

9540/17

(OR. en)

PRESSE 28
PR CO 28

OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3541st Council meeting

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

Brussels, 22 and 23 May 2017

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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ITEMS DEBATED

YOUTH

Life skills for young people's development

The Presidency started by outlining the main initiatives carried out during the Maltese Presidency in the youth field, in particular the EU Youth Conference in Bugibba, the Conference on Youth for Tomorrow's Europe and soon a Seminar on Democracy, Youth and Sports.

The Council then adopted conclusions on the role of youth work in supporting young people's **development of essential life skills** that facilitate their transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life ([8033/17](#)).

The conclusions stress that youth work that facilitates and promotes non-formal learning can have positive outcomes for young people, enabling them to develop personal skills and competences, as well as strengthen their human and social capital.

Developing life skills means not only addressing the economic, political, social and human costs arising from high youth unemployment, but also helping young people - in particular those at risk and with fewer opportunities - to determine and build their futures through quality employment, social inclusion and active citizenship.

The conclusions also point out that it is important to go beyond the immediate needs of the labour market and to focus on those aspects of education and training that can encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity, promote active citizenship and foster talent.

The Commission drew attention to its Handbook on Youth Work which is included in the EU Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018 ([13631/15](#)). It will also announced that it will present soon a proposal on the European Solidarity Corps.

European cooperation in the youth field post-2018

The Council adopted conclusions on the strategic perspectives for European cooperation in the youth field post-2018 ([8035/17](#)). The key policy instrument in this area is the resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010 - 2018), the "EU Youth Strategy"¹. The resolution lays down overall objectives, eight fields of action and realistic and effective means for implementation and follow-up.

The conclusions will provide guidance to the Commission in its current mid-term evaluation of the "EU Youth Strategy". In particular, they stress that the future strategy should be cross-sectoral, flexible, responsive and transparent and take account of the rapidly changing political, social, cultural and economic situation in Europe.

The conclusions also highlight the fact that future European cooperation in the youth field should focus on promoting and safeguarding the European Union's values and young people's sense of European identity and trust in the European project. They must therefore be encouraged to develop their competences and their political participation, civic engagement, voluntary activities and learning mobility.

The Commission underlined that cooperation in the youth field should be based on facts and to this end an external evaluation was being carried out on it and also on Erasmus +. The Commission also stressed the importance of the European Youth Week as a source of information on youth needs and aspirations.

Structured dialogue post-2018

The Council adopted a resolution on the future development of the dialogue with young people in the context of policies for European cooperation in the youth field post 2018 ([8034/1/17 REV 1](#)).

The structured dialogue serves to promote continuous joint reflection on the priorities and implementation of and the follow-up to European cooperation in the youth field. It seeks to involve a diverse range of young people and youth organisations in consultations at all levels in the member states, at the EU Youth Conferences and during the European Youth Week.

¹ OJ C 311, 19.12.2009

At European level, the European Youth Forum (the largest European umbrella organisation for youth organisations) is fully involved in the political process, and at national level member states consult young people when developing their national reports on the implementation of youth priorities.

The resolution calls for a review on how to improve this dialogue and make it more effective in the future. It also requires particular attention to ways of developing a constructive dialogue and cooperation with young people from diverse backgrounds, youth researchers, policymakers and interested parties from other related sectors.

The resolution includes joint recommendations agreed in the last three EU Youth Conferences and also outlines the priorities for the next three presidencies (EE, BG and AT). The overall thematic priority for this next cycle will be "Youth in Europe: what's next?".

The Commission considered the adoption of the resolution very timely, since at the moment it's reflecting on the way forward as regards several key policy instruments that are coming to an end. It also underlined that the next cycle of European cooperation should be closely linked to other youth policy tools.

Building Europe's future

Ministers held a policy debate on "Building Europe's future - listening to and supporting young people" ([8036/17](#)), also in the follow-up to the informal meeting with young people's representatives, which took place just before the official Council meeting.

The Presidency underlined the importance of this "structured dialogue", as a valuable tool for policymakers to be informed about the real-life situation of young people and hear their views on youth policies. Minister Bartolo briefly outlined the outcome of the exchange of views which addressed in particular the subject "Looking to the future, with an eye on the past".

