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*Plenary sitting*

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**A9-0244/2022**

13.10.2022

# REPORT

on esports and video games  
(2022/2027(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

Rapporteur: Laurence Farreng

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on esports and video games (2022/2027(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 6 and 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which specify the competences and actions of the Union in the area of sport,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013<sup>1</sup>, and in particular its media strand,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013<sup>2</sup>, and in particular the sport chapter thereof,
- having regard to Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 15 December 2020 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Single Market For Digital Services (Digital Services Act) and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (COM(2020)0825),
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 15 December 2020 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector (Digital Markets Act) (COM(2020)0842),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 December 2020 entitled ‘Europe’s Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation’ (COM(2020)0784),
- having regard to its resolution of 17 September 2020 on the cultural recovery of Europe<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 March 2021 on shaping digital education policy<sup>5</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> [OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 34.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [OJ L 303, 28.11.2018, p. 69.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [OJ C 385, 22.9.2021, p. 152.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [OJ C 494, 8.12.2021, p. 2.](#)

- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 entitled ‘Europe’s Media in the Digital Decade: an Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation’<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 23 November 2021 entitled ‘EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward’<sup>7</sup>, and in particular its call for the EU institutions to launch a debate on the future and on the opportunities of esports and to collect data in order to assess this sector and present a study on its social and economic impact,
  - having regard to the Council resolution of 1 March 2002 on the protection of consumers, in particular young people, through the labelling of certain video games and computer games according to age group<sup>8</sup>,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions of 4 April 2022 on building a European Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem<sup>9</sup>,
  - having regard to the Commission Recommendation of 27 October 2011 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation<sup>10</sup>,
  - having regard to the Commission communication of 11 May 2022 entitled ‘A Digital Decade for children and youth: the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+)’ (COM(2022)0212),
  - having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU<sup>11</sup>,
  - having regard to the World Health Organization’s decision to include gaming disorder in the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11),
  - having regard to the International Olympic Committee’s decision to launch the Olympic Virtual Series (OVS),
  - having regard to the Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe<sup>12</sup>,
  - having regard to its study entitled ‘Esports’<sup>13</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A9-0244/2022),
- A. whereas the video game ecosystem has become a leading cultural and creative industry (CCI) all over the world, with an estimated European market size of EUR 23.3 billion in

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<sup>6</sup> [OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 71.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [OJ C 224, 8.6.2022, p. 2.](#)

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 65, 14.3.2002, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> OJ C 160, 13.4.2022, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> OJ L 283, 29.10.2011, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> Scholz, T. M. and Nothelfer, N. (2022), Research for CULT Committee – *Esports*, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels.

2021<sup>14</sup>, including more than 4 900 game studios and 200 game publishers<sup>15</sup>, and has great potential for growth, innovation, creativity and triggering positive change for the whole sector; whereas this industry is one of the few in the CCI to have experienced turnover growth during the COVID-19 crisis<sup>16</sup>;

- B. whereas the video game ecosystem is an integral part of the CCIs, successfully inspiring and drawing on many other creative and cultural industries, such as films and books;
- C. whereas video games have proven to be a powerful cross-sectoral medium, building on the experiences of various artistic techniques while combining them with innovative technologies;
- D. whereas the Court of Justice of the EU has recognised that video games are complex creative works with a unique and creative value, protected both by Directive 2009/24/EC on the legal protection of computer programs and Directive 2001/29/EC on copyright;
- E. whereas the success of European video game streamers and esports clubs and tournaments shows that younger generations of European citizens are actively seeking to participate in the new creator economy driven by video games; whereas national, regional and global esports tournaments could be perceived as fostering cultural exchanges and promote European culture and values;
- F. whereas the video game industry employed approximately 98 000 people in Europe in 2020<sup>17</sup>, of whom only an estimated 20 % are women<sup>18</sup>; whereas there is a strong gender imbalance in esports; whereas getting more women into video games and esports should be treated as a strategic priority;
- G. whereas half of all Europeans consider themselves to be video game players, of whom almost half are women, and the average age of a video game player in Europe is 31.3 years; whereas over 70 % of young people aged 6-24 in the EU play video games, although the majority of players are over 18<sup>19</sup>;
- H. whereas the video game industry brings together a wide range of skills and know-how for writing, design, artistic creation, digital development, publishing, distribution and localisation; whereas a video game is first and foremost a work of intellectual property (IP) on which the value chain is based; whereas the issue of IP ownership and control has an impact on the complexity of the legal structure of the ecosystem, and creates new legal challenges for streamers, developers, publishers and third-party content holders;
- I. whereas the European video game industry is mainly made up of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) of vital importance to the European economy, in particular the CCI;

