

## Newsletter

EEA Midterm Review event on 10 October 2023  
CULT Committee meeting on 24 October 2023

### European Education Area (EEA) midterm review event



The European Parliament – in collaboration with the European Commission – held a high-level mid-term review event focusing on the European Education Area on 10 October 2023. President Metsola opened the event with a recorded message, in which she highlighted the importance of a European Education Area for the future of the European Project.

The CULT Chair, Ms Sabine Verheyen, was a keynote speaker on the first panel, which took place as a plenary session. She spoke of

the European Parliament's vision of the European Education Area, which should provide a coherent and comprehensive structure that allows Member States to cooperate in ways that are till now very difficult. Another panel member was Commissioner Ivanova, for whom this was one of the first events as Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth. She spoke of her new role and the importance she attributed to creating wide collegiality to achieve the EEA by 2025. Also on the panel were José Manuel Bar Cendón, Spanish State Secretary for Education, representing the Presidency of the Council of the EU, Emil Boc, Member of the European Committee of the Region's Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture, and Elisa Gambardella, President of the Lifelong Learning Platform.

The afternoon was dedicated to four parallel break-out sessions, involving also several CULT Members. Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D) was in the panel on empowering young people and promoting EU values through citizenship education. He spoke of the contribution of the EU, mentioning the EP School Ambassador programme and Euroscola. Ilana Cicurel (Renew) discussed ways to support teachers and trainers as key actors for the European Education Area. She spoke of mobility as a way to improve the European dimension of teachers' professional development and ways to address teacher shortages. Marcos Ros Sempere (S&D) was on a panel discussing ways to boost equity and inclusion in education policies. His intervention focused on comprehensive and systemic approaches to inclusion and necessary synergies to achieve this. Diana Riba i Giner (Greens) discussed the facilitation of automatic

mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad. She focused on how Erasmus+ can act as a catalyst and what the European Parliament and the Commission can do more to make this happen.

In the concluding remarks Michaela Šojdřová (EPP) congratulated all present politicians, policy makers and civil society organisations on the very rich and fruitful discussions and expressed her hope that they will continue to work together towards a European Education Area that leaves no-one behind.

## Exchange of views on the Veszprém-Balaton 2023 European Capital of Culture

The CULT Committee held an exchange of views with Ms. Alíz Markovits, CEO of Veszprém-Balaton 2023 Jsc., and Ms. Frederika Mike, Programme Director. The exchange took place, as no CULT delegation had visited the city which is one of three towns designated as European Capitals of Culture (ECOCs) in 2023. Veszprém is a small city of 60,000 inhabitants that had already received the UNESCO Music City title in 2019, it is also acknowledged as the most liveable city in Hungary.



The project of European Capital of Culture 2023 includes the wider Bakony-Balaton region comprising 450,000 inhabitants. The organising team is working in close cooperation with 116 municipalities from the region, within a joint framework of action. As working with so many towns separately was extremely difficult, the decision was taken to work with them in different thematic clusters. This has built regional trust and people have come to understand that it is well worth working together on culture beyond the year.

The year is funded 90% by the Hungarian government, 5% by local municipalities and 5% by EU funds to a total of EUR 175 million. This has allowed 542 projects to be initiated, leading to the organisation of more than 3,000 events. Capacity building, audience development and community projects had started already in 2020. The goal of the project is to turn the Bakony-Balaton region into Europe's first rural creative region, with Veszprém as its powerhouse. This turns culture into a tool for regional and rural development.

Among the challenges, the speakers mentioned the building of regional trust and changes in the financial environment. It has become harder to secure additional financial sources considering inflation, the rise in energy prices, post-pandemic recovery and war. Finally, they mentioned difficulties of knowledge transfer. They linked this last point to the presence of European Capitals of Culture at European level and their general recognition, so that they can move beyond accidental cooperation with each other into a sustainable structure and enhance the visibility of symbolic moments such as the handover.

They also commented about the problem of legacy; expectations are high but there are almost no tools to accompany the transition period after the title year. They indicated that a sound financial and professional framework for the legacy, with the contribution of the EU, could substantially improve the legacy's impact.

The following discussion focused on investments, infrastructure, legacy sustainability, how the European Parliament can support the initiative better, synergies between sport and culture, and ways to raise the visibility of the towns and cities.

