Newsletter

Committee meeting on 25 April 2022
Joint ITRE-CULT hearing on the New European Bauhaus on 20 April 2022

CULT discusses policy measures for Ukraine during a structured dialogue with Commissioner Gabriel

On 25 April, the CULT Committee held a structured dialogue on the policy priorities within the committee’s area of competence with Commissioner Mariya Gabriel.

In her opening remarks, Commissioner Gabriel outlined the measures taken at EU level as a policy response to the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, in particular aiming at integrating young refugees in the education systems of EU Member States. She mentioned that the Commission provided financial support for schools, for vocational education and training, as well as for early childhood education and care through the European structural and investment funds, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. In addition, the Commission set up an EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine to identify the needs of Ukrainian children and to support Member States hosting them, including through peer learning and policy guidance. The Commission is also facilitating the access to Ukrainian learning material and offers online resources and courses for teachers through the School Education Gateway. Commissioner Gabriel pointed out that the Commission is supporting teachers among the refugees through access to EU programmes and exchanges in the eTwinning community.

Beyond measures in the context of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, Commissioner Gabriel also commented on the European Year of Youth (EYoY) and its more than 1400 planned events. The EYoY’s focus on Ukraine is also strong. She also mentioned the launching of the Digital Education Hub in the context of the European Education Area and the launching of the New European Bauhaus LAB: a ‘think and do’ tank to make the New European Bauhaus a reality through concrete and tangible projects.

CULT Members expressed their strong support to the measures tackling the consequences of the war against Ukraine and asked questions on a wide range of specific aspects, ranging from participation of athletes in sports competitions to the use of the New European Bauhaus for the reconstruction of Ukrainian cultural heritage. Overall, CULT Members agreed that policy support through education and culture should in the first place reflect our common European values and build bridges for the future peace-building process.
Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps - scrutiny exercise for annual work programmes

As part of its scrutiny strategy aimed at reinforcing parliamentary control over the EU executive, the CULT Committee held an exchange of views with the Commission to review the policy priorities for the 2022 Annual Work Programmes of Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps.

DG EAC and CNECT representatives presented the key activities and state of implementation of the adopted 2022 Annual Work Programmes of the three CULT programmes and looked ahead to 2023.

The Commission underlined that Erasmus+ has shown good flexibility in support of Ukrainian students. In 2022, physical mobility was relaunched, making best use of new formats such as school, student, VET and adult learner mobility. In 2023, a new mobility action for sport coaches will be launched. Support for Ukraine will be increased with substantial additional funding. Synergies will be boosted, for example by creating a ‘seal of excellence’ for projects that could not obtain EU funding. Also in 2023, preparations will start for a monitoring and evaluation framework in view of the upcoming interim evaluation.

Creative Europe also seeks to offer support for Ukrainian artists and cultural organisations, which are eligible to apply for the ongoing calls for proposals, deadlines of which were extended to facilitate Ukrainian applications. In addition, the Commission intends to set up a special action to support the Cultural and Creative Sector in Ukraine. Ukraine also participates fully in the cross-sectoral, and partially in the MEDIA strands. A novelty in 2022 is the launch of a new mobility tool for artists. DG EAC explicitly asked the Committee for help in dealing with the much lower budget expected for 2023 (-25%), following the frontloadings that happened in 2021 and 2022.

The Commission is applying greater flexibility in this year’s implementation of the European Solidarity Corps in response to the Ukrainian crisis. Furthermore, the Corps focuses on mitigating extreme weather events and replying to public health issues. In 2023, the Corps will continue with the same specific priorities, including tackling the consequences of the war against Ukraine, in particular through the launch of its humanitarian aid strand. In 2023, the Commission intends to reinforce the budget for solidarity projects and grassroots projects focusing on local needs.

In the subsequent discussion, Members challenged the Commission over the ongoing technical problems with the application of new IT tools. Instead of simplifying procedures and alleviating the administrative burden, the new IT systems seem to have imposed additional barriers to project submission, especially for small organisations. DG EAC confirmed the challenges and insisted that they are working to improve the user-friendliness of its IT tools. Members also requested more details on how to facilitate Ukrainian applications for EU funding, the adoption timeline of the 2023 work programmes and EU support for the music sector. Other issues raised in the discussion were the possible participation of Switzerland and the UK in Erasmus+, the need to accelerate the mutual recognition of diplomas, to seek synergies with the New European Bauhaus, also for the future reconstruction in Ukraine, and to ‘green’ the CULT programmes.
Joint ITRE-CULT hearing on the New European Bauhaus initiative
(20 April 2022)

At the start of the hearing, Members listened to a recorded video address by Commission President von der Leyen, in which she underlined that the New European Bauhaus initiative (NEB) is already inspiring innovative projects, including in the Commission’s own real estate portfolio, and fostering novel collaborations in and between Member States. She underlined that the NEB could also support reconstruction efforts in Ukraine after the war.