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<sup>14</sup> ISFE, Europe's Video Games Industry, ISFE-EGDF Key Facts, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> EY, Rebuilding Europe: the cultural and creative economy before and after the COVID-19 crisis, January 2021.

<sup>16</sup> EY, Rebuilding Europe: the cultural and creative economy before and after the COVID-19 crisis, January 2021.

<sup>17</sup> ISFE, Europe's Video Games Industry, ISFE-EGDF Key Facts, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

- J. whereas the video game and esports ecosystems are strongly impacted by research, technological and creative innovation and must constantly be reinvented; whereas the innovative value of the sector should also be acknowledged, as much as its cultural added value;
- K. whereas these ecosystems still lack the harmonised data, definitions and legal frameworks required to enable them to embrace their full potential;
- L. whereas the video games ecosystem is mostly privately owned, but benefits from measures and incentives at national and EU level; whereas this support is sometimes directly targeted, as with the Creative Europe programme, or as part of the overall support for research and innovation through Horizon Europe; whereas public policies in favour of video games are often incorporated into the audiovisual field;
- M. whereas video games and esports are above all founded on a highly internationalised market with few barriers to the circulation of goods and services; whereas access to the latest hardware and software is critical to the dynamic nature and competitiveness of the European video game and esports ecosystems;
- N. whereas although the EU is a major actor in the video game ecosystem, the industry is largely dominated by non-EU actors; whereas the market comprises many different actors across the value chain, which are mainly operated through non-EU platforms that also act as intermediaries in the distribution of European games worldwide;
- O. whereas video games and esports use advanced technologies such as AI and virtual reality, and have initiated the creation of alternative virtual spaces such as metaverses;
- P. whereas esports are competitions where individuals or teams play video games – typically in front of spectators – either in-person or online, for entertainment, prizes or money; whereas the definition encompasses a human element (the players), a digital element (the games themselves) and a competitive element; whereas esports could be considered not only part of the video game sector, but also part of the culture and media sectors;
- Q. whereas esports is still a young phenomenon with considerable potential to evolve and transform other sectors at EU and national level, and is developing differently across the Member States;
- R. whereas esports differ from sports in that they are digital by definition; whereas esports is a phenomenon essentially driven by private entities, with the IP rights belonging to the game publisher and competition rights either to the game publisher or arranged on a contract-by-contract basis;
- S. whereas esports are an increasingly popular entertainment activity, characterised by both a large video game player base and a small number of professional players and teams; whereas esports start at an amateur level, but can also be practised at a semi-professional or professional level by teams and players;
- T. whereas video games and esports have great potential for use in EU educational policies and lifelong learning; whereas the use of video games in the classroom often encourages students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, the arts and maths

(STEAM), and esports can help to develop several skills which are essential in a digital society; whereas video games and esports are widely accessible and can be used to increase inclusivity and diversity in learning environments such as in the classroom and throughout life;