## Exchange of views on the future of the European Capitals of Culture scheme



Members held an exchange of views with representatives of past, present and future European Capitals of Culture to reflect on the future development of the ECOC scheme, which has now existed for 38 years and seen the title of European Capital of Culture awarded to more than 60 cities and towns across the EU and beyond. The aim was also to feed into the Commission's preparations of a proposal for a new legal base, in view of the expiry of the current one in 2025.

The speakers included:

Dominic FRITZ, Mayor of Timisoara ECOC 2023 (Romania)

Rytis ZEMKAUSKAS, representative of the Kaunas 2022 ECOC project team (Lithuania)

Alíz MARKOVITS and Friderika MIKE, representatives of the Veszprém 2023 ECOC project team (Hungary)

Stefan SCHMIDTKE, programme director of Chemnitz ECOC 2025 (Germany)

Georg HÄUSLER, Director for Culture, Creativity and Sport, DG EAC, European Commission

Anne KARJALEINEN, Member of the Committee of the Regions

Among others, stakeholders made the following comments and recommendations:

- The ECOC scheme was still very much relevant, highlighting the role of culture as an engine of local transformation, which also develops our capacity to see the world through the eyes of others and contributes to a richer understanding of other cultures.
- The Commission should build a pool of independent experts to advise ECOC candidates with their application preparation.
- As the ECOC application process was already very complex, the future legal base should not add any new criteria, but rather refocus existing ones on strengthening the European dimension.
- Parliament and the Commission should strengthen the European added value of ECOCs in terms of strengthening European integration, for instance by linking them more closely to the European political agenda. At the same time, the ECOC title was a great opportunity to anchor European values better in local communities and should be used even more to give visibility to the EU's achievements at local level.
- An EU-funded ECOC promotion mechanism should be set up to enhance brand visibility, including through the House of European History. ECOCs should also get more visibility in European media.
- Networking between past, present and future ECOCs should be formalised to stimulate their cooperation and exchange of best practices. More EU funding should be provided for activities that stimulate knowledge transfer after the title year.
- An internet resource should be set up where ECOCs could have easy access to supporting materials.
- A mechanism should be set up to improve the early availability of funding to ECOCs, which was a challenge for many ECOCs early in the five-year process.
- The EU's financial contribution in the form of the Melina Mercouri prize, funded from the Creative Europe programme (EUR 1.5 million per awarded ECOC), was felt to be rather symbolic, and should be reviewed upwards.



In the debate, Members highlighted the importance of the ECOC scheme for the local and regional economy and the challenge of leaving a sustainable legacy after the title year. The scheme's European added value could be enhanced through a stronger presence of European politicians at ECOC activities and by giving more visibility to ECOCs within the EU institutions and the House of European History. As there is a tendency for the ECOC title to be awarded to smaller towns, the focus should be expanded to include the wider region. Several Members mentioned that the value of the Melina Mercouri prize should be increased and that synergies with other EU funding instruments, such as the ESF+, the ERDF (which should offer more opportunities for cultural investments) and the mobility scheme for artists under Creative Europe, should be expanded.

## Report on ongoing interinstitutional negotiations

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

Sabine Verheyen (EPP, Germany)

The CULT Chair, who is also the Rapporteur on the EMFA, reported back to the Committee on the latest developments in the ongoing interinstitutional negotiations and in particular on the outcome of the first trilogue, which had taken place on the 19 October 2023 in Strasbourg.

The Chair recalled that EMFA is the result of continuous calls from the European Parliament to take action at EU level in order to reinforce media freedom and pluralism in the EU – essential conditions for any democratic system.



She underlined that the EP had worked in record time to get the mandate adopted on 3 October 2023, with 448 votes in favour, 102 against and 75 abstentions. The EP mandate is based on the CULT Report adopted on 7 September 2023 and puts forward 295 amendments to the Commission proposal.

The Chair underlined that during the first trilogue on 19 October 2023, the EP team reiterated many of its political priorities, in particular: (1) maintaining the right balance between national and Union competences on media pluralism and independence, while ensuring the respect for cultural diversity, national rights and duties and single market objectives; (2) ensuring coherence and clear interlinks and complementarities between the proposal, the AVMSD and other Union efforts to promote and support media freedom and pluralism; (3) safeguarding the independent functioning and financing of public service media providers; (4) guaranteeing the full independence of the European Board for Media Services, which is supposed to replace the ERGA; (5) clarifying the relationship between media service providers and very large online platforms on the one hand, and the protection of media content and editorial independence on the other. Finally, the Chair reiterated that it is the duty of the co-legislators

to have a legislative text that is future-oriented, clear and supports measures related to media pluralism and to the viability, resilience and digital transformation of the media sector.