Young people representatives explained that the main problems they are currently facing are the lack of high quality education for all, the mismatch of skills, limited training opportunities, unpaid internships, lack of meaningful participation, as well as the challenges brought by digitalisation, globalisation and climate change. They stressed that solidarity must be at the heart of European dialogue.

The main conclusions from the ministerial debate were the following ;

- need for high -quality regular consultations and effective dialogue with all young people, in particular those more vulnerable and hard to reach
- increased use of digital tools to better reach young people
- developing cross-sectoral policies, covering in particular housing, education, training and employment
- making the best use of European funds and programmes in this field
- strengthening the synergies between local, national and European policies
- promoting and safeguarding European Union values and young people's sense of European identity

Other business

- *Work programme of the incoming presidency*

The Council took note of information from the Estonian delegation on its presidency's main priorities in the youth field for the coming six months, in particular: taking forward youth work files, follow-up on the structured dialogue review and on the European Solidarity Corps initiative.

EDUCATION

Before starting with the formal agenda items, the Presidency briefly presented the outcome of the exchange of views of education ministers over lunch, addressing the Erasmus + programme. Ministers examined how well its initial aims had been achieved and reflected on ways to improve and develop the programme beyond 2020.

Europass

The Council took note of a progress report on the proposal for a decision on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass). ([8867/17](#))

The overall objective of Europass is to increase the mobility of people in Europe for education and employment purposes, by improving access to transparency instruments amongst learners, job-seekers, employees and employers, and education and training institutions among others.

The general aim of the current revised proposal is to update the existing Europass framework¹ to ensure that it is better suited to responding to the rapid technological development and continuously changing demands and trends within the labour market, education and training sectors brought by the digital age.

Although substantial progress has been made during the Maltese Presidency on this complex file, further work is still needed on some issues, such as

- integration of new instruments and services
- references to the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations framework (ESCO)
- references to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- governance.

¹ Decision 2241/2004/EC

European Qualifications Framework

The Council adopted a recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning (8872/17). Its aim is to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications in Europe, by establishing a common reference framework for national qualifications systems.

The wider objectives of the recommendation are to contribute to modernising education and training systems and to increase the employability, mobility and social integration of workers and learners.

The revised recommendation takes into account the many differences between national qualifications systems. It is important to note that the qualifications must first be recognised within national frameworks or systems and only then will they be referred to the EQF.

Member states are asked to take measures to ensure that all future qualification documents issued by competent authorities (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate and diploma supplements), and/or registers of qualifications, contain a clear reference to the appropriate EQF level.

The Commission recalled that EQF is a success story: 24 member states have already adopted it and together with the Europass decision, they are important elements for the implementation of the New Skills Agenda for Europe (10038/16).

Giving learners a voice

Ministers exchanged views on how to improve and modernise the EU's education systems so that these provide high- quality education for all and are more open to the needs of learners (8407/17).

The guest speaker, Professor John Portelli from the University of Toronto, who has a substantial academic record in the philosophy of education and educational leadership, launched the debate;

The main topics of his presentation were the following:

- Students don't want to drop out, they are pushed out of the system!
- In education "One size DOES NOT fit all "
- Equity and equality are not the same thing
- Alternative assessments are needed
- Need to create two-way dialogue about sensitive issues
- Need for inclusive and cooperative leadership
- Importance of taking into account students' life experiences ("Curriculum of life")
- Move from a "deficit mentality" to a mentality of opportunities

Three young Maltese students presented to ministers their views on school and education, recommending:

- more group work and music, sport and cultural activities, less focus on marks and exams
- students should be respected and their personal experiences taken into account
- respect and better pay for teachers
- awareness classes on pollution and climate change
- less heavy school schedules to allow for human contacts
- importance of voluntary activities

Ministers highlighted the fact that education policy plays a key role in promoting inclusion and respect for diversity in the European Union and that ensuring inclusive high -quality education should be seen in a life-long perspective covering all aspects of education. They also outlined actions and initiatives already implemented or in preparation at national level to reach those objectives.