- U. whereas video games have the ability to bring the school environment closer to pupils' everyday reality, in which video games often figure prominently; whereas there are indications that primary school teachers that have used video games in the classroom have in some cases observed a significant improvement in several key skills, such as problem-solving and analytical, social and intellectual skills, spatial coordination, and teamwork, as well as better levels of concentration; whereas esports can also be incorporated in education and contribute to the acquisition of digital competences and skills;
- V. whereas many video game players are young people in the middle of their intellectual, mental, social and physical development; whereas the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as a deterioration in the level of physical activity, increased anxiety or other types of mental ill-being, have been affecting these young people; whereas, nevertheless, video games and esports can provide significant mental health benefits for many players and have the capacity to disseminate positive values, which should be pursued for the younger audience in particular;
- W. whereas the video game sector offers an increasing number of job opportunities for many cultural creators; whereas as with many creative sectors, workers in the video game sector are particularly subject to a very high work rate in the run-up to the release of a game, also known as the 'crunch', including overtime that often goes unpaid; whereas these conditions can be detrimental to workers;
- X. whereas esports and video games also pose challenges for European society in the digital sphere; whereas some of these challenges include cheating, adverse impacts on environmental sustainability, online features that can be misused for online violence or harassment, especially towards female players, and disinformation;
- Y. whereas the monetisation of video games through micro-transactions, in game currencies and loot boxes containing random in-game content are common in some video games; whereas loot boxes can sometimes also be paid for with real money; whereas aggressive design could potentially have harmful financial consequences for players, especially minors or those who are most vulnerable, through unwanted or uncontrolled spending; whereas in some cases, loot boxes can be considered a 'pay-to-win' mechanism; whereas a uniform EU approach is needed in order to ensure robust consumer protection;

### ***Video games and esports: challenges, opportunities and a European strategy***

1. Calls on the Commission and the Council to acknowledge the value of the video game ecosystem as a major CCI with strong potential for further growth and innovation; calls for the development of a coherent, long-term European video game strategy, which should benefit all actors involved fairly and adequately, while taking into account esports and the current dependence on imports and building on existing national strategies in order to support EU actors and EU start-ups in these sectors;

2. Underlines that for its work on the new video game strategy, the Commission should build on the targets of its communication on the 2030 Digital Compass in order to enhance access to talent and financing, address the shortage of digital skills, and provide reliable infrastructure and connectivity, as well as ensure that the relevant stakeholders are involved in the process; points out that the strategy should take into account future challenges and the fast-paced changes in the sector;
3. Considers that the creation of a truly integrated European video game sector will require more video game productions and co-productions by European actors; welcomes the fact that the Creative Europe and Horizon Europe programmes provide funding for the European video game sector, including research and innovation, through specific calls for tender with European added value; regrets, however, the low amount of funding committed so far, and the fact that the eligibility criteria are not always fit for the sector's needs, especially SMEs; calls, in this regard, for greater support and investment in research and development (R&D) and training in order to maximise game creation opportunities throughout all Member States and encourage the development of and retain European talent; calls on the Commission to support public and private initiatives that contribute to the development of a more competitive European video game landscape;
4. Underlines that national incentives and support for local video game development, including SMEs, should be encouraged and facilitated through EU State aid rules such as the General Block Exemption Regulation;
5. Underlines the importance of promoting and supporting the international trade and marketing of video games created in Europe; calls on the Commission, in this context, to map and define the European video game industry and to consider creating a 'European Video Game' label, as well as fostering other initiatives at a national and European level to improve the discoverability of video games and encourage the dissemination and recognition of video games created in Europe, including worldwide;
6. Stresses the importance of the localisation process for the successful circulation of a game in a multilingual market such as the European Union, and for the promotion of linguistic diversity; considers that strong support from the European Union in this matter would be appropriate;
7. Stresses that harmonised and reliable industry data on the European video game and esports sectors is essential in order to deliver evidence-based assessments and recommendations, including on diversity and inclusion; calls on the Commission to create a European Video Game Observatory to support and provide decision-makers and stakeholders with harmonised data, assessments and concrete recommendations with a view to developing the sector; considers that such a European Video Game Observatory could also be utilised as a knowledge network to support dialogue for a more integrated sector;
8. Invites the Commission to propose a revision of the relevant codes in the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE), so as to ensure that video game developers, publishers and esports are reviewed, clarified and streamlined and thus address the challenges the sector is facing and improve the inadequacy of the current statistical classification;



