

## Newsletter

December 2020



It is hardly news to say that 2020 has been earth-shattering. This is especially true for the sectors that the Committee on Culture and Education represents. Nurseries, schools, colleges, universities, adult training centres and youth clubs have had to shut their doors and move online. The ingenuity and skill of those providing education and training and supporting young people has been remarkable and we salute the efforts of all involved. And yet, at the same time, our Committee has watched with alarm as the lack of digital readiness - whether due to inadequate equipment, connectivity gaps or insufficient digital proficiency - has widened existing inequalities both within and across our Member States.

The cultural and creative sectors have been brought to their knees by long-term closures of theatres, cinemas and museums, an end to live performances and ongoing challenges in production. We are acutely aware that the pandemic represents an existential threat to many artists and creative businesses. The same is true in the media sector. We have all seen vividly how important a vibrant and healthy media sector is in ensuring robust and critical reporting amid growing disinformation. And in sport too, the pandemic's impact has been huge, preventing fans from cheering on their favourite team, hindering grassroots competitions and choking clubs' revenue streams.

Our Committee has worked hard to highlight these challenges and push for EU and national support schemes to reach people and businesses who need help. From 1 January 2021, an unprecedented recovery package will be available to help get Europe back on its feet. We have pressed for these funds to reach the education, culture, media, youth and sports sectors and will keep a close eye to make sure this happens.

If 2020 has been a tough year for our sectors, it is also wonderful to be able to announce that we have, in recent days, struck provisional agreements on the future Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Thanks to our efforts, the new Erasmus+ programme received a 2.2 billion EUR top-up compared to the European Council agreement in July. The programme will now be more inclusive, open to more and to new groups of people, support the digital and green agendas and trial new pioneering initiatives. Creative Europe also sees a 0.6 billion EUR boost thanks to the Parliament and will provide more support to the cultural and creative sector than ever before. The programme will be more inclusive, do more for gender equality and provide greater support to the music sector. And the European Solidarity Corps will offer more life-changing volunteering opportunities, thanks to the Parliament, with an increased focus on people with fewer opportunities and with more robust safeguards.

It is a positive note on which to end a deeply challenging year. I take this opportunity to wish you a relaxing time with your loved ones over the festive period and a healthy and happy new year.

## Stay of play on the rights and values programme

*Exchange of views. 19 November 2020*

Following the agreement on the next long-term budget (MFF), the financing for ten EU programmes will be increased compared to the European Council agreement of 21 July 2020. More specifically, the Rights and Values programme will receive an additional 0.8 billion EUR. This opens up significant prospects for such an important programme. The question now is how, in particular, the additional funds will be allocated to different strands of the programme, and more specifically to the "Citizens engagement and

participation strand", which is under the CULT Committee's remit.

For this exchange of views, the Chair invited the Rapporteur for the lead committee (LIBE), Ms Alice Kuhnke, and the European Commission/DG JUST, Ms Daniela Bankier. The Rapporteur for the CULT opinion, Mr Lukasz Kohut, was also present. Interinstitutional talks are still ongoing in search of a final agreement.

## Debate on resolution "The impact of Covid on youth and sport"

*19 November 2020*



The CULT Committee discussed a draft motion for a resolution on the impact of COVID-19 on youth and on sport. Both are among the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. As regards youth, the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly disrupted every aspect of young people's lives

throughout the world and continues to have negative consequences in terms of education, employment opportunities and physical and mental wellbeing. Similarly, the pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on both professional and grassroots sports, and numerous clubs at all levels are facing existential threats.

Members generally welcomed the draft resolution and agreed that both sectors require additional targeted support in the immediate short term. They also asked for an assessment of the medium- and long-term socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these sectors, and the development of a coordinated European approach to cope with the challenges and mitigate the consequences. The motion for a resolution will be tabled to wind up a debate in plenary following the Commission's response to an oral question on the subject.

## Public Hearing “The education package: aims, challenges and prospects for success”

2 December 2020



The CULT Committee held a public hearing focussing on the two strands of the ‘education package’ - the European Education Area (EEA) and the revised Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP). A variety of speakers were invited, offering a state of the art of European digital and education policies and initiatives.