[Procedure file](#)

## Votes

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

Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D, Spain)



MEPs from the EMPL and CULT Committees adopted, by 43 votes to 5 and 3 abstentions, a proposal for an EU framework to improve the living and working conditions of professionals in the cultural and creative sectors (CCS professionals).

This joint EMPL-CULT legislative own-initiative report takes forward a key demand from Parliament made in 2021 through a joint legislative initiative. It calls for the creation of an EU framework to improve the social and professional conditions of CCS professionals, through a combination of legislative instruments:

- a directive to improve CCS professionals' working conditions, in particular to ensure fair remuneration and working practices in the sectors, as well as to facilitate the correct determination of the employment status of CCS professionals;
- one or more decisions contributing to the implementation of EU *acquis* in relevant areas or complementing it, and setting up a mechanism for structured cooperation and the exchange of best practices between Member States, including through a new European platform on the social and professional situation of persons working in the CCS. This is to be set up with a view to formulating quality standards as regards the status and situation of CCS professionals-

The report makes concrete suggestions in the following areas: the status of artists; cross-border mobility; fair remuneration, practices and funding, including the impact of coercive buy-out contracts on European creators' livelihoods; the role of the social partners and collective bargaining; education, training opportunities and career development; gender equality and measures against workplace harassment and discrimination; artistic freedom; digital challenges, including the challenges posed by generative AI.

The report also asks the Commission to ensure that the next cycle of Union programmes targeting the CCS introduces a social conditionality, including the obligation to remunerate CCS professionals fairly for their work.

The Parliament will vote on this legislative initiative in November 2023 plenary session in Strasbourg. The Commission will then have three months to reply to the EP's request.

[Procedure file](#)

## Implementation of the European Solidarity Corps programme 2021-2027 (Implementation Report)

Michaela Šojdrová (EPP, Czech Republic)



On 24 October 2023, CULT adopted, by an overwhelming majority (22/1/0), its report on the “Implementation of the European Solidarity Corps programme 2021-2027”. The report takes stock of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme 2021-2027, which aims to create opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in solidarity-oriented projects. It also includes an overview of the activities in support of humanitarian aid operations (humanitarian strand).

Despite the lack of quantitative data, the overall assessment of the programme indicates it meets its objectives. The report focuses on a set of suggestions linked to the strong inclusiveness of the programme supporting young people, including those with fewer opportunities. It emphasises the need to improve the functioning of digital tools and systems, including the linguistic support for participants, the recognition of learning outcomes from volunteering activities (for example by awarding credits), and of youth work. It also suggests using the ESC to promote European citizenship education to young people and strengthening its European civic mobility or transnational volunteering capabilities.

The report suggests to reinforce the visibility and budget of the programme to allow for even more participants, especially those with fewer opportunities. It also calls to at least double the financial envelope for the implementation of the programme in the future, as the EUR 1.009 billion for the 2021-2027 period is not sufficient to cover the increasing demand and unforeseen circumstances.

Finally, the report calls for the creation of a special visa category for non-Schengen participants, for exploring new formats of volunteering and revising the number of participants for in-country activities for the next programming period, and strengthening the specific support role of participating organisations.

[Procedure file](#)

## Policy Department Research

### Recently finished projects

#### Concomitant expertise for CULT reports:



#### Implementation reports on MFF programmes

- Study on [The EU funding programmes for 2021-2027 in Culture, Media, Education, Youth and Sport: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives: Erasmus +](#); September 2023;
- Study on [The EU funding programmes for 2021-2027 in Culture, Media, Education, Youth and Sport: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives: Creative Europe](#); September 2023;

- Study on [\*The EU funding programmes for 2021-2027 in Culture, Media, Education, Youth and Sport: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives: European Solidarity Corps\*](#); September 2023;
- Study on [\*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"\*](#); September 2023.

Legislative report on the *European Media Freedom Act*:

- Background analysis on [\*European Media Freedom Act\*](#), April 2023;
- Policy recommendations briefing on [\*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.
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#### 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: 27 - 28 November 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](#)

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