9. Underlines that IP is central to video games and a key factor in growth and investment; highlights the need to develop a European strategy for video game IP, utilising both the creation of new and original IP and the promotion of existing European creations and IP; stresses that the cross-border enforcement of the IP rights of game developers and artists must be adequately protected and that fair remuneration must be ensured;
10. Welcomes the Council's position on a European strategy for the cultural and creative industrial ecosystem, in particular on the definition, protection and promotion of our strategic cultural assets; declares its readiness to move forward on this subject, in particular with regard to European video game studios and catalogues; is of the opinion that further European investment should be channeled to the sector and that InvestEU and Media Invest could help in ensuring that its financing needs are being met;
11. Welcomes the pilot project initiated by the European Parliament entitled 'Understanding the value of a European Video Games Society', which aims to develop a better understanding of the value of the video game sector and its impact on a range of policy areas and on society as a whole; calls on the Commission to continue this process by fostering interdisciplinary research on video games and esports, to publish a communication dedicated to this issue and, if necessary, to propose appropriate measures, bearing in mind the need to protect young players, especially minors;
12. Acknowledges the need to safeguard esports from problems with match-fixing, illegal gambling and performance enhancement, including doping; underlines the necessity to prevent doping and match-fixing in professional gaming and to educate players about these issues, as well as to protect the integrity of competitions;
13. Calls on the Commission to explore synergies between the video game sector and its innovation strategy, particularly in the context of research on the metaverse and bearing in mind the protection of data privacy and cybersecurity challenges, without losing sight of the esports phenomenon;
14. Highlights that, owing to their wide audience and digital component, video gaming and esports have significant social and cultural potential to connect Europeans of all ages, genders and backgrounds, including older people and people with disabilities; recognises the efforts made by the video game sector to improve the accessibility of their products in line with the principles of equality and non discrimination; considers, however, that this progress must continue;
15. Highlights the benefits of cross-platform online games both for the user experience by enabling players to interact easily across different platforms and for game developers, and calls on the video game industry to make every effort to make the fullest possible use of this feature;
16. Stresses that video games and esports have great potential to further promote European history, identity, heritage, values and diversity through immersive experiences; believes that they also have the potential to contribute to the EU's soft power;
17. Calls on the Commission to launch initiatives to promote European video games that showcase European values, history and diversity, but also the industry's know-how, while educating people and raising awareness about the benefits of video games for the

development of skills and general knowledge; believes that these initiatives could lead to the creation of a European Video Game Academy;

18. Stresses that video games are an integral part of Europe's cultural heritage and should therefore be preserved and promoted; suggests that support be provided, in cooperation with the industry, for the creation of an archive to preserve the most culturally significant European video games and ensure their playability in the future; highlights the need, in this regard, to build upon existing projects such as the International Computer Game Collection (ICS) and numerous video game museums across the EU;
19. Insists that video games and esports can be a valuable teaching tool for actively involving learners in a curriculum and for developing digital literacy, soft skills and creative thinking; believes that using video games in schools should be done in parallel with raising teachers' awareness of how best to use video games in their teaching; stresses that teachers should be closely involved in decision-making around the use of video games for educational purposes; underlines that this will require better equipment and connectivity in schools;
20. Underlines the importance of lifelong learning and stresses that teachers have to be adequately trained to teach ICT and computational skills; highlights that upskilling teachers during working hours is essential to ensure the successful integration of ICT and games in education;
21. Recalls the importance of European training courses dedicated to the video game professions including the creative, technical, legal and economic aspects thereof; stresses the need to develop leading educational programmes in Europe, including in public institutions and universities, bridging the gap between the existing European curricula and the requisite set of knowledge and skills for video game professions, and pursuing a proactive policy to foster gender equality and inclusivity in the sector;
22. Welcomes the work carried out by organisations such as Pan European Game Information (PEGI) to inform video game players and parents about the content of video games and to protect minors from potentially inappropriate content; encourages the industry, rating agencies and consumer associations to continue awareness-raising campaigns on such systems; recalls that the role of parents is key in ensuring that children play video games safely, with tools at their disposal such as parental control features; underlines the important role of awareness-raising campaigns, notably through public-private partnerships, to educate and inform parents and schools, including on how to use video games appropriately;
23. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to recognise that the video game sector is an important industry for discovering and developing new creative talent, as well as contributing to the upskilling and reskilling of all cultural creators and other professionals, particularly in the context of the digital transition, as the European game industry is currently struggling with a chronic shortage of talent;
24. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to work with social partners to improve the working conditions of all those involved in the development of video games and to ensure fair contracts and compliance with national and EU legislation on workers' rights, fair and equal pay and physical and mental health and safety at work; deplores the repeated reports of so-called 'crunch' working hours and unpaid overtime

