

## Newsletter

CULT Committee meetings on 27 and 28 March 2023

### CULT own-initiative report on “The future of the European book sector” – exchange of views

The Rapporteur, Tomasz Frankowski (EPP), opened the discussion by emphasising the need to consider books as basic commodities which should be widely accessible to everyone in the Union.

He stressed the need for promoting reading from an early age, recalling the essential role of public libraries in developing reading skills. An increase of public libraries’ budget, in addition to purchases through local bookstores by public procurement, are therefore crucial in this regard.

He also raised the issue of the accessibility of books for the disabled and the visually impaired, which should be one of the priorities of the sector. As part of the review of the Creative Europe Programme, he called for a better use of funding to promote inclusion and, in particular, the availability of books in various accessible formats.

The Rapporteur also stressed the need for EU funding to support the sustainability of the sector as well as green initiatives. He added that translations of texts will ensure the widest possible dissemination of literary works, which is



also a means to preserve cultural diversity. In conclusion, he outlined the need to increase printing capacity for certain categories of works such as children’s books, as well as the importance of digital books and e-lending.

In the subsequent debate, Members concurred with the Rapporteur that a better understanding of the specific needs and demands of the sector was essential. They also raised some issues, such as inclusive reading, overprinting and the role of Artificial Intelligence.

The Rapporteur will present his draft report at the CULT meeting of 24-25 May. The vote is scheduled on 18 July.

## Presentation of two STOA studies on “The State of Play of Academic Freedom in the EU” and “How academic freedom is monitored?”

When people talk about academic freedom, they might focus on academics’ freedom to teach, learn, research and express themselves, or broaden their focus to include students and administrators in universities, and cover additional aspects, such as institutional autonomy and academic labour conditions. What academic freedom entails was a theme that unified the presentations during the CULT Committee meeting on 27 March 2023.



Professor Peter Maassen of the University of Oslo highlighted that the study was a pilot project that shows a trend of widespread erosion of academic freedom in Europe with instances of infringements and violations, which have become systematic in at least one Member State. Examples of this include political violations of academia’s responsibility to guard science, but also limitations imposed by executive leadership and management, institutional management, colleagues, students and self-censorship. Among the actions to reinforce academic freedom he suggested a revision of the current legal foundation to academic freedom.

Dr Gergely Kovats from the Corvinus University of Budapest pointed out the importance of a definition that is clear enough to allow each single element to be monitored at the required depth. To date, most of the monitoring is ad hoc, and not all monitors adopt the same definition of academic freedom. In his presentation, he distinguished between the essential elements of academic freedom and the conditions that safeguard it. He called upon the European Parliament to set up a platform where violations can be reported. He also indicated the importance of synergies between the European Higher Education Area, the European Education Area and the European Research Area, as well as between programmes, most notably Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe.

## Harnessing talents in Europe’s regions - exchange of views with Commissioner Elisa Ferreira



Many regions in Europe face a two-fold demographic challenge of an ageing population and a brain drain. In combination, these two phenomena can throw entire areas of the European Union into what Commissioner Ferreira has termed the “talent development trap”. This is an impasse which impacts the entire economy of regions that find themselves in the impossibility of either developing talents or attracting them.

She underscored that 46 EU regions, where 16% of the population live, are caught in this trap.

Furthermore, another 36 regions, where another 13% of the population live, are at risk of falling into this trap. Taken together, this situation concerns close to a third of the EU population. The way out of

the talent development trap requires comprehensive approaches that are grounded in local realities. In order for these regions to attract young people and young families, they need to offer a good quality of life which includes good schools for children, good quality work opportunities, a rich and vibrant cultural and leisure sector, as well as lifelong-learning opportunities. She highlighted that Member States with high internal cohesion are also the more competitive ones. She concluded that there is a link between the two.

The Commissioner also presented the talent booster mechanism as a tool that supports these regions. This mechanism is based on 8 pillars and was launched this year in the context of the European Year of Skills. It helps regions develop and implement tailored and comprehensive strategies, as well as to identify relevant projects, to train, attract and retain skilled workers. In the exchange with the Members present, the importance of financing education, including early childhood education and care, and the desirability of earmarking regional funds for investments in education and culture were discussed as part of the comprehensive strategies to escape the talent development trap.

## Establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market (“European Media Freedom Act”) and amending Directive 2010/13/EU – exchange of views

CULT held its first exchange of views on the proposal for a “European Media Freedom Act”. Overall, the Rapporteur (Sabine Verheyen, EPP) welcomed the objectives of the proposal, but considered that significant improvements are required. Consequently, the Rapporteur highlighted some of the points that will be tackled in the upcoming draft report, for example:

- the need for a right balance between national and EU competences on media pluralism and independence, while at the same ensuring the respect for cultural diversity, national rights and duties and single-market objectives;
- the need to guarantee the full independence of the European Board for Media Services; and
- the importance of clarifying the relation between media service providers and very large online platforms.

Moreover, the Rapporteur highlighted that it will be essential to ensure the independent functioning of public service media providers,



while respecting and guaranteeing consistency with the so-called “Amsterdam Protocol”.

Finally, the Rapporteur stressed the urgency to advance on the file and on the need to start the negotiations with the Council before autumn 2023.

During the lively debate, Members highlighted the positive aspects of the proposal, but indicated the points that they would like to see further developed and which are linked to the specific wording of some Articles, to funding issues, to infringement procedures, to the situation of the press and to the need to protect journalists and to ensure transparency as regards media-market concentration.

## Consideration of draft reports/opinions

### CULT own-initiative report on “The System of European Schools: State of play, Challenges and Perspectives” – consideration of draft report

Ilana Cicurel (Renew)



Following extensive preparatory work and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, the Rapporteur of the CULT own-initiative report on “The System of European Schools: State of play, Challenges and Perspectives” presented the main elements of her draft that takes stock of the European Schools System (ESS) and outlines perspectives for future development. To that aim, the report is structured as follows:

1. State of affairs of the European Schools System (ESS) and vision;
2. Governance, management and legal issues;
3. Resources, infrastructure and staff;
4. Educational and pedagogical quality; and
5. Outlook.

Being based, among other things, on a [dedicated Policy Department study on the ESS](#) that had been commissioned by the Committee, this report can claim to be of strategic interest for CULT. This is not only due to many Members and staff being personally concerned by the ESS, but also since the ESS in its providing high-quality multilingual education with a strong European dimension and pedagogical innovations, and with the European Baccalaureate being recognised in all EU Member States, represents a model for educational reform in Europe. This goes especially with regard to the creation of a European Education Area (EEA), representing one of CULT’s political priorities in the current legislative term. With this in mind, the Rapporteur praised the undeniable strengths and the unique character of the European Schools in her presentation, while acknowledging the need for substantial reform in several areas, including the governance of the ESS.

In the ensuing debate, Shadow Rapporteurs as well as the Secretary-General of the ESS and the European Commission representative warmly welcomed the draft report for its thoroughness and balanced approach, while at the same time being ambitious and outspoken. In particular, the report’s hands-on suggestions for reform in the short- and mid-term, while also outlining a long-term vision for the ESS, was acknowledged. Among the issues addressed in more detail in the discussion were the overcrowding of the European Schools especially in Brussels, problems of recruiting well-qualified teachers, inclusion matters, and the need for an even stronger focus on European history and citizenship education in the curricula of the ESS.

The CULT Committee is planning to vote on this report in May 2023.

[Procedure file](#)



## Votes

### CULT implementation report on the “Implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive”

Petra Kammerevert (S&D)



CULT unanimously (26/0/3) adopted the implementation report on the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive. The endorsed report is critical as regards the delays by the Member States in transposing the Directive and of the Commission's overall reluctance to initiate infringement procedures. Another important point highlighted in the report relates to the definition of European works and on the need for the Commission to evaluate the definition of “European Works” exclusively on the basis of scientific findings, obtained in cooperation with ERGA and the European Audiovisual Observatory. Additionally, the report emphasises other important provisions, notably on the protection of minors and on the European quota requirements, which should, according to CULT, be considered as minimum targets and be regularly monitored. Finally, the adopted report states the fact that a large number of online platforms do

not provide access to audience data on works provided by media-service providers, while this data is indispensable to adjust policies and to support content creation.

The plenary vote is expected to take place in May 2023.

[Procedure file](#)

### CULT Opinion on “Laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse”

Niyazi Kizilyürek (The Left)



CULT unanimously (29/0/0) adopted its legislative opinion to the proposal laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse, which will contribute to the ongoing Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) report on the matter. The opinion focuses on a set of suggestions linked to preventing and combating child sexual abuse and online solicitation of children, through strategies and awareness-raising campaigns aiming at enhancing the digital skills and competences, including media literacy, of children, parents and educators. Moreover, the opinion calls for regular training activities for officials, including in law-enforcement authorities, who deal with cases which involve children, and for a more systematic data collection on prevention and victim-assistance programmes. Finally, the opinion calls for stronger support to hotlines in their role to support

victims and their families.

[Procedure file](#)

## Policy Department Research

### Recently finished projects



#### Concomitant expertise for CULT reports:

Implementation report on *The revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive*:

- Background analysis on [Implementation of the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#), November 2022;
- Policy recommendations briefing on [The Implementation and Future of the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#), November 2022.

INI report on *Esports and videogames*:

- Background analysis on [Esports](#), May 2022;
- Briefing on [Esports - Policy Recommendations](#), May 2022.

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.

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 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;
- Policy Recommendations Briefing on [The situation of artists and cultural workers and the post-COVID cultural recovery in the European Union policy](#), May 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:**

- [\*Protecting cultural heritage from armed conflicts in Ukraine and beyond\*](#), March 2023
- [\*The influence of social media on the development of children and young people\*](#), February 2023
- [\*The European Universities Initiative: first lessons, main challenges and perspectives\*](#), January 2023;
- [\*The European Union's approach to multilingualism in its own communications policy\*](#), October 2022;
- [\*The European Schools System: state of play, challenges and perspectives\*](#), June 2022;
- [\*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;
- [\*Education and Youth in post-COVID-19 Europe – Crisis effects and policy recommendations\*](#), May 2021.

#### **Workshop:**

- [\*Workshop on the influence of social media on the development of children and young people\*](#), held on 01/03/2023

### **Selection of forthcoming projects**

#### **Concomitant expertise for CULT reports:**

*Legislative report on the European Media Freedom Act :*

- *Background analysis (expected April 2023)*
- *Recommendations briefing (expected May 2023)*

#### **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)

**Next CULT Committee meeting: 26-27 April 2023**

#### **Useful links**

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

## About the editor

European Parliament  
Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union  
Secretariat of the Committee on Culture and Education

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