



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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CULT 21**

NOTE

from:	General Secretariat
to:	Delegations
Subject:	Partial summary record of the meeting of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) of the European Parliament, held in Brussels on 13 February 2014 (item 9)

The meeting was chaired by Ms PACK (EPP, DE).

Item 9 on the agenda

Exchange of views with Viviane Reding (Vice-President, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship) on information and communication policy
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In her speech, Ms REDING outlined the achievements in recent years and since she became Commissioner in 1999, addressed the challenges regarding the upcoming EP elections, and reiterated her overall commitment to Europe's media, citizenship and culture.

Ms REDING highlighted the success of programmes like "Erasmus Mundus", "Promise of Europe", "Europe for Citizens" as well as the Town Twinning Programme. Regarding the upcoming elections, Ms REDING said that Commissioners had increased their open dialogues with citizens all over Europe in order to raise public awareness of them. She informed MEPs about additional projects aimed at providing information to the citizens such as "Share Europe online" and the establishment of 500 Europe Direct Information Centres (EDIC).

MEPs were generally appreciative of Ms REDING's work. Nevertheless, many regretted the budget cuts (an average of 19 per cent) and suspension of programmes (such as EU Diary, Press Europe) (Ms PACK (EPP, DE), Mr SCURRIA (EPP, IT), Ms TRÜPEL (Greens/EFA, DE)).

Mr BORYS (EPP, PL) called for the improvement of EU information services which would be particularly important during the upcoming elections. According to him, the public had too little knowledge of EU projects. Mr MATULA (EPP, RO) saw such unawareness of the public as the reason for low voter turnouts at past EP elections and Mr CAVADA (EPP, FR) regretted that there was no obligatory voting scheme. Strong concern was expressed by these MEPs about anti-EU sentiments and the increasing influence of euro sceptical political parties.

In her statement in reply, Ms REDING agreed that there was room for improving European information and communication strategies. According to her, the media's negative reporting on EU policies on the one hand, and the Member States' national focus in their relations with the media and public opinion on the other, negatively affected the impact of EU projects. Still, Ms REDING said that the Commission would launch further projects aiming to close the information gap (for example "Europe around the corner" and the "Handbook on Citizen Rights").

Regarding budget cuts, Ms REDING reiterated her disappointment but considered that the EU should adapt to reality. She noted that projects were launched by the Commission, but were expected to be taken over by private funding. She regretted the little contribution of Member States on citizenship projects. Overall, it would remain a challenge to decrease costs while increasing the communication impact.

Ms REDING expressed her satisfaction on the cooperation with CULT and stressed the importance of this committee's role within the next Parliament.

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