and stresses that video game developers and publishers have a responsibility to ensure healthy and fair working conditions for their workers;

25. Considers that in spite of the efforts that have been made in terms of an accurate, equal and non-stereotypical representation of women in video games, progress must continue and go hand in hand with attaining greater equality for women in all positions in the value chain, as well as progress on the fight against sexual abuse and discrimination;
26. Welcomes the Commission's guidelines on unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices; highlights the need for greater transparency surrounding loot boxes, including when it comes to the chances of winning, and a harmonised European approach; stresses that where loot boxes are used, they must be made fully clear and transparent to all players, in particular minors and their parents, in order to prevent risky behaviour; calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider legislative measures, where appropriate, to address issues linked to the phenomena of in-game monetisation, such as luck-based game elements and 'pay-to-win' systems, taking into account all possible means to protect players that are most vulnerable to aggressive designs, such as minors;
27. Stresses that the timely and full implementation of all EU legislation relating to the CCIs is of the utmost importance;

#### ***Esports: fair competitive video gaming within a European framework***

28. Considers that esports and sport are different sectors, not least because the video games used for competitive gaming or esports are played in a digital environment and belong to private entities that enjoy full legal control and all exclusive and unrestricted rights over the video games themselves; believes, however, that both sectors can complement and learn from each other and promote similar positive values and skills, such as fair play, non-discrimination, teamwork, leadership, solidarity, integrity, antiracism, social inclusion and gender equality;
29. Believes that, owing to the borderless nature of the discipline, the European Union is the appropriate level at which to address the challenges of esports; encourages the introduction of European mapping of esports actors at local, regional and national level, enabling Europeans to get in touch with structures close to them, as well as facilitating the organisation of competitions and encouraging amateur esports; stresses that mapping could help to raise awareness about and promote esports;
30. Calls on the Commission to develop a charter to promote European values in esports competitions, in partnership with publishers, team organisations, clubs and tournament organisers; welcomes the use, in this context, of tools such as guiding industry principles on esports engagement and national codes of conduct for esports in order to promote esports that are fun, fair and enjoyed by players and organisers around the world in an open and inclusive environment;
31. Asks the Commission to study the possibility of creating coherent and comprehensive guidelines regarding the status of professional esports players;
32. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to consider the creation of a visa for esports personnel based on the Schengen cultural and sports visas, applicable to all

personnel involved in running and participating in esports competitions, and to consider measures to facilitate visa procedures to enable video game workers to come to the EU;

33. Warns that intensive video gaming can, in rare cases, lead to addiction and toxic behaviour, as recognised by the World Health Organization; stresses that esports players can suffer from a lack of exercise and high stress levels due to the lack of a work-life separation and that the careers of professional esports players are often short, which creates issues when it comes to transitioning to another career; believes that the EU should adopt a responsible approach to video games and esports by promoting them as part of a healthy lifestyle including physical activity, in-person social interaction and cultural engagement;
34. Recognises the potential of sports video games and virtual sports for exploring new forms of fan engagement and increasing youth participation in physical activities; encourages the forging of partnerships between all the relevant stakeholders in the video games and sports sectors in order to create new projects that bring added value to players and audiences;
35. Underlines that video games and esports have a dual role to play in the green transition, both as an industry that must work to become more environmentally friendly, and as a medium for raising awareness of climate and environmental issues among video game players; welcomes the initiatives taken by the video game industry to protect the environment and improve the energy efficiency of the devices used and services provided; calls, in this context, for greater efforts to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of esports services;
36. Highlights that video games can be a social activity allowing users to socialise and spend time together; underlines that the stigma surrounding esports and video games is still widespread throughout society and should be addressed;
37. Highlights the important role that cities and regions can play in providing access to infrastructure capable of hosting esports events or facilitating access to video games for all; underlines, in this regard, that public spaces such as libraries can play an important role in promoting video game culture and providing access to video games and devices for all, regardless of socio-economic circumstances, in accordance with EU copyright law; calls on the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to ensure sufficient funding for public spaces such as libraries in order to support such a role;

