Election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education
(26 January 2022)

On 26 January 2022, the elections of the Bureau of the Committee on Culture and Education for the second half of the parliamentary term took place. Ms Sabine VERHEYEN (EPP, Germany), the current Chair, was re-elected by acclamation, thus ensuring continuity and allowing for a seamless continuation of the Committee’s work on its policy priorities for 2019-2024. All Vice-Chairs of CULT were confirmed by acclamation as well, confirming the predominant spirit of collaboration in the Committee:

- 1st Vice-Chair: Mr Romeo FRANZ (GREENS/EFA, Germany)
- 2nd Vice-Chair: Ms Dace MELBĀRDE (ECR, Latvia)
- 3rd Vice-Chair: Mr Victor NEGRESCU (S&D, Romania)
- 4th Vice-Chair: Ms Michaela ŠOJDROVÁ (EPP, Czech Republic)
Presentation of the priorities of the French Presidency

Exchange of views with the French Minister of Culture (Ms Roselyne Bachelot), Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (Ms Frédérique Vidal), Minister of National Education, Youth and Sports, (Mr Jean-Michel Blanquer) and the State Secretary in charge of Youth and Engagement (Ms Sarah El Haïry) (26-27 January, 7 February 2022)

In her intervention in the CULT Committee on 26 January, French Minister of Culture, Ms Bachelot, underlined that the French Presidency is keen on showing strong support to a sector hit hard by the current pandemic by reinforcing intercultural exchanges through mobility for artists and professionals in the cultural sector and through multilingualism in the digital environment. Minister Bachelot also made a clear commitment towards promoting a new European strategy for Cultural and Creative Industries, to encourage innovation in the cultural sector and support export strategies for European cultural businesses. In addition, Minister Bachelot also insisted on the need to reinforce European cultural diversity in the dimension of education by improving the attractiveness of the EU for students, researchers and professors. In addition, according to her, the presidency will be strengthening inclusiveness in mobility as a way to reinforce the sense of belonging and help build a shared perspective, in particular for young Europeans. In this context, the Presidency will also seek to promote intellectual debate at European level by setting up an independent committee on the history of Europe and the creation of an Academy of Europe which will bring together intellectuals from the 27 Member States across disciplines.

On 7 February, Minister Blanquer reiterated the importance of education as a key factor of individual success and as building element for cohesive societies. Therefore, the French Presidency will work towards relaunching an inclusive and better-recognised youth mobility, but also mobility for teachers to improve their professional training, skills and perspectives. Overall, the accent was put on the construction of a genuine European education space with strong investment in education, reinforced mobility, and improved international attractiveness of its educational institutions.
In addition, State Secretary Sarah El Hairy underlined the need to tackle the negative multifaceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and show strong support in particular to young people with fewer opportunities. Overall, the Presidency will be promoting opportunities for young people to open new perspectives and help them reinvent their future with optimism and confidence and in particular though improved engagement and participation channels. The Presidency will launch the new, 9th Cycle of the youth dialogue focusing on inclusiveness and sustainability – two of the most important issues to young people.

The discussions between the French Ministers and CULT Members developed, inter alia, around questions related to the importance of culture for social cohesion in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the role of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the national recovery plans for the cultural and creative sectors and the implementation of key European legislation in the audio-visual sector. Members of the Committee also asked the Presidency for a clear commitment to tackling the negative effects of the pandemic on young people and in the education sector, for more funding to be dedicated to the most disadvantaged for whom international mobility is out of reach. They also urged the Presidency to make steady progress and complete the European Education Area (EEA) by 2025, to remove remaining barriers to the mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications and to foster a genuine European citizenship education based on a shared European curriculum voluntarily endorsed by the Member States. Many of the speakers also underlined the importance to deliver a strong message to young people during the undergoing European Year of Youth 2022.

Furthermore, the debate centred around the Digital Services Act and Digital Market Act directives, the Council’s intentions with regard to the follow-up of the MAAPs, video games, media freedom and support for the Fund for Investigative Journalism, multilingualism and translation policies.

On the EEA, see also the recent publication by the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies on *Making the European Education Area a reality: state of affairs, challenges and prospects*, February 2021.
Exchange of views with the Chair of ERGA
(13 January 2022)

The CULT Committee held an exchange of views with Mr Karim Ibourki, the newly appointed Chair of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA). The discussion was an opportunity to discuss ERGA’s ongoing work and priorities for 2022 on several matters of interest to the CULT Committee, namely on the ongoing implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), on the Digital Services Act (DSA) and on the European Democracy Action Plan.

In his intervention, Mr Ibourki highlighted the need to strengthen democracy in the digital world and to fight against fake news. Other topics covered during the exchange of views related to the major challenges posed by online platforms and the importance of human oversight of AI tools. In addition, Mr Ibourki referred to the new COM proposal on political advertising and ERGA’s role in the public consultation on the Media Freedom Act.

The Q&A session was lively, with several questions raised regarding media concentration in Europe, independence of regulators, budgetary constraints and governance aspects of the future DSA. Members showed genuine willingness for a stronger cooperation with ERGA in the future.

Joint ITRE-CULT exchange of views on the New European Bauhaus initiative
(1 February 2022)

A joint CULT and ITRE exchange of views took place on the New European Bauhaus (NEB), the first step in the process of adopting a joint CULT-ITRE own-initiative report on the topic. Members from the associated REGI and EMPL Committees also took part in the event.

After an introduction by the two co-chairs, Ms Patrizia TOIA (ITRE) and Ms Sabine Verheyen (CULT), the two Co-Rapporteurs set out their vision for the NEB report. Mr Marcos Ros Sempere (S&D, Spain), CULT Rapporteur, insisted that NEB should improve citizens’ quality of life and improve inclusion. Mr Christian Ehler (EPP, Germany), ITRE Rapporteur, wanted to see the initiative supported through well identified resources and, in the future, a freshly funded instrument. He urged the Council to consider this during the upcoming mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework.

Commissioner Mariya Gabriel explained the main NEB events so far and recalled that in 2022 EUR 85 million are available. She agreed that it was necessary to provide fresh funding for the future and insisted on the need to facilitate collaboration between the creative and research communities, to improve communication with citizens and to involve them more in the initiative.

In the ensuing discussion, Members emphasised the need to clarify the objectives, funding criteria and future resources of the initiative, with a dedicated budget line. They also highlighted that this initiative should not be just for urban areas, but for regions and rural areas as well. Some Members proposed strengthening the communication and educational aspects of NEB.
In the second part, Members heard the views of the French Presidency of the Council, two experts nominated by the ITRE and CULT Committees to the NEB High-Level Roundtable, and the Rapporteurs from the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee on the initiative.

In the catch-the-eye discussion, Members underlined the incentivising effect that a NEB label may have for industry, the importance of sustainable inclusive architecture, the need to increase funding, and they suggested that an online NEB platform could be used to offer educational seminars open to all citizens.

The CULT Rapporteur concluded that, in order to become a success, NEB must have a grassroots character, reach out to all citizens, including in rural areas and through cross-border projects. Remaining challenges include clarifying objectives, governance mechanisms and funding sources of the initiative.

The impact of COVID-19 closures of educational, cultural, youth and sports activities on children and young people in the EU
Exchange of views (27 January 2022)

In a first exchange of views without documents, discussed the profound and complex impacts the COVID-19 lockdowns and school closures have had on young people. The Rapporteur, Mr Hannes Heide (S&D, Austria), outlined his preliminary thoughts on the subject by underlining that the negative effects of the successive lockdowns and disruptions in the classroom activities have affected youth disproportionately, particularly their mental health. Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, psychological disorders affected between 20-25% of young Europeans, more than a 50% rise as compared to previous years. Therefore, the Rapporteur proposes studying the multi-faceted impacts of closures and their short-term and long-term effects.

In their first reactions, Shadow Rapporteurs congratulated the Rapporteur for steering the INI in the right direction and confirmed their firm will to formulate policy recommendations on how to overcome the adverse consequences of this situation and on how to promote the wellbeing of younger generations. In particular, comparing the long-lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic with posttraumatic stress disorder, Members outlined the need to prevent young people carrying the psychological consequences of this crisis into adulthood. It is also expected that a particular focus will be given to young people living in rural and remote areas. The draft report should be ready in April 2022, with a vote in Committee scheduled for July 2022.
Votes

2020 discharge: General budget of the EU – European Commission
2020 discharge: Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union
(Petra Kammerevert, S&D, Germany) 26 January 2022

The CULT Committee adopted two opinions contributing to the discharge 2020 (Lead Committee: CONT), which hold to account, on the one hand, the European Commission, and, on the other hand, the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the EU. The CULT opinions commend the institutions for their flexible management of programme implementation in the challenging context of the pandemic, and encourage them, inter alia, to continue on the path of technological transformation and digitalisation wherever it is useful, while fully respecting data protection rules. Both opinions were adopted by very large majorities.

Towards an EU strategy to promote education for children in the world: mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
(Sabine Verheyen, EPP, Germany). 7 February 2022

The CULT Committee adopted an opinion that contributes to the AFET INI report with the same title. The opinion draws attention to the importance of giving priority to educational projects in EU-funded development aid. It highlights the importance of cost and impact analysis to ensure that projects meet children's educational needs effectively and asks for the development of methodologies and guidelines to ensure that these projects reach all learners without discrimination and barriers. The opinion also draws attention to the role of vocational education and training as well as of non-formal and informal learning to provide learning opportunities for all.

Guidelines for the 2023 Budget-Section III
(Morten Løkkegaard, Renew, Denmark) 7 February 2022

The adopted CULT opinion on the Guidelines for the 2023 Budget-Section III highlights the main political priorities of the CULT Committee for the upcoming year. The outcome of the vote shows the need to continue to support the cultural and creative sectors and education after the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on SMEs. Furthermore, the CULT Committee asks for additional funding for the Creative Europe programme and recalls the possibility for synergies across EU programmes and instruments, including between Erasmus+, Creative Europe, the European Solidarity Corps and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). The opinion requests a mid-term revision of the MFF and for the European Year of Youth 2022 to leave a lasting legacy, with the importance of planning and financing activities in 2023. Finally, the CULT opinion also notes the post-Brexit situation of EU students, calls on the Commission to start negotiating with Switzerland their participation in the Erasmus+ programme and notes the changes in the ownership structure of Euronews. The opinion was adopted by a large majority (24/1/3).
Intersectional discrimination in the EU. The socio-economic situation of women of African, Middle-Eastern, Latin-American and Asian descent. (Sabine Verheyen, EPP). 7 February 2022

The adopted CULT Committee contributes to the FEMM INI report on Intersectional Discrimination in the European Union. The opinion suggests that Erasmus+ projects can contribute to overcome barriers to the study of subjects such as science and maths. The opinion acknowledges young women’s contribution to and encourages their active participation in the European Year of Youth 2022.

It highlights that diversity and variety in perspectives benefit vibrant cultural and multimedia sectors. Finally, it draws attention to participation in grassroots sport for social inclusion and healthy lifestyles, but also to promote participation in professional sport on an equal footing. The opinion was adopted by a large majority.

The role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism (Salima Yembou, Greens/EFA, France) 7 February 2022

On 07 February, the CULT Committee adopted, by a large majority (21 “in favour”/3 “against” /4 “abstentions”), an own-initiative report unveiling the pivotal role that culture, education media and sports can play in fighting persisting forms of racism and discrimination deeply entrenched in our societies. With this report, CULT Committee Members are calling for more and better measures to prevent media from spreading stigmatising narratives with racial content. They also call for programmes that aim to broaden media professionals’ knowledge on diversity and inclusiveness. Amongst the priorities, CULT Members believe that regulators need to be empowered to sanction racist programmes. They call for learning programmes for civil servants and security forces to eliminate racist behaviour, for revised education curricula to eradicate discriminating stereotypes and include minority authors. Furthermore, the reports calls on the Commission to develop recommendations to combat racism and support victims of discrimination in sport and foster inclusion and respect. The resolution has been scheduled for adoption in the March I Strasbourg plenary.

