

## Newsletter

CULT Committee meetings on 5 and 7 September 2023

### Hearing of Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth



On 5 September 2023, the joint ITRE-CULT hearing took place in order for the Members of both committees to assess the suitability of Ms Ivanova for the position of Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth. The nomination of the Bulgarian candidate followed the resignation of the predecessor, Mariya Gabriel, who stepped down on 15 May to become Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bulgaria. The parliamentary hearing of the

Commissioner-designate is an essential step in the appointment process as Members of the European Commission are subject to a vote of approval by the relevant parliamentary committee(s) prior to their appointment. Expressing their wish to continue the strong cooperative relationship between the Commissioner and the parliamentary committees, Committee Chairs Sabine Verheyen (CULT) and Cristian-Silviu Buşoi (ITRE) started the morning with a few welcoming words. Ms Ivanova followed up with a multilingual opening statement emphasising her perspective on the key priorities for the remaining mandate.

Three points play a central role in the vision of the Commissioner-designate:

- The key role of research and innovation (R&I) for the EU's growth model;
- The best ways to foster education and skills (as developing people's potential is an investment in our future);
- The cohesive role of culture for our society, the empowerment of young people, and the uniting role of sport to make us stronger and more united.

Elaborating when answering MEP questions, Ms Ivanova highlighted the importance of the future development of the Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ programmes to achieve these goals. The main

challenges of these programmes in terms of burdens to equal accessibility, over-stretched flexibility and budgetary cuts raised by concerned MEPs became the main points of discussion. Ms Ivanova expressed a shared concern in this regard and the willingness to tackle these obstacles by means of working together with fellow Commissioners, national authorities and local actors. Additional MEP questions covered a wide range of significant topics related to the completion and development of the European Education Area, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps that Ms Ivanova believes are at the core of our European way of life. Moreover, recent examples of controversies that the portfolio covers were raised such as the role of women in sports. Ms Ivanova emphasised that the European values of gender equality and diversity are high priorities on her agenda regarding all aspects of the portfolio.

Following a unanimous positive assessment of the candidate, the Committees' recommendation, alongside the assessment by the Conference of Committee Chairs, was forwarded to the Conference of Presidents (CoP). The final evaluation of the CoP on 6 September 2023 marked the end of the hearing process. On 12 September, the European Parliament plenary approved the appointment of Iliana Ivanova (522 MEPs in favour, 27 against, 51 abstentions).

## Presentation of the priorities of the Spanish Council Presidency

On 7 September, three (acting) ministers presented the priorities of the Spanish Council Presidency falling under the remit of the CULT Committee: Ms Pilar Alegria Continente, Acting Minister for Education and Vocational Training; Mr Joan Subirats Humet, Acting Minister for Universities; and Mr Miquel Iceta Llorens, Acting Minister for Culture and Sports.

Ms Ione Belarra Urteaga, Acting Minister for Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda and as such also responsible for youth policies, had also been foreseen to come to Brussels, but had to cancel her participation at short notice.



The Ministers provided an overview of the ambitious programme of the Presidency, which, among other things, intends to progress with the completion of the European Education Area by 2025 and fostering a European sense of belonging. The Presidency plans to step up efforts in various areas and also to reinforce the existing flagship programmes Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps.

MEPs questioned the Presidency on the concrete implementation of the priorities in the field of education, culture and sports, including the mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications. Requests were also made to progress with the digital agenda and the digital education action plan. Most importantly, Members insisted on maintaining ambitious budgets for the EU flagship programmes in the fields of culture, education and youth, rejecting any cuts proposed by the Council.

## Consideration of draft reports/opinions

### General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2024 - all sections

Morten Løkkegaard (Renew)



On 7 September, MEP Ilana Cicurel (Renew) presented this draft opinion on behalf of the CULT Rapporteur, MEP Morten Løkkegaard (Renew), indicating that the overall budget for 2024 is heavily limited due to the rising interest rates and expenses relating to the Russian war against Ukraine. Therefore, the negotiators have agreed on ambitious, yet realistic requests for CULT's main programmes. The Rapporteur proposes an increase of approximately EUR 60 million for the Erasmus+ programme. He suggests more funds to be dedicated to mobility, sport and E-sport. Concerning Creative Europe, the Rapporteur requested an increase of EUR 43 million, evenly distributed between the three strands. A key priority for the Rapporteur is to boost the

cross-sectoral strand, which supports news media. He proposes a minor increase in the budget for the European Solidarity Corps.

In their comments, the political groups present welcomed the draft opinion and said they would propose some amendments to strengthen it further. The Commission expressed its appreciation of CULT's support for the programmes and pointed out that this was a very delicate moment. The Commission considered the cuts proposed by the Council to Creative Europe with disfavour. A reinforcement was now needed due to the high oversubscription. The Chair confirmed that underfunding of the programmes was a structural problem and so cuts would be extremely detrimental and counterproductive, particularly during the year of the European elections.

[Procedure file](#)

## Votes

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

Sabine Verheyen (EPP)



On 7 September, Committee Members adopted the draft report on the “European Media Freedom Act” (EMFA) with a large majority (24 in favour/3 against/4 abstentions).

The endorsed report – for which a total of 1,785 amendments had been tabled and 53 compromises reached – focuses on the importance of preserving media freedom and pluralism and on maintaining the right balance between national and European Union competences on media policy. The report consists of a series of suggested changes to the Commission proposal aiming to ensure coherence and clear interlinks as well as complementarities between the EMFA proposal, the Audiovisual

Media Services Directive (AVMSD) and other European Union instruments to promote and support media freedom and pluralism. A key point in the report is the aim to safeguard the independent functioning of public service media providers, while respecting and guaranteeing consistency with the Amsterdam Protocol. Furthermore, the report highlights the need to guarantee the full independence of the future European Board for Media Services and aims to clarify the relationship between media service providers and very large online platforms. Finally, the report strengthens several transparency requirements, including those related to media ownership and advertising revenues.

The plenary vote for this key legislative file is scheduled for October 1, with interinstitutional negotiations being planned to commence immediately thereafter.

[Procedure file](#)

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

Laurence Farreng (Renew)



On 7 September, Members adopted, by a very large majority, CULT’s opinion on the AFET-INTA joint report on the implementation of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The Committee deeply regrets the unilateral political decision of the UK Government not to participate in the Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps programmes, despite the openness shown by the EU negotiating team. The opinion highlights the practical obstacles created by Brexit for exchanges and cooperation between the EU and the UK in the fields of education, culture, international youth dialogue, volunteering and sports, as well as the negative impact Brexit has had on those areas. The Committee notes that no truly equivalent

replacement schemes have been put in place by the UK Government covering the same broad range of activities as the EU programmes. Finally, the opinion recalls that the UK, like all interested neighbouring and like-minded countries, is welcome to seek association with Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps again.

[Procedure file](#)

## 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: 19 September 2023**

### Useful links

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

### About the editor

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