In the first panel comprising four speakers, Gyula Csery and Georgi Dimitrov outlined the Commission’s ambition behind the package and its over-arching goal of achieving an inclusive, digital and green Europe. While COVID-19 might define the short-term context, the DEAP ultimately seeks to address the longer-term digital transformation of the EU. Simon Broek, author of research for the CULT Committee on the DEAP, also commented on the impact of the pandemic on widening existing inequalities and the difference in access to digital technologies across the EU. Pierre Heriard from the EP’s Policy Department noted that, while there may be clarity on what is desired from the EEA, a clear roadmap of how to get there is still lacking. He called therefore for a clear set of targets and goals with details of how to achieve each in turn.

The second panel provided an assessment of the revised DEAP. Brikena Xhomaqi from the Lifelong Learning Platform stressed the importance of ensuring pedagogical freedom for teachers and providing them with access to digital resources and software. Investing in all areas of education

at all levels and in all settings, was additionally noted as key. Antonio Ranieri from CEDEFOP stressed that everyone needs basic digital skills, with important ramifications for the workforce in the EU. He recalled that opportunities to upskill throughout life and employment are essential. Gillian Coughland from the Committee of the Regions called for a major investment in training for newly-qualified and established teachers, increased connectivity across the EU and listening to students’ voices in policy-making. The EU Digital Education Hub could help co-ordinate training across the Member States, sharing best practice and resources and creating economies of scale.

The final panel reflected on how to build a true European Education Area by 2025. Francois Taddei from the Centre of Interdisciplinary Research in France spoke of the development of a peer learning environment, with the EU playing a global role and supporting wider progress towards the fulfilment of the SDGs. Developments in AI should also be utilised in education with the importance of sharing through open source platforms emphasised. Lenka Rovná from Charles University in Prague focussed on the European Universities initiative, describing the development of a community that spreads across universities with the active involvement of students at its core. Emil Boc from the Committee of the Regions stressed the importance of a policy approach built on subsidiarity that invests in high-quality teachers and on ensuring the automatic recognition of qualifications. Moreover, he recalled the central role of local and regional authorities in delivery.

Members engaged in active debate with the panellists, stressing the importance of the DEAP and the EEA in driving education and digital skills policy in the EU. There was a clear interest in inclusion, tackling wider societal inequalities and the recognition of qualification and micro-qualifications.

## Exchange of views with Director-General Roberto Viola.

*Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT).*

*3 December 2020*



The Committee held an exchange of views with Director-General Roberto Viola (DG CNECT) to discuss a series of topics, notably the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), Euronews and the Media Action Plan, unveiled on 3 December.

Regarding the AVMSD, Mr Viola considered the current state of play rather worrying, as only four Member States successfully transposed the Directive by the 19 September 2020 deadline. As a result, he explained that, on 23 November 2020, the Commission launched infringement procedures against twenty-three Member States, by sending letters of formal notice requesting further information within two months.

Although Mr Viola was confident that some Member States would manage to achieve transposition in the first half of 2021, he stressed that eight Member States were unlikely to do so.

On the Media Action Plan, the Director-General stressed the three main pillars of the Plan: (i) helping the media sector to recover from the COVID-19 crisis, (ii) supporting the sector in achieving its full transition to digital technologies to ensure its competitiveness and (iii) establishing an inclusive structural dialogue with all the concerned parties.

Regarding Euronews, Members once again voiced their concerns over the channels' editorial independence and shareholder structure - although they acknowledged that the channel plays an important role in some regions, like in Arab countries and even in certain Member States. The Director-General guaranteed the full editorial independence of Euronews, already confirmed by independent audits. He highlighted that the Commission and Euronews were bound by a Framework Partnership Agreement, which runs from February 2017 to February 2021, after which, a decision would have to be taken. Mr Viola stressed that this matter would be addressed within the upcoming 'multimedia actions' plan for the new MFF.