The Commission recalled that according to the last Pisa survey, underachievement in reading and maths has increased between 2012 and 2015. It also drew attention to the Eurydice network reports that can be useful when planning national measures

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php

In particular ministers agreed

- on the importance of promoting European values, which have become even more crucial with the rise of populism and extremism
- on the need to involve parents, teachers, sport and cultural organisations, local associations in all levels of the education process
- that teaching should be tailor-made, enhancing students' personal and social skills
- that assessments should also take into account non-cognitive skills, such as active citizenship and "life skills"

Other business

- *Erasmus+: bringing European people together for 30 years*

The Council took note of the Commission's contribution marking the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus programme ([9053/17](#)). The Commission stressed that it coincides with another milestone event: the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.

Erasmus+ is widely recognised as one of the most successful programmes of the European Union.

Throughout its three decades of history, more than 9 million people have benefited from the learning opportunities of Erasmus+: The budget of the programme for the period 2014-2020 is €14.7 billion.

To celebrate its 30 years, conferences, forums, dialogues, celebrations, debates, and exhibitions are being organised all over Europe and even beyond throughout 2017.

Erasmus has contributed to generating a European identity and promoting the idea of the European Union as a space of co-existence, marked by the forging of common values among young people over several generations. According to some surveys carried out among the participants, 83% of mobile higher education students report a heightened sense of European citizenship after going abroad.

There have been calls to expand the number of opportunities to study or train in another member state since today the programme only reaches 5% of the EU's young people. The success of this campaign depends heavily on strong support at national level.

– ***The Education Summit***

The Council was informed by the Commission of the Education Summit that will take place in January 2018 in Brussels, addressing 'Inclusion in Diversity'. It will focus on priority issues such as inequality and low achievement in basic skills. ([9100/17](#))

The Summit will bring together more than 400 participants, in particular education ministers from the member states, as well as teachers, learners and parents, researchers, business and social partners, and civil society.

– ***Promoting social inclusion through formal and non-formal learning***

The Council took note of information from the Commission on the launch of a public consultation relating to its forthcoming proposal for a recommendation on promoting social inclusion and shared EU values through formal and non-formal learning ([9052/17](#)).

The recommendation will aim to support member states in developing inclusive education that promotes shared EU values, while also contributing to preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism. It will cover all levels and sectors of education, with links to non-formal learning.

– ***World Open Educational Resources Congress***

The Council was briefed by the Slovenian delegation on the 2nd World Open Educational Resources (OER) congress which will take place in Ljubljana on 18-20 September 2017 ([9042/17](#)). The theme of the Congress is “OER for Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education: from commitment to action”.

The Congress is co-organised by UNESCO and the Slovenian Government and is one of the largest global events in the field of education to be hosted by one of the member states in 2017.

– ***Work programme of the incoming Presidency***

The Council took note of the Estonian Presidency's main priorities in the education field for the coming six months, in particular:

- The New Skills Agenda
- Modernisation of Higher Education
- Graduate- tracking initiative

AUDIOVISUAL/CULTURE

Audiovisual media services directive

The Council reached a general approach on the [proposal for a revised directive on audiovisual media services \(AVMS\)](#), on the basis of a final compromise text presented today at the Council by the Maltese Presidency. Member states agreed on the main issues still open: scope of the directive, jurisdiction rules, quota for European works and financial contributions (*see [press release](#)*).

International cultural relations

The Council adopted conclusions on an **EU strategy for international cultural relations (7935/17)** in response to the Commission's and the EU High Representative's [Joint Communication on this issue](#).

The conclusions propose to develop a platform that would bring together experts from different policy areas (such as culture, foreign affairs, development cooperation, education, human rights, customs etc.) to help develop synergies and complementarities when implementing the strategy.

The conclusions also stress the need to ensure coordination with measures carried out at international level, such as those adopted through the Council of Europe and UNESCO, and the need to avoid the duplication of effort.

Vice-President Mogherini recalled the main principles for EU action in this field:

- promoting cultural diversity and respect for human rights
- encouraging mutual respect and inter-cultural dialogue
- focusing on social and economic development in cultural cooperation with third countries

- protection of cultural heritage sites and combating the trafficking of cultural objects in conflict areas
- a new EU approach to cultural diplomacy.

She also stressed the significant contribution of cultural and creative industries to the European economy and the crucial importance of cultural heritage as a symbol of European values and identity. The High Representative outlined several restoration projects involving cultural heritage sites that were being carried with the EU's participation, for instance, in Timbuktu and Sarajevo's old town.