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38. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

Video games represent a major ecosystem for the European Union, both in economic and cultural terms.

It is a cultural and creative industry worth 23.3 billion euros, which has experienced strong structural growth and still has great potential with the digital transition embraced by the European Union. Although the market is extremely international and video games seek a global audience, Europe has established itself as one of the world's leading markets for video games, as well as a key player in all stages of their development, from writing to distribution. The European Union has more than 80 000 people working in the sector and is home to some 5 000 development studios of all sizes, some of which are world leaders, such as Ubisoft, CD Projekt and Paradox.

For the Rapporteur, video games are both an industry whose competitiveness the EU can promote, and a prime area for promoting European identity and values, particularly in this European Year of Youth (more than two-thirds of 6-24 year-olds declare that they play video games).

### **A prominent economic, creative and technological industry**

The structure of the video game industry is such that it involves a multitude of players in the creation of a game: artistic creation, development, writing, game design, testing, publishing, communication, localisation, distribution, etc. It is sometimes difficult for the industry to know its composition and potential because of blurred nomenclatures (multiplicity of careers and skills, divergent status in the Member States, etc.). The Rapporteur therefore recommends collecting more data on the way the sector operates and on the major trends that run through it, with the creation of a European Video Game Observatory, following the model of the European Audiovisual Observatory.

The EU supports the creation of video games via its Creative Europe programme, but the small amount allocated (for example EUR 6 million in 2022) and the strict eligibility criteria cannot constitute a real support plan for co-productions and the creation of European video games. Moreover, the value chain is intrinsically based on the development of the game as an object of intellectual property. Thirdly, as the sector is built on innovation, games can quickly become outdated and studios need to adapt to the latest technological standards, or to the latest generation of devices that come out every 5 to 10 years. Therefore, the video game industry is and will be in constant need of funding and investment, that the EU should help to provide.

Finally, it is vital for the competitiveness of the European industry to increase the number of quality educational programmes leading to video game professions, often linked to the digital transition. The existence of these programmes and their graduates thus represents an important resource for Europe's digital dynamism, for example in the context of research on the metaverse, for which video games are a pioneer. Education is also the ideal stage to tackle the issue of gender equality in the sector, as, although the share of women working in video games is steadily increasing, only around 20 % of European video games workers are women.

## **An endless cultural and societal potential**

At the same time, video games today represent a cultural and technological medium that cannot be overlooked, and which has taken a decisive place in society since the appearance of the video game industry fifty years ago. Today, they are a genuine total art form, bringing together techniques from other fields such as cinema, graphic arts, music and theatre, with constantly evolving technologies, in the service of a gaming experience. What began as a marginal practice for a handful of insiders has become in a few decades a mainstream medium practiced by half of Europeans aged 6 to 64, on smartphones, PCs and consoles.

It is therefore a very strong vector of links that knows no geographical boundaries and allows Europeans to be in direct contact with people of all generations and backgrounds, encouraging exchanges and discovery. Video games are therefore an area for the EU to invest in, to promote the values set out in its Treaties, highlighting democracy, diversity, anti-discrimination, tolerance and gender equality. Moreover, the narrative power of the medium makes it a space in which the European Union can showcase its rich history and heritage, for example through the 3D reconstruction of historical monuments or scenes from European history.