Finally, Mr Viola announced that the proposal for the Digital Services Act (DSA) should be published by the end of the year.

In the subsequent discussion, Members asked a series of questions, notably on Article 17 of the Copyright Directive ('value gap' provisions) and Euronews.

## Presentations of draft opinions

### 2019 Discharge: General budget of the EU - European Commission

#### 2019 Discharge: Translation Centre for the bodies of the EU

*Adoption of draft opinion*

Morten LØKKEGAARD (Renew)



The CULT Committee discussed two draft opinions related to the discharge procedure for the 2019 budget. The first opinion refers to Commission accounts related to the implementation of CULT programmes, while the second concerns the discharge of the Translation Centre. Members highlighted that, in both cases, the European Court of Auditors considered the financial management satisfactory. In the discussion, Members pointed out that overall implementation of the CULT programmes had been successful. Criticism was voiced only on certain specific aspects of the programmes and it was suggested to reduce bureaucratic requirements to improve their accessibility.

[Procedure file](#)

[Procedure file](#)

### The role of the EU's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance in addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

*Adoption of draft opinion*

(Christine ANDERSON, ID)



On 3 December, Ms Anderson presented her draft opinion, in which she proposes to focus on the importance of culture and education in developing countries, in particular in the context of the current pandemic and its dramatic consequences. During the ensuing debate, Members underlined the importance of EU financial support for education and culture, in particular for the least developed countries where risks of poverty and social disruption are higher. The representative of DG DEVCO underlined that the Commission is planning to spend some 20% of its development aid on human development and in particular on education and culture during the next MFF.

[Procedure file](#)

## Votes

### Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033

*Vote on the provisional agreement resulting from interinstitutional negotiations*

(Zeljana ZOVKO, EPP)



The Committee voted on the provisional agreement on Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 resulting from interinstitutional negotiations. The agreement was endorsed unanimously and introduces necessary adjustments for the Capitals in 2020 and 2021, which have been hit by the COVID-19 crisis. It enables the European Capitals of Culture 2020 to implement their activities until April 2021 and postpones the 2021 Capitals, whose preparation has also been affected. It will be voted in the plenary in December.

[Procedure file](#)

## Policy Department Research

### Recently finished projects

#### Concomitant expertise for INI reports:

INI report on *Effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps programmes*:

- Introductory briefing on [Effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps programmes](#);
- Briefing on [Virtual formats versus physical mobility](#).

INI report on *Artificial intelligence in education, culture and the audiovisual sector*:

- Introductory briefing on [The use of artificial intelligence in the cultural and creative sectors](#);
- In-depth analysis on [The use of artificial intelligence in the audiovisual sector](#);
- Introductory briefing on [The use of artificial intelligence in education](#).

INI report on *Shaping Digital Education policy*:

- In-depth analysis on [Shaping digital education policy](#)

### Selection of forthcoming projects

#### Concomitant expertise for INI report:

- INI report on The European Education Area: a shared holistic approach to education, skills and competences.
- Study on Making the European Education Area a reality: challenges and policy actions (expected February 2021)

#### Studies:

- Towards a European Education - Critical Perspectives on Challenges Ahead (expected February 2021)
- EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward (expected January 2021)
- Education and Youth in post-COVID-19 Europe - Crisis effects and policy recommendations (expected February 2021)

### Useful links and contacts:

- [Research for CULT Committee](#)
- [Supporting analysis for CULT Committee](#)
- <https://twitter.com/PolicyCULT>
- [poldep-cohesion@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:poldep-cohesion@europarl.europa.eu)

**The next committee meeting: 11 January 2021**

### Useful links

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|---|----------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------|
| ) | <a href="#">CULT Committee website</a> | ) | <a href="#">Policy Department Publications in the EP</a> |
| ) | <a href="#">Meeting documents</a>      | ) | <a href="#">European Parliament - Think Thank</a>        |
| ) | <a href="#">Calendar of meetings</a>   | ) | <a href="#">The German Presidency of the Council</a>     |

### About the editor

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