The two NGOs invited by the Presidency, Instituts Culturels Nationaux de l'Union Européenne (EUNIC) (<http://www.eunic-online.eu/fr/>) and Europa Nostra (<https://www.europanostra.org/>) presented briefly their main activities and called for culture and cultural heritage to be given greater priority in EU action.

Other business

– *Mobility in Culture*

The Council took note of information from the Italian delegation - supported by France and Germany - proposing a specific initiative “Mobility in Culture” (9262/17). Its aim is to support exchanges and work placements, such as residential programmes for apprentices and young professionals, focusing on cultural and creative professionals and artists. The programme will not be aimed only at a small elite, but at a wider range of young people with various educational and cultural backgrounds. The European Year for Cultural Heritage in 2018 could be an ideal stage for launching this initiative.

The Commission recalled that 1/3 of the Creative Europe budget is devoted to cultural mobility.

– *Infringements of copyright in the audiovisual and cultural sector*

The Council took note of information from the Commission concerning an enforcement system against commercial scale infringements in this sector, in the context of the mid-term review of the Digital Single Market Strategy (9029/17). The copyright reform is one of the key measures of the strategy. The Commission announced that it is still finalising its evaluation of the current legal framework for the enforcement of those rights.

– ***European Capitals of Culture for 2021***

The Greek and Romanian delegations briefly presented to the Council their Capitals of Culture in 2021, respectively the cities of Elefsina and Timisoara. The city of Novi Sad from Serbia will be the third European Capital of Culture (9007/17).

Under the new decision adopted in 2014 (establishing the European Capitals of Culture action for 2020-2033), the Council no longer designates the European Capitals of Culture but the member state that holds the title and, in the case of a city from a participating non-EU country, which happens this year for the first time, the designation is done by the Commission.

In order to ensure that this action remains visible, which is very important to member states at the highest political level, Greece and Romania have nevertheless decided to maintain the tradition of presenting their Capitals of Culture at the EYCS Council.

– ***Protection of cultural assets***

The Council took note of information from the German delegation calling for EU common import rules for cultural objects coming from third countries (9176/17).

In its Action Plan on strengthening the fight against terrorist financing (5782/16), the Commission undertook to propose legislative measures against illicit trafficking of cultural goods, which has been on the Council agenda for the last 3-4 years, following confirmation of the direct link between the illicit trafficking of cultural objects and the financing of the Da'esh terrorist activities. A proposal is expected in July-September this year.

– ***Work programme of the incoming Presidency***

The Council took note of the Estonian Presidency's main priorities in the culture and audio-visual field for the coming six months, in particular

- the follow-up to the audiovisual media services directive
- access to culture and cultural heritage

SPORT

Sport and social inclusion

The Council adopted conclusions on **sport as a platform for social inclusion** through volunteering ([8937/17](#)), which highlight the fact that volunteering in sport can play a major role in developing social cohesion and inclusive communities.

Volunteering promotes fundamental values and encourages intercultural dialogue, contributes to active citizenship and increases employability. It can also help to integrate the immigrant/refugee population, strengthen solidarity between generations and promote gender equality.

In addition, volunteering in sport develops useful skills and competences (organisation, responsibility, communication) and it gives young people further opportunities through non-formal and informal learning. It can also serve as a safety net for young people who are out of education or employment and on the margins of society.

The conclusions invite member states to support and encourage local and regional authorities to cooperate with sport clubs and organisations, including non-governmental organisations, and to give those people who are socially excluded increased access to sport.

The conclusions also recommend that member states and the Commission promote initiatives such as the European Week of Sport and the European Solidarity Corps within sports organisations, and to make the best use of other European tools and programmes in this area.

Work Plan for Sport

The Council adopted a resolution on the European Union **Work Plan for Sport** (2017-2020) ([8938/17](#)), which aims at strengthening cooperation between member states and the Commission and at developing a short- and medium-term strategy in this field.

The future Work Plan has a limited number of policy initiatives tackling key issues such as the fight against doping, combating match-fixing and improving good governance in sports organisations.

