coordinator, National Association of Youth Organizations (NAYO) on the *Recommendations from the 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit*
- Danjuma Laah, Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Poverty Alleviation & Social Welfare - Nigeria *Education and Sport - the case of Nigeria*
- Celine Fabrequette - Secretary-General of the ACP Young Professionals Network on *The Youth Abidjan Declaration*
- Edouard Matoko - UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Africa on *Promoting youth participation: the UNESCO strategy*

In addition, we heard remarks from the floor by Giorgio Ficarelli from the Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation (European Commission); Ali Wakil, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Poverty Alleviation & Social Welfare, Nigeria; Johnson Oghuma, Member of the National Assembly of Nigeria; and Cynthia Mukendy, Director and Founder, GC Network, African Gist - a platform that promotes African cultures and opportunities offered by the continent.

During the two question-and-answer sessions, Members of the CULT Committee were interested in equal access to education for girls and boys, youth political representation, human rights, forced marriages, internal immigration within Africa (children spending the most important years of their lives in refugees camps), the role of civil society and civil rights organisations. All agreed that peace is the basis for achieving all policy priorities, and that a collective effort is needed because Europe and Africa have much to gain from increased political and economic ties, but also a lot to lose if they fail to act. As one speaker stressed, it is time for fewer words and more action.



Scientific and Academic Culture to Counter Radicalism and Fake News

Public hearing



Fake news - and the accompanying problem of political radicalisation - are among the most disquieting and pressing challenges of today. They have gained particular relevance in the context of the Brexit referendum and the US elections in 2016.

At both the national and European level, fake news is consciously disseminated by state and non-state actors alike to create uncertainty and confusion, manipulate and steer public opinion, or undermine democratic systems. Countering what is euphemistically described as “alternative facts” is thus a central concern of the European Union, too. In a public hearing specifically dedicated to the issue, the European Parliament’s CULT Committee examined how to meet the challenges of fake news through science and academia.

Five international experts were invited for that purpose and they presented their views in two dedicated thematic panels. Nikolay Naydenov, Professor at the Department of Political Science at Sofia University, first gave a presentation on *Fake News – A Cynical Approach to Politics*. Vincent F. Hendricks, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Copenhagen, then investigated the interconnection between *Fake News and Social Psychology*, followed by Massimo Marchiori, Professor at the Department of Pure and Applied Mathematics at the University of Padova, who analysed *Search Engines and Truth Manipulation*.

In the second panel of the hearing, Constantinos Daskalakis, Associate Professor of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, examined *Scientific and Technological Approaches for Detecting and Addressing Fake News*. Ms Karolin Schwarz, from the fact-checking organisation CORRECTIV in Berlin, then provided insights into practical aspects and experiences of *Fact-Checking and Verification*.

Both panels were followed by lively question-and-answer sessions spurred both by the quality and liveliness of the experts’ presentations and by the topicality of the subject. Among the central issues were the opportunities/limitations of technological means to detect and fight fake news, the importance of increasing citizens’ resilience vis-à-vis fake news by fostering a critical sensibility towards the issue and increasing media literacy, and the role of politics and academia respectively in meeting the challenges of fake news.



European Solidarity Corps

Consideration of amendments (Rapporteur: Helga TRÜPEL, Greens/EFA)

During the short consideration of amendments, Ms Trüpel, underlined that she had received strong backing for her proposal to change the name of the Corps (she has proposed “Initiative”), to expand the scope for action and focus on disadvantaged youth, and to expand the geographical scope to non-EU countries with a special focus on neighbouring countries. Most importantly, she underlined support for her proposal that the Initiative focus exclusively on volunteering and not on work placements (the “occupational strand”) and for the Initiative to be funded with “fresh” money.

In the subsequent debate, the shadow Rapporteurs gave clear backing to Ms Trüpel’s approach and stressed the need for compromise amendments to be formulated soon. This is of particular importance with respect to finding compromises with the EMPL Committee which is associated with shared and exclusive competences under Rule 54 of the EP’s Rules of Procedure.



Structured dialogue with Commissioner Navracsics

The Chair opened this structured dialogue by underlining that the CULT Committee is happy to see the prominence given to the contribution of education and culture to a European sense of belonging in the recent Commission Communication *“Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture”*.

Commissioner Navracsics emphasised that the Commission is proposing policy measures on modernising schools and higher education (through key competences and a set of common values for education; digital skills; tackling the skills mismatch; better guidance for students; lifelong learning). He also commented on the need to boost the Erasmus+ programme budget and expanding its scope to assist the most disadvantaged young people.

On culture, Mr Navracsics stated his unequivocal commitment to the 2018 Year of European Cultural Heritage, which he will launch in early December 2017. He noted that a multitude of partners and stakeholders were already engaged on the ground in making the year a success. He also argued for a doubling of the Creative Europe budget and urged all stakeholders, including the Parliament, to make the “Music Moves Europe” Preparatory Action a success.

Finally, turning to sport, the Commissioner outlined the success of the European Week of Sport, held from 23 to 30 September 2017 in Tartu, Estonia, and emphasised the impact sport has on inclusiveness in society.

The subsequent question-and-answer session gave Members the opportunity to focus on a number of issues, from the MFF and increasing budgetary support to the Erasmus+ and Creative Europe programmes, to Brexit and European identity, to the Solidarity Corps and the validation of skills and competences.

In his replies, Commissioner Navracsics made it clear that, in the preliminary stages of the discussions on the MFF, increased support for the Erasmus+ programme seems to be unanimously supported, making it an even more powerful tool for social inclusion.



Exchange of views with Commissioner Moscovici (9 November)

Commissioner Moscovici came to present a Commission proposal on the import of cultural goods and to explain the rationale behind it. CULT will soon prepare an opinion on this proposal.

Mr Moscovici underlined that the proposal should be seen not only as an endeavour to tackle one of the sources of financing for terrorism, but also as a commitment to the protection of cultural heritage and cultural diversity by putting an end to the looting and smuggling of antiquities.

During the debate, it was clear that Members unequivocally supported the Commission proposal and recognised the need to introduce new control mechanisms for the import of cultural goods. The importance of awareness-raising and educational measures in this field was also repeatedly stressed, as was the fact that the fight against illicit trade in cultural goods should be a key European initiative in the course of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage.

Cultural work with refugees

Workshop organised by Policy Department B (9 November)

At the request of CULT, Policy Department B organised a workshop on “Cultural Work with Refugees”. In their presentations, the speakers highlighted different aspects of culture being used as a tool for integration.

Ms Alison Phipps, holder of the UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts at the University of Glasgow, accompanied by Ms Naa Densua Tordzro, research associate and a multi-genre artist living and working in Glasgow, examined the question “Why cultural work with refugees?”.

Mr Rasoul Nejadmehr, Culture Developer at the Västra Götaland region in Sweden, analysed current practices in cultural work with refugees and outlined lessons to be drawn from that work.

Ms Rosanna Lewis, who co-authored the Voices of Culture report on “The Role of Culture in promoting inclusion in the context of migration”, together with Ms Polly Martin, who has hands-on professional experience of working in a refugee camp in Calais and a refugee welcome centre in Copenhagen, presented existing EU support for cultural work with refugees, making concrete recommendations for the next generation of EU funding programmes.

The workshop - with the three presentations being followed by a lively question-and-answer session - was very well received by Members, who were present in considerable numbers. This was not least due to the format chosen for the event, with Ms Naa Densua Tordzro giving an artistic live performance during the workshop and thus underlining the practical dimension of “cultural work”.

[Presentations](#)



EU Youth Orchestra - amending Creative Europe programme

Adoption of draft report and on the decision to enter into interinstitutional negotiations (Rapporteur: Silvia COSTA, S&D)

The CULT committee adopted - by a large majority (23 in favour, 3 against and 2 abstentions) - the report on the proposal to amend the Regulation establishing Creative Europe Programme and the mandate to enter into inter-institutional negotiations. In so doing, the Committee recognised the special status of the European Union Youth Orchestra as a *body identified by the basic act*, meaning it will be able to benefit from grants without a call for proposal.

[Procedure file](#)



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Media pluralism and media freedom in the European Union

Consideration of draft opinion (Rapporteur: Curzio MALTESE, GUE/NGL)

The Rapporteur underlined in his presentation that media freedom and media pluralism are a pillar of democracy and that access to quality, free and independent information is a fundamental human right, essential in forming public opinion.

There was an interesting debate among Members on crucial aspects of media pluralism, such as the financing of the sector, the training, working conditions and remuneration of journalists, the dangers of media concentration and the problems faced by the written press in a digitised world. The importance of a quality press and of independent public media was repeatedly stressed, as was the need to ensure media literacy, in order to counter the negative effects of fake news.

The Chair recalled that CULT is associated under Rule 54 for the report as far as "media literacy" is a concerned. The deadline for amendments is 30 November 2017.

[Procedure file](#)

The next committee meeting:
Monday, 4 December 2017 at 15.00-18.30

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 Estonian Presidency of the Council](#)

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