In this respect, the Rapporteur believes that video games are a useful educational tool, enabling learners of all ages to learn and play with concepts in a more interactive way, with the guidance and support of the teacher. Also, the introduction of video games in schools can also lead students to take up careers related to the sector: for example, girls who say they play video games are 3 times more likely to take up STEAM careers than non-gamers.

## **Esport: a rapidly maturing practice**

This report also seeks to have a thorough look at the practice of competitive video games, also called “esport” (short for “electronic sport”).

It is difficult to define precisely the limits of esport, but, in the context of this report, the Rapporteur focuses on the fundamental differences between this practice and that of traditional sports. Esport is distinguished by its central digital component, but also by the fact that all esports are based on intellectual property, the video game belonging to a private business operator. Consequently, the logic behind the organisation of competitions necessarily has a lucrative component, which is not the case for traditional sport, which is governed by federations with no commercial purpose. Esport cannot therefore be compared to a real traditional sport, nor regulated as such and it is a cross-sectional phenomenon.

However, the values and skills associated with sport such as fair play and teamwork can be conveyed by esport, governed by rules that respect European values and fair competition. Moreover, the structuring of the esport environment partly mirrors that of traditional disciplines: many players practice eagerly to become excellent and hope to be part of the small elite of professional players, managed and employed by clubs. It should be noted that, due to the cross-border nature of video games, esport has given rise to truly European teams, where Europeans of all nationalities compete together, sometimes against teams from other geographical areas.

The Rapporteur therefore believes that a European policy to promote esport that respects European values could be further developed. In particular, the encouragement of a mapping of clubs, publishers and tournaments should be envisaged, in order to enable Europeans wishing

to play in teams to meet suitable structures. The creation, in Europe, of an environment adapted to the installation of teams, the organisation of tournaments and their multiplication, would benefit the ecosystem as a whole.

## **Challenges**

Finally, it should be remembered that video games, whether competitive or not, can entail inherent risks, especially for young people. The Rapporteur therefore believes that video games should be part of a lifestyle in which physical exercise, socialising and school or work activities have their place. In this respect, the regulator must also ensure that games with sensitive content do not end up unsupervised in the hands of unsuitable audiences, or that the behaviour of players does not undermine the values upheld by the European Union. Although more and more risks relate not to the content of the game but to the context in which it is used, the rapporteur welcomes the industry's self-regulatory mechanisms such as the PEGI system, which has become a standard recognised throughout Europe, including by two-thirds of parents, and which has a crucial role to play in teaching people to play video games in a healthy manner.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Date adopted</b>	3.10.2022
<b>Result of final vote</b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>+</span> <span>:</span> <span>26</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>-</span> <span>:</span> <span>0</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>0</span> <span>:</span> <span>0</span> </div>
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Asim Ademov, Andrea Bocskor, Gianantonio Da Re, Laurence Farreng, Tomasz Frankowski, Romeo Franz, Catherine Griset, Sylvie Guillaume, Hannes Heide, Irena Joveva, Petra Kammerevert, Niyazi Kizilyürek, Predrag Fred Matić, Niklas Nienaaß, Peter Pollák, Diana Riba i Giner, Monica Semedo, Andrey Slabakov, Massimiliano Smeriglio, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Maria Walsh, Milan Zver
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Loucas Furlas, Martina Michels, Salima Yenbou



**FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL  
IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE**

<b>26</b>	<b>+</b>
ECR	Slabakov Andrey
ID	Da Re Gianantonio, Griset Catherine
NI	Bocskor Andrea
PPE	Ademov Asim, Furlas Loucas, Frankowski Tomasz, Pollák Peter, Sojdrová Michaela, Verheyen Sabine, Walsh Maria, Zver Milan
RENEW	Farreng Laurence, Joveva Irena, Semedo Monica, Yenbou Salima
S&D	Guillaume Sylvie, Heide Hannes, Kammerevert Petra, Matic Predrag Fred, Smeriglio Massimiliano
THE LEFT	Kizilyürek Niyazi, Michels Martina
VERTS/ALE	Franz Romeo, Nienas Niklas, Riba i Giner Diana

<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
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<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
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Key:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstentions