

## Newsletter

CULT Committee meeting on 28 and  
Joint CULT-EMPL meeting on 29 June 2023

### ECA presentation of Special Report 11/2023 on the EU support for the digitalisation of schools



On 28 June, the CULT and CONT Committees together heard a presentation by Mr. Russo, Member of the Court of Auditors, on its special report dedicated to the use of EU funds – including RRF and Cohesion funds – for the digitalisation of schools. The conclusions were drawn on the basis of research carried out in six Member States: Germany, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Austria, and Poland.

The report looks at the extent to which projects have been embedded in national strategies, whether national strategies have implemented the European Digital Agenda and how effective this has been at enhancing education in general and digital education in schools.

The presentation highlighted an overall fragmented approach. Furthermore, the auditors encountered an instance where the principle that EU funds should supplement rather than replace national investments was not respected. They also noticed important gaps in the provision of key enablers such as state-of-the-art equipment, gigabyte connectivity and professional development of digital skills. Mr Russo also regretted the lack of systematic monitoring and comprehensive data that makes it difficult to determine the extent to which the European Digital Action Plan was being successfully implemented.

MEPs considered the results of the study quite alarming. They drew attention to the fact that many schools are not aware of EU tools that they can use. They also commented on the way the pandemic revealed and exasperated differences in digital preparedness between schools and regions. Various interventions insisted on the importance of a systematic and strategic approach in drawing up and implementing digitalisation policies and the use of EU funds to support them.

## CULT Committee discusses issues of common concern with representatives of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

On 28 June, the CULT Committee held an exchange of views with Members of different committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to focus on ways to support the country in its reconstructions, but also to discuss the more long-term EU accession perspective. The exchange of views was a logical follow-up to the overall efforts of CULT to show its solidarity with Ukraine (3 meetings had been dedicated to Ukraine in 2022).

Six speakers from the Verkhovna Rada took the floor to express their concerns about the terrible and far-reaching consequences of the war of aggression on Ukraine. It was outlined in particular that some 35% of the schools in the country are completely not operational because of the damages they have suffered. Speakers underlined the need for practical support – support to build shelters where children and young people can be evacuated, but also to purchase buses – to drive them to shelters and other safe places. They also requested notebooks and laptops for children and teachers who do not have access to safe education infrastructure.

Members of the Rada also sent a clear message to the CULT Committee that they are strongly committed to and are already working on transposing EU legislation into the Ukrainian legal system in an effort to harmonise Ukrainian with EU laws in view of a possible future membership. A strong interest was shown in particular in the AVMSD and the DMA/DSA Directives, but also in the future EMFA. In addition, Ukrainian counterparts mentioned lifelong and adult learning, the recognition of qualifications as well as the further development of volunteering as topics of high interest, in particular with regards to the future needs of human resources for the reconstructions of the country.



In addition, the financing of independent media and media freedom and independence of regulators were mentioned as other important topics. Finally, with regards to the international mobility of students it was clearly underlined that unfortunately, due to the martial law currently in place in the country, male individuals between 18 and 60 years of age cannot leave the country. Members of the Verkhovna Rada concluded by underlining the importance of sports not only for the personal development of individuals, but also as a vector of political messages. Therefore, they clearly advocated once again for banning the participation of Russian and Belarusian Olympic federations to any major international competitions.

During the ensuing debate, CULT Members clearly expressed their preparedness to further support the Verkhovna Rada's corresponding committees in their efforts to incorporate the *aquis communautaire* in their legal framework. At the end of the meeting, a representative of DG EAC gave an overview of the support measures in the field of education, while a representative of the EEAS touched upon support measures to protect the endangered Ukrainian cultural heritage.

Participants left a clear message and wish for additional meetings to be held in the near future to further discuss topics of shared interest.

## Draft Budget 2024: Presentation of the CULT Rapporteur's approach to budgetary amendments



Speaking on behalf of the Rapporteur, Morten Løkkegaard (Renew), Irena Joveva pointed out the severe challenges regarding the budget for 2024. The reasons for the heavily limited scope for the 2024 budget are the rising interest rates and the additional cost for the war in Ukraine. The Rapporteur's approach was therefore to find an ambitious yet realistic position for the CULT Committee in order to protect CULT flagship programmes such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. He would ask for a significant increase for the Erasmus+ programme especially for the mobility,

youth and sport strands. He was also in favour of a substantial increase for Creative Europe to support the creative and media sectors. Furthermore, the need for some financial scope for CULT PPAs was underlined.

In their reactions, Shadow Rapporteurs, generally welcomed the Rapporteur's approach while highlighting one or the other priority and making suggestions for variations on the suggested amounts.

The Commission indicated that the targeted MFF revision 2024 will be decisive for the programmes which had reached normal absorption. All the programmes attracted high interest from beneficiaries and were heavily oversubscribed. It acknowledged that the creative and culture sectors were facing huge difficulties due to inflation.

## Exchange of views with the Commission on the use of the EU emblem in the logo of MFF programmes

Together with the CONT Committee, CULT held an exchange of views with the European Commission on new operational guidelines as regards the use of the EU emblem (i.e., the EU flag) in conjunction with the names of EU MFF funding programmes, including Erasmus+.

In its presentation, the Commission – represented by the responsible Director in the EC's DG COMM, Ms Lene Naesager – underlined its overall objective of ensuring more coherence in corporate communication across all MFF programmes. It was explained that in order to help beneficiaries to correctly apply reporting and communication obligations, the Commission had issued dedicated guidelines on how to use the EU emblem.

In the ensuing debate, CULT and CONT Members expressed their lack of understanding as to why the EU flag can no longer be used in direct conjunction with programme names, thus taking away the most obvious link between the EU and its funding programmes for citizens. Members argued that any potential weakening



of the identification of citizens with the EU – be it directly or indirectly – had to be avoided, especially in times of growing Euroscepticism. They therefore urged the Commission to allow for the continued use of the EU flag in conjunction with the name of EU funding programmes.

## Consideration of draft reports/opinions

### Implementation report on the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement

(Rapporteur: Laurence Farreng (Renew), Lead Committees: AFET/INTA)



In her draft opinion, the Rapporteur deeply regrets the unilateral political decision of the UK Government not to participate in the Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps programmes any longer, despite the openness shown by the EU negotiating team. In her presentation, Ms Farreng underlined that this decision leads to a lose-lose outcome, depriving people and organisations in the EU and in the UK of life-changing opportunities through exchange and cooperation projects, particularly in the education, culture, youth, volunteering and sports sectors.

The Rapporteur also regretted the absence of any provisions linked to culture and the cultural and creative sectors in the TCA, making it de facto a 'No Deal Brexit' for both EU and UK artists and the whole cultural sector, and leading to severe problems, for example for UK artists wanting to tour in the EU and vice versa.

In the Rapporteur's opinion, the implications of Brexit on these sectors have generally been underestimated and this state of affairs is challenging the long-standing constructive relations between the EU and the UK.

In the ensuing debate, Members expressed overall support for the Rapporteur's assessment. Having just returned from a Committee mission to Scotland, Members commented on the post-Brexit administrative and financial obstacles facing those in the EU and UK student and research communities and the cultural sectors who engage and travel across the Channel; the need to send a clear message about importance of educational mobility; and the loss of opportunities in particular for Scotland, which did not chose to leave the EU and has not received full compensation from the UK government for lost EU funding opportunities.

The European Commission reiterated that it regrets the UK's decision not to be associated to the EU programmes in the educational, cultural, youth, volunteering and sports sectors and remains open to discussing the UK's re-association to relevant programmes in the future, the only conditions being that association can only be to a programme in its entirety and for the UK as a whole.

[Procedure file](#)



## EU framework for the social and professional situation of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors

Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D, CULT co-rapporteur)



The co-rapporteurs of this joint CULT/EMPL legislative own-initiative report, Mr Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D, CULT) and Mr Antonius Manders (EPP, EMPL), presented their draft report. With the cultural sector having been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for ensuring appropriate conditions for professionals in the cultural and creative sectors has become all the more important. This has been a longstanding concern for Parliament, as most recently expressed in the European Parliament resolution of 20 October 2021 on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU, which called among others for a European Status of the Artist, setting out a common framework for working conditions and minimum standards common to all EU countries.

In their draft report, the co-rapporteurs emphasise the fundamental role of the cultural and creative sectors, and make recommendations to the Commission and the Member States regarding the introduction of a specific status for artists and other cultural and creative professionals ('CCS professionals'), as well as improving their access to social security, cross-border mobility, fair remuneration, collective bargaining, education, training and career development opportunities, the prevention of workplace harassment and discrimination, the safeguarding of artistic freedom, and addressing digital challenges that impact their work. The potential of the entertainment sector to nourish European identity is also highlighted.

In particular, the co-rapporteurs request the Commission to submit one or more proposals for a Decision establishing a comprehensive Union framework for collecting and publishing appropriate data and for encouraging cooperation and the exchange of best practices between Member States with a view to formulating quality standards in areas relevant to the living and working conditions of artists and other CCS professionals, covering both workers and the self-employed, with the full participation of the social partners. In an Annex to the draft report, they provide a number of recommendations detailing the key points of such a future legislative proposal. The co-rapporteurs finally stated their intention to table a number of amendments to complement the draft report.

In the ensuing discussion, Members agreed unanimously on the need for the EU to take a more active role in improving the working and living conditions of artists and other CCS professionals, and discussed the most appropriate legal instrument(s) to achieve this. They further highlighted the importance of the social partners and collective bargaining specific to the sectors, and the need for facilitating cross-border mobility of CCS professionals and improving their social protection and freedom of expression. Several Members emphasised the need for better monitoring of buy-out contracts and tackling abusive practices.

Ms Barbara Stacher (European Commission, DG EAC) stated that the European Commission is largely supportive of the objectives set out in the draft report, and remains attentive to the Parliament proposals while noting the limitations of EU competences in the field. She also mentioned the relevant studies and work of the Commission on the matter, its support for existing sectoral social dialogue, as well as the regular consultation with civil society through the 'Voices of Culture' platform. The Commission also mentioned the Open Method of Coordination Working Group of Member States'

experts, which is expected to produce a report on 'The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals' in July 2023.

[Procedure file](#)

## Votes

### EU-Switzerland relations

Hannes Heide (S&D)



On 28 June, the CULT Committee adopted this opinion unanimously (25/0/1). The opinion notes the relegation of Switzerland to non-associated third country in Erasmus+ due to the unilateral decisions taken by the Swiss government regarding its relationship with the EU. It acknowledges the calls of EU-based and Swiss student and youth organisations to reverse this state of affairs. It welcomes the participation of Swiss universities in the European university alliances thanks to their association in the European Higher Education Area. CULT also points out that the doors to Erasmus+ for Switzerland and other countries that share the EU's values should be open once they fulfil all necessary conditions.

[Procedure file](#)

### The new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+)

Sabine Verheyen (EPP)



The CULT Committee adopted this Motion for Resolution by a very large majority (24/1/1). The resolution endorses the Commission's new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+). It focuses on a set of suggestions linked to prevention and the safety of children online, enhancing their digital skills and competences, including media literacy. It calls for the development of a European strategy against bullying and cyber-bullying in schools, for an update of the existing EU framework for action on mental health and well-being, and for increased resources, investments and data collection on prevention and support to victims of online child abuse or solicitation. Finally, it welcomes the creation of a European standard on online age verification by 2024 and the recent setting up of the special group on the EU Code of Conduct on age

appropriate design.

The motion for a resolution will be tabled for the September Plenary in Strasbourg.

## CULT Committee @ EYE2023 – Strasbourg, 10 June 2023



The Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) has been at the forefront of the European Year of Youth, engaging with young people in a number of different initiatives. CULT Committee Members firmly believe that young peoples' voices need to be better reflected in EU policy and decision making processes, making young people's concerns a horizontal and crosscutting priority for the Union. That is why the CULT Committee has the ambition to become the young people's hub at the heart of the European Parliament and to strengthen youth

policy and its mainstreaming.

In the session organised by CULT at the European Youth Event (EYE2023), called “Engaged4YOUth - MEPs want to hear from you”, the CULT Committee Chair, Sabine VERHEYEN, together with CULT Members Joao ALBUQUERQUE, Marcos ROS SEMPERE and Milan ZVER, engaged in conversation with over 100 young people to discuss key priority issues: education, unpaid and underpaid traineeships, mental health, demographics and voting age, Erasmus+, volunteering, and how MEPs can continue to bridge the gap between young people and policy makers, in order to bring youth policy concerns closer to EU decision-making.



## Policy Department Research

### Recently finished projects

#### Concomitant expertise for CULT reports:



Legislative report on the *European Media Freedom Act* :

- Background analysis on [European Media Freedom Act](#), April 2023
- Policy recommendations briefing [European Media Freedom Act](#), May 2023

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 video games*:

- 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:

#### Implementation reports on MFF programmes

- *The EU funding programmes for 2021-2027 in Culture, Media, Education, Youth and Sport: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives: Erasmus +;*
- *The EU funding programmes for 2021-2027 in Culture, Media, Education, Youth and Sport: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives: Creative Europe;*
- *The EU funding programmes for 2021-2027 in Culture, Media, Education, Youth and Sport: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives: European Solidarity Corps;*
- *The EU funding programmes for 2021-2027 in Culture, Media, Education, Youth and Sport: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives: Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme - Strand 3 "Citizens' engagement and participation".*

## 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: 17- 18 July 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](#)

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