The co-rapporteurs, Christian Ehler (EPP, ITRE) and Marcos Ros Sempere (S&D, CULT), presented their draft report on the NEB, the ultimate objective of which is to contribute to improving the quality of people’s lives. Mr Ros Sempere emphasised that all projects need to respect the three principles of sustainability, aesthetics and inclusion. Regarding financing, the co-rapporteurs asked for a dedicated Horizon Europe mission to be set up with a budget of EUR 500 million and, starting in 2027, a standing NEB programme with fresh funding on a dedicated budget line. Mr Ros Sempere also underlined the need to link the NEB with the Renovation Wave of the EU’s building stock and develop a clear labelling strategy. Mr Ehler criticised the NEB initiative for not being concrete enough, with partners still unsure about how to join the initiative. In his opinion, the upcoming mid-term review of the MFF provides the perfect opportunity for securing meaningful funding for the NEB, without reducing funding for existing programmes. The Commission should clarify the criteria for selecting and funding NEB projects, while safeguarding the initiative’s accessible, affordable and inclusive character. The initiative should fully involve the cultural and creative sectors and link up with the European Year of Youth.

Four experts drawn from academia (Ms Jutta Emes, Vice President of the Bauhaus University Weimar), national authorities (Mr Iñaki Carnicero, Director-General for the Urban Agenda and Architecture in the Spanish Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda), regional authorities (Mr Julije Domac, Managing Director of the North-west Croatia Regional Energy Agency) and the private sector (Mr Paolo Subissati, Chairman of SUBISSATI SRL) provided their input, followed by a Q&A session.

Kicking off the Q&A session, Ms Marie Denninghaus (European Disability Forum) underlined that the end-users’ perspective was not sufficiently taken into account. The criteria and concrete requirements for achieving effective affordability and accessibility should be defined at European level.

In the subsequent debate, ITRE and CULT Members discussed ways to implement inclusion and empowerment strategies effectively, involve citizens and regions, also in rural areas, and to link the NEB with existing programmes and initiatives such as Erasmus+ and the European Education Area, the Renovation Wave and the national Recovery and Resilience Facility plans. Members also insisted on the need for stable NEB funding in the mid and longer term, a clear timetable and concrete criteria for selecting and funding NEB projects.

The Commission representative informed Members of the ongoing work on NEB criteria and a labelling strategy, invited the EP to engage through the NEB Lab and the High-level Roundtable, and agreed on the need to seek more synergies with Horizon Europe and look into ways to ensure the financial sustainability of the NEB in the mid and longer term.
Votes

Establishing the 2030 Policy Programme Path to the Digital Decade
Sabine Verheyen (EPP), vote on a draft opinion (Lead Committee: ITRE), 25 April 2022

By a large majority, the CULT Committee voted on its draft opinion on “Establishing the 2030 Policy Programme - Path to the Digital Decade”. The outcome of the vote shows the role of education and training as being key to a digitally skilled population. The CULT opinion proposes amendments that are aimed at clarifying the definitions of basic and advanced digital skills and establishing targets on digital skills for teachers and for women in higher education enrolled in ICT programmes. Finally, it puts a strong emphasis on the need to build synergies with existing programmes and initiatives in the field of research and education and on the need to support the Gigabit internet connectivity in all educational institutions. The CULT opinion will contribute to the ITRE work on this legislative file.

Procedure file

Implementation report on the Recovery and Resilience Facility
Niklas Nienaä (The Greens/ EFA), vote on a draft opinion (Lead Committees: BUDG and ECON), 25 April 2022

The opinion was adopted by 27 votes in favour and three abstentions. The adopted opinion underlines the need for culture, education, media and sports to receive adequate support from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). The opinion questions the fact that only 16 Member States have included culture in their RRF plans and highlights the need to reassess the data available and the overall approach to the RRF statistics. In addition, the CULT Committee recalls the need for an exchange of best practices, mutual learning and for a thorough monitoring of the RRF implementation, including by the relevant stakeholders and by the European Parliament. Finally, it calls for further synergies between the RRF and other existing Union and national funds, also in view of complementing the European Year of Youth actions.

Procedure file

Implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals
Sabine Verheyen (EPP), vote on a draft opinion (Lead Committees: DEVE and ENVI), 25 April 2022

The Committee adopted the opinion in the form of a letter on the “Implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs) by a large majority with 27 votes in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention. The opinion reiterates the importance of education in achieving the SDGs. There is an external dimension through the EU’s humanitarian aid, its partnerships and people-to-people contacts. Internally, a number of EU tools can support SDG4, including greater inclusivity towards the green and digital education.

Procedure file
Establishing the European Education Area by 2025
Sabine Verheyen (EPP), vote on a draft motion for a resolution, 25 April 2022

The Committee adopted the motion for a resolution on “Establishing the European Education Area by 2025 – micro credentials, individual learning accounts and learning for a sustainable environment” by a large majority, with 28 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 1 abstention. The motion for a resolution welcomes the contribution of the three initiatives towards building a European Education Area by 2025 and making the EU’s benefits more tangible to its citizens. The Committee also highlights the important interconnection between these initiatives as they should help create cross-border, lifelong and life-wide learning opportunities for all.
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

Concomitant expertise for CULT reports:
INI report on E-sport and videogames:
- Background analysis on E-sport (expected May 2022);
- **Briefing on E-sport - policy recommendations** (expected May 2022).

**Studies:**
- **The European Schools System: state of play, challenges and perspectives** (expected May 2022),
- **The European Union’s approach to multilingualism in its own communications policy** (expected May 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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- poldep-cohesion@europarl.europa.eu

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**Next CULT Committee meeting: 17 May 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

**About the editor**
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