

Newsletter

Committee meeting 11 July 2018



Austrian Presidency Priorities

Exchange of views with Minister for Education, Heinz Faßmann, Minister for Youth, Juliane Bogner-Strauß, Minister for Culture, Gernot Blümel, and Minister for Sports, Heinz-Christian Strache

On 11 July, the Committee held its traditional exchange of views with the incoming (Austrian) Presidency of the Council of the EU – represented by a total of four federal ministers, covering the fields of education, youth, culture and sports.

Mr Heinz Faßmann, Minister of Education, Science and Research, began by emphasising that the central theme of the Austrian Presidency in education will be the future of EU cooperation on education. Apart from discussions on the successor of the Strategic Framework – Education & Training 2020 (ET 2020), the 14 December 2017 European Council Conclusions will be central, as will the Commission's Communication "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture". A key dossier to be dealt with under the Austrian Presidency will be the successor programme to Erasmus+, for which it is envisaged to reach agreement on key parts of the programme (a partial general approach) within the Council by the end of 2018.

Ms Juliane Bogner-Strauß, Federal Minister for Women, Families and Youth, then highlighted the proposal for a new EU Youth Strategy after 2019, as well as quick and efficient progress on the European Solidarity Corps post-2021. There are also plans for conclusions on the role of youth work for young migrants and refugees building on the work of the European Commission expert group.

Mr Gernot Blümel, Federal Minister for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media, provided an overview of the priorities in the field of culture and media, referring mainly to the revision of the European Agenda for Culture. Moreover, far-reaching progress is planned on the Commission proposal for the new Creative Europe Programme as of 2021, and the Austrian Presidency intends to adopt Council conclusions on the opportunities and challenges in the cultural, media and creative sectors in the digital age. In implementing the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, special attention will be paid to its legacy.

Finally, Heinz-Christian Strache, Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for the Civil Service and Sport, gave an account of the Council priorities in the area of sport, where the Austrian Presidency intends to highlight the diverse economic dimensions of sport and present the Council with a proposal for conclusions on this topic.

The presentations of the four ministers met with great interest among CULT Members, who expressed their overall satisfaction with the objectives of the Austrian Presidency. At the same time, there was a common plea for the Council to provide the necessary means – financial and otherwise – in order for the ambitious European initiatives in education, youth, culture and sports, and especially the next generation of funding programmes, to be successful.

European Solidarity Corps

Adoption of the provisional agreement after interinstitutional negotiations (Rapporteur: Helga TRÜPEL, Greens/ALE)

The Committee also voted overwhelmingly in favour of the political agreement reached by the EP team on the ESC with 23 in favour, 4 against and 1 abstention. The agreement provides for an overall budget of 375.6 million EUR for the period 2018-2020, of which 90% will support volunteering activities and 10% will go to traineeships and jobs. Parliament managed to secure 'fresh money' to fund 20% of the budget, while 80% comes from redeployments from Erasmus+ and other programmes. The EP's team managed to safeguard the Erasmus+ programme against further redeployments beyond the European Voluntary Service part. Another achievement of the Parliament's team was that the Solidarity Corps will only support non-profit activities, even when implemented by a profit-making organisation. Following the confirmation of the political agreement in CULT, a vote in plenary to endorse the new rules will follow, probably in September.

[Procedure file](#)

AVMSD

Adoption of the provisional agreement after interinstitutional negotiations (Rapporteurs: Sabine VERHEYEN, EPP and Petra KAMMEREVERT, S&D)

The text agreed with the Council was adopted by a majority of 19 in favour, 7 against and 2 abstentions and will be tabled for the October I plenary. The outcome of negotiations ensures that the revision is fit to tackle the forthcoming challenges in the audiovisual sector. One of the main achievements of the new AVMSD is to introduce video-sharing platforms (VSPs), including social media to some extent, within the scope of the Directive. This will help to address in particular the issue of hate speech and the dissemination of harmful content to minors on such platforms as well as to create a genuine level playing field for audiovisual commercial communications on all audiovisual media services, including video-sharing platforms.

[Procedure file](#)

New European Agenda for Culture

Public hearing

The afternoon session was dedicated to a public hearing on "The New European Agenda for Culture" linked to an own-initiative report drafted in reaction to the Commission communication published in April (Rapporteur: Giorgos Grammatikakis, S&D).

The experts presented their views on the new Agenda for Culture from different perspectives. Ugo Bacchella from Fondazione Fitzcarraldo (Italy) underlined that unfocused policies with too many objectives and priorities are often counterproductive. Instead, well-funded and properly tuned policy is needed for the cultural field. Christine Merkel, from the German Commission for UNESCO, focused her presentation on cultural participation, the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage and mobility. Rosa Perez Monclus, from Culture Action Europe, looked at culture from a civil society perspective and based her presentation on the results of the consultation among members of the Culture Action Europe network.

Both experts and Members agreed on the need to draw up more qualitative indicators for the cultural and creative sectors and to reinforce cross-sectoral activities in order to stimulate cross-overs. They also pointed out that, although cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are not explicit dimensions of the new Agenda, all actions in the cultural field should aim to reinforce those aspects. The synergies between education and culture and the value of culture for social integration and well-being were also raised during the hearing.



Multilingualism and communication policy

Exchange of views with the Commission

The Chair began by stating that several Commission websites are not translated into all official languages. Although there are 24 official languages, most of the websites are available only in very few languages and documents that are crucial to citizens, such as toolkits, guidelines on how to apply for grants etc. are often available only in English. The Commission, represented by three DGs (DG COMM, DG T and DG EAC), argued that there are two categories of content: some that is always translated into all EU languages (legally required EU legislation or content that stays online for a long time) and specific translations decided on using an evidence-based approach, where language coverage depends on the target public, subjects etc. The Commission added that there is some progress in offering more content in all languages in the Erasmus+ programme, but this was not satisfactory for Members. The issue will be revisited by the CULT Committee before the end of the parliamentary term.



Employment and social policies of the euro area

Adoption of draft opinion (Rapporteur: Nikolaos CHOUNTIS, GUE/NGL)

The Committee adopted its opinion on "Employment and social policies of the euro area" by a clear majority of 24 in favour, two against and four abstentions. The opinion argues for an economic policy rethink with respect to public investment in education, calling for a 'silver rule on social investment' within the Stability and Growth Pact. It highlights the need for a greater focus on equal opportunities and lifelong learning possibilities within education, both as a means of broader personal development and to boost employment prospects. It also gives its backing to the Youth Guarantee and Skills Guarantee, urging the EU to reinforce funding for both, and calls for the swift implementation of a Child Guarantee (currently the subject of a Preparatory Action). It also explicitly links a number of the Education and Training 2020 benchmarks with the newly introduced Social Scoreboard in the European Semester, proposing new indicators, for example on under-achievement in reading and scientific literacy. The opinion also bemoans persistently worrying levels of basic literacy levels, which hamper effective participation in public life and in the labour market. It concludes with an appeal for a genuine revision of education and training policies to deliver real lifelong learning possibilities and promote equal opportunities and social inclusion.

[Procedure file](#)



2019 budget - all sections

Adoption of the budgetary amendments and consideration of the draft opinion (Rapporteur: Morten LOKKEGAARD, ALDE)

The CULT Committee adopted its amendments to the 2019 draft budget, focusing on the need for reinforcements across the key, but underfunded, education and culture programmes. The Committee calls for a 20% increase across the four Erasmus+ lines to meet current funding needs and a 22% rise for the MEDIA sub-programme, which would need 44% more money just to finance all high-quality projects and which is being asked to boost work on cinema operators' networks and to absorb the highly successful Preparatory Action on the sub-titling of cultural content. It also asks for an additional 10% for both the Culture sub-programme and the cross-sectoral strand of Creative Europe – the former being topped up by a further 3 million EUR to scale up the successful pilot scheme on artists' mobility - and a 10% increase for Europe for Citizens (after the 1.1 million EUR shifted to the European Citizens' Initiative has been restored).

The Committee also approved a series of Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPAs), which will go to the Budgets Committee. CULT has previously piloted a number of successful initiatives through the PPPA procedure, as is evidenced by the design of the next generation of CULT programmes. The Committee has now entrusted the Rapporteur with defending this position in the BUDG Committee and with restoring the draft budget on any 'CULT' lines the Council amends, but the Committee left untouched.

• [Procedure file](#)

• Amendments deadline: 13 July 2018 at 11:00 (for the opinion)

• Committee vote: 3 September 2018



Protection of persons reporting on breaches on Union law

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

In the absence of the Rapporteur, the presentation of the legislative draft opinion on the "Protection of persons reporting on breaches of Union law" offered an opportunity for Shadows to voice their position on the draft text. Damian Draghici (S&D), Jill Evans (Greens/EFA) and Dominique Bilde (ENF) all welcomed the Commission's proposal and broadly supported the amendments proposed by the Rapporteur, which aim notably to reinforce the protection of whistle-blowers against retaliation. The vote will take place on 24 September in CULT and on 10 October in the lead committee JURI.

• [Procedure file](#)

• Amendments deadline: 12 July 2018 at 12:00

• Committee vote: 24 September 2018

The next committee meeting: 3 September 2018

Useful links

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

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