

Newsletter

Committee meetings

15-16 March 2021

The European Education Area: a shared holistic approach



Following the presentation of the study *Making the European Education Area a Reality*, the CULT Committee held its first exchange of views on the forthcoming own-initiative report "European Education Area: a shared holistic approach", which is among the key political priorities of the Committee for the current legislature.

The Rapporteur, Ms Michaela Šojdrová (EPP), started with outlining the overall political priorities of the report which will be structured as follows:

- 1) The reasoning for building a European Education Area
- 2) Bridging institutional and stakeholder approaches
- 3) Turning vision into reality: common strategic priorities and EU-level targets
- 4) Sector-specific measures
- 5) Enabling framework and governance
- 6) Towards a greater European dimension in education

Following this, the shadow rapporteurs and other CULT Members took the floor, broadly welcoming the Rapporteur's collaborative and integrative approach, which also involves Member States and

stakeholders. Additionally, they stressed the importance of fostering the EEA: not just from an educational point of view in order to provide more and better opportunities for all European citizens to study, train and work abroad, but as a central means to provide a new impetus for the European Project by fostering a sense of European belonging. Specific points that were addressed in this wider context encompassed:

-) the role of language learning and civic education;
-) the necessity for a critical "European historical consciousness" to emerge, which in turn needs to be based on a solid knowledge of European history and cultural heritage;
-) the need to familiarise learners with the European integration process, the institutions and policies of the EU, the rights emerging from EU citizenship and how to actively participate in the EU's democratic processes;
-) the fundamental importance of teacher training; and
-) the need to strike a balance between respecting the principle of subsidiarity on the one hand, and having an ambitious European perspective and governance mechanism on the other.

Implementation of pilot projects and preparatory actions

The CULT Committee discussed the implementation of current pilot projects and preparatory actions (PPPAs) together with a number of invited Commission speakers. To start with, Mr Talebzadeh (DG EAC) recalled the legal eligibility criteria and main qualities of a promising proposal for PPPAs, from the Commission's point of view. While the total number of PPPAs submitted to pre-assessment has increased fivefold since 2009, the number of proposals processed by DGs EAC and CNECT has remained relatively stable over the years. Mr Talebzadeh also recalled that the process of having a PPPA proposal adopted into the annual budget starts with participation in an informal pre-assessment carried out by the European Commission in the spring, followed by its submission as a budgetary amendment in the summer/autumn.

DG EAC and DG CNECT representatives then presented the state of play of the implementation of four CULT-initiated PPPAs adopted in previous years, illustrating the usefulness of PPPAs as a tool for testing new approaches in sports, online media and investigative journalism, with some potentially paving the way for new legislation.

Romeo Franz (Greens/EFA), CULT's budget rapporteur, emphasised the importance of respecting the procedures and deadlines set by the CULT Committee and asked the Commission to increase the transparency of the pre-assessment exercise and to involve MEPs more closely in PPPA implementation.

In the ensuing exchange, Members discussed the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on PPPA implementation and underlined the need for parliamentary involvement in the follow-up of projects. The Commission reassured Members that the impact of the pandemic could in many cases be mitigated by ad-hoc measures, such as the digitalisation of planned activities and limited extensions of the project duration.

Exchange of views on the state of play of Europeana

In order to shed light on the challenges currently faced by [Europeana](#), the most important aggregator and display space for European digitised works and Europe's cultural heritage, CULT held an exchange of views. Ms Schwinninger-Ladak, from the European Commission, first explained the strategy for Europeana for the next 5 years, in particular:

-) empowering the cultural heritage sector in its digital transformation;
-) developing expertise, tools and policies to embrace digital change;
-) encouraging partnerships that foster innovation;
-) making it easier for people to use cultural heritage for education, research, creation and recreation; and
-) contributing to an open, knowledgeable and creative society.



Ms Schwinninger-Ladak also stressed the key challenges ahead, relating notably to aggregation infrastructure, quality and richness of content and metadata, as well as findability of material. She finally explained how Europeana could support both education and tourism, by providing educational resources using digital culture, whilst promoting cultural heritage tourism in the context of Re-open EU.

Mr Verwayen, Director-General of Europeana, then raised his concerns about the potential lack of funding in the coming years, due to the increasing

use of AI, highlighting the need for EUR 36 million over the next 4 years.

During the subsequent discussion, Members reiterated the role that Europeana plays for the promotion of cultural diversity and cultural heritage in Europe. They highlighted the need to ensure sufficient funding so it could properly

function in the coming years. They also stressed that more should be done in order to increase the visibility of Europeana across Europe.

The situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU



In a first exchange of views with CULT Members, the Rapporteur (Monica Semedo, Renew Europe) outlined the main ideas for her draft report on the situation of artists and cultural recovery.

The report will focus on the support to the cultural and creative sectors required to relaunch their activities after the pandemic and preserve cultural diversity in the EU, as well as on the European framework for working conditions of artists and cultural professionals with a view to ensure a long-term resilience.

In the subsequent discussion, Members confirmed the necessity to earmark at least 2% of recovery funds for the sector and to preserve the artistic freedom. They also raised the issue of challenges relating to working conditions, including fair remuneration and social security.

Study Presentation: Making the European Education Area a Reality



In preparation of the Committee's forthcoming report on the European Education Area (EEA), a presentation of the in-house study [Making the European Education Area a reality: State of affairs, challenges and prospects](#) by the EP's Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies was held on 16 March 2021. This study examines three communications on a future European Education Area published by the European Commission between November 2017 and September 2020, analysing the reception and assessment of these communications by the other EU institutions, Member States and various stakeholders. It highlights existing challenges and makes concrete recommendations as regards the strategy, governance and priorities required to turn the vision of a European Education Area into reality.

In their presentation, the authors of the study, Mr Pierre Heriard and Mr Markus J. Prutsch, focused on the following issues:

- J Europe as a common educational space: historical perspectives and early achievements;
- J The Commission's 2017-2018 vision of creating a European Education Area by 2025;
- J Four flagship initiatives: European Universities; European Student Card, Mutual recognition of diplomas, Improved language learning;
- J The Commission's Communication on "Achieving the European Education Area by 2025"
- J Outlook and recommendations on strategy, governance and policy priorities.

The study met with great interest from CULT Members, and its quality was acknowledged across political groups. The lively debate that followed the experts' presentation referred to, among others:

- J The benchmarks relating to students' achievements in reading, maths and science and the need for a stronger focus on quality aspects in the implementation of a future EEA, taking into account also regional contexts;
- J The geopolitical dimension of the EEA and the involvement of non-EU countries, in particular in the Western Balkans and in Africa;
- J The need to give more prominence to media literacy in the EU education policies to tackle disinformation;
- J The teaching of history in Europe as well as citizenship education as means to build a European sense of belonging;
- J The funding issues and the implementation timeframe of the European Education

Votes

Artificial intelligence in education, culture and the audio visual sector

Adoption of draft report

(Sabine VERHEYEN, EPP)

With a broad majority (25 in favour, 0 against, 4 abstentions), the CULT Committee adopted its own-initiative report on AI in education, culture and the audiovisual sector, recalling how the use of AI technologies in these sectors could have an impact on the backbone of fundamental rights and values of our society. In its report, the Committee calls for all AI technologies to be regulated and trained, using unbiased data in order to protect non-discrimination, gender equality, pluralism, as well as cultural and linguistic diversity. The Committee also calls for a clear ethical framework for algorithms to protect EU's cultural and linguistic diversity, so that AI technologies can be used in the media to ensure that people have access to culturally and linguistically diverse content. Such a framework should also address the misuse of AI to disseminate fake news and disinformation. Finally, the Committee considers that teachers must retain control over decisions affecting students' future opportunities.



[Procedure file](#)

Shaping the digital future of Europe:

Adoption of draft opinion

(Sabine VERHEYEN, EPP)

CULT's opinion on Shaping the digital future of Europe was adopted unanimously. Therein, the Committee recalls that AI should be developed, deployed and used in a fair and ethical manner with a human-centric approach, in full compliance with Union values and principles, in particular freedom of expression and information, media freedom and pluralism and cultural diversity. The Committee also underlines the crucial need for a coherent vision and strategy at Union level: one vision that would help achieve a genuine digital single market within an AI-powered society that fully benefits users. The Committee also stresses the potential of AI-technologies for the cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI).

[Procedure file](#)

Policy Department Research

Recently finished projects

Concomitant expertise for CULT reports:

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: state of affairs, challenges and prospects](#);
- Study on [Towards a European Education – Critical Perspectives on Challenges Ahead](#);
- Briefing on *The European Education Area seen by the Member States of the European Union - Synthesis of a survey conducted amongst Member States' representatives.*

INI report on *Shaping Digital Education policy*:

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

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 *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](#).

Other studies:

Cultural and Creative Sectors in post-COVID-19 Europe – [Crisis effects and policy recommendations](#)

Selection of forthcoming projects

Concomitant expertise for CULT reports:

INI report on *The situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU*:

- Background analysis on *The situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU* (expected March 2021);
- Policy Recommendations Briefing on *The situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU* (expected April 2021).

INI report on *Europe's Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation*:

- Background analysis on *Europe's Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation (news media sector)* (expected April 2021);

- Thematic briefing on *Europe's Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation (news media sector): Media Pluralism and Media Freedom* (expected May 2021);
- Policy Recommendations Briefing on *Europe's Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation (news media sector)* (expected May 2021).

Other studies:

- o *EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward* (expected April 2021);
- o *Education and Youth in post-COVID-19 Europe – Crisis effects and policy recommendations* (expected May 2021).

Useful links and contacts:

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

The next committee meeting: 19 April 2021

Useful links

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|) CULT Committee website |) Policy Department Publications in the EP |
|) Meeting documents |) European Parliament - Think Thank |
|) Calendar of meetings |) The Portuguese Presidency of the Council |

About the editor

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