Implementation report on the Recovery and Resilience Facility

Consideration of draft opinion (7 February 2022)

The CULT Rapporteur, Mr Niklas Niennäss (Greens/EFA, Germany), presented his draft opinion, which will contribute to the ECON-BUDG Implementation report on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). The Rapporteur focused his work on the way education and culture have been addressed in the recovery and resilience plans so far, including regarding planned reforms and investments. The Rapporteur criticised the fact that some Member States have not planned enough investment in the culture and creative sectors and the fact that some available statistics can be misleading. Mr Niennäss welcomed the 10% RRF investments in education, but was disappointed by the fact that this is only achieved at an aggregated level and not per Member State. The Shadow Rapporteurs welcomed the draft opinion which they considered a good basis for the next discussions.
Establishing the 2030 Policy Programme “Path to the Digital Decade”
Consideration of draft opinion (7 February 2022)

The Rapporteur, Ms Sabine Verheyen (EPP, Germany), presented the draft opinion on the Commission’s proposal “Path to the Digital Decade”.
Overall, the Rapporteur welcomed the Commission’s new initiative, but suggested a series of amendments in order to highlight the fact that education and training are key to digital transformation and to a digitally skilled population.
The Rapporteur proposed the introduction of definitions of basic and advanced digital skills in line with the Digital Education Action Plan. Although the Rapporteur agrees with the digital skills targets proposed by the Commission, she considered important to suggest the introduction of an intermediary target by 2025 and a special focus on digital skills for teachers. Finally, the Rapporteur proposed amendments expressing the need to ensure internet access and digital equipment in schools. The draft opinion was very well received by the Shadow Rapporteurs.

Implementation of citizenship education actions
Consideration of draft report (13 January 2022)

The CULT Committee had a presentation and an exchange of views on the draft implementation report on citizenship education actions in the EU (Rapporteur: Domenec Ruiz Devesa, S&D, Spain). The topic is at the heart of a larger debate in the EU in the context of the ongoing Conference on the Future of Europe, as it looks into a crucial building block of any positive future scenario in the EU – the development of a shared sense of belonging to a common political and cultural entity.
In his draft report, MEP Ruiz Devesa evaluates the efforts already deployed at EU level, notably through programmes as Erasmus+, Solidarity Corps or Horizon Europe, and throughout the Member States and formulates policy recommendations for a more efficient and effective systematic approach to European citizenship education. The draft report recommends the improvement of citizenship education in the EU – key to forging a genuine European identity. For example, the Rapporteur proposes the development of a European curriculum on citizenship education, voluntarily endorsed by Member States, and the development of a systematic strategic approach towards identifying good practices in citizenship education that can be shared throughout Europe.

From the ensuing lively debate with CULT Members, it has become clear that the topic of citizenship education on EU matters is of great interest to the Committee. While widely agreeing with the Rapporteurs’ suggestions, Shadow Rapporteurs emphasised a couple of specific aspects, including the need to reinforce the EU dimension in curricula throughout the Member States and the need to strongly support learning about the EU as a tool for building a commonly shared narrative for Europe.
Policy Department Research

Recently finished projects

Concomitant expertise for CULT reports:

INI report on *The role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism*:
- Background analysis on *The role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism*, October 2021;
- Briefing on *The role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism – policy recommendations*, November 2021.

- Background analysis on *Europe’s media in the digital decade: an action plan to support recovery and transformation in the news media sector*, May 2021;
- Thematic briefing on *Media Action Plan: key challenges related to media pluralism, media freedom and democracy*, May 2021;
- Briefing on *Media Action Plan: policy recommendations*, May 2021;

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*, March 2021;

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*, February 2021;
- Study on *Towards a European Education – Critical Perspectives on Challenges Ahead*, October 2020;
- Briefing on *Approaches of the Council and the Commission to the European Education Area: strategic priorities and quantitative objectives*, April 2021;
- Briefing on *The European Education Area seen by the Member States of the European Union - Synthesis of a survey conducted amongst Member States' representatives (internal)*, March 2021;
- Briefing on *The European Education Area: bibliographical review (internal)*, April 2021;

Other studies:
- *EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward*, June 2021;
- *Cultural and Creative Sectors in post-COVID-19 Europe – Crisis effects and policy recommendations*, February 2021;
Selection of forthcoming projects

Studies:
- The European Schools System: state of play, challenges and perspectives (expected March 2022),
- The European Union’s approach to multilingualism in its own communications policy (expected April 2022).
- The European Universities Initiative: first lessons, main challenges and perspectives (expected October 2022).

Useful links and contacts:
- Research for CULT Committee
- Supporting analysis for CULT Committee
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Next CULT Committee meeting: 14-15 March 2022

Useful links
- CULT Committee website
- Meeting documents
- Calendar of meetings
- Policy Department Publications in the EP
- European Parliament - Think Thank
- The Slovenian Presidency of the Council

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