The three priority themes (integrity of sport, the economic dimension of sport and sport and society) of the current Work Plan (2014-2017)¹ were carried over to the next Plan. Emphasis was placed on combating corruption, safeguarding minors, developing links between sport and the digital single market, including media rights, as well as on education within and through sport, the role of coaches and sports diplomacy.

The resolution also stresses that sport can contribute to the implementation of the overarching priorities of the EU's security, economic and social policy agendas. This is particularly relevant in areas such as migration, social exclusion, and radicalisation that may lead to violent extremism, unemployment and to unhealthy lifestyles and obesity.

The role of sports media in strengthening social inclusion

The Presidency started by briefly outlining the outcome of the exchange of views ("structured dialogue") with sports representatives during the working lunch (English Premier League, AIPS (Association Internationale de la Presse Sportive) EOC (European Olympic Committee) UEFA (Union of European Football Associations, Malta Sport). They also addressed the issue of sports media and their role in strengthening social inclusion.

The sports representatives highlighted the deep changes in the media world brought by technological progress, social media and in particular user-generated content. There is therefore a need for specialized and professional reporting. They also pointed out problems relating to the revenues from advertising. They underlined that projects for the community are progressing.

In the follow-up to the structured dialogue, ministers discussed how to develop a **media policy that supports social objectives in sport** ([8668/1/17 REV 1](#)). The subject was introduced by a guest speaker, Mr William Bush (Executive Director of the English Premier League).

Mr Bush's responsibilities include communications strategy, intellectual property, public policy, relations with government and the EU, relations with fans and the community programme. Before joining the Premier League, Mr Bush worked as a senior advisor to the UK Prime Minister's office (1999-2001) and to the department for culture, media and sport (2001-2005).

¹ OJ C 183, 14.6.2014.

Mr. Bush explained how sport can contribute to school success, social integration and personal well-being. He also outlined several successful community projects sponsored by the Premier League.

The main conclusions of the ministerial debate were the following:

- the need to support all kinds of sports
- sport must convey ethical values and positive images and be inclusive
- the need to increase the social responsibility of traditional and new media
- independent media can contribute to ensure the credibility and integrity of sport
- sport organisations and clubs are encouraged to become involved in the fight against social exclusion and marginalisation

Other business

- *World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) meetings*

The Council was briefed by the EU representatives (BE, MT and UK Sport ministers) on the outcome of the WADA meetings which took place in Montreal, on 17-18 May 2017.

The meetings addressed mainly issues relating to the selection of the host city for the 2019 World Conference on doping, code compliance update, the governance of WADA, the 2018 draft budget and the establishment of a new investigations framework, as well as the challenges to the current anti-doping system.

The World Anti-Doping Agency, (www.wada-ama.org) set up in 1999, is a private- law body whose mission is to promote, coordinate and monitor the fight against doping in sport in all its forms. Its key tasks include scientific research, education, the development of anti-doping capacities and monitoring of the World Anti- Doping Code.

A new World Anti-Doping Code was approved by the WADA Foundation Board at the World Conference on Doping in Sport in Johannesburg in November 2013. It came into force on 1 January 2015.

– ***2024 Summer Olympics and Paralympics***

The Council took note of information from the French delegation on its bid to host the Summer Olympics (8999/17) since France considers that this will benefit Europe as a whole and build momentum. The French minister asked for support, stressing that France is the only European candidate. The minister also described the main features of the project.

Several member states expressed their support for the French bid.

– ***Rubber granulates on artificial sport pitches***

The Council took note of concerns from the Belgian delegation on health risks relating to artificial football pitches which use recycled and potentially hazardous rubber components (8997/17).

– ***Erasmus+: bringing European people together for 30 years***

The Council took note of the Commission's intervention marking the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus programme (9053/17). The Commission stressed that it coincides with another milestone event: the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.

Erasmus+ is widely recognised as one of the most successful programmes of the European Union.

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Erasmus has contributed to generating a European identity and promoting the idea of the European Union as a space of co-existence, marked by the forging of common values among young people over several generations. According to some surveys carried out among the participants, 83% of mobile higher education students report a heightened sense of European citizenship after going abroad.

There have been calls to expand the number of opportunities to study or train in another member state since today the programme only reaches 5% of the EU's young people. The success of this campaign depends heavily on strong support at national level.

– *Work programme of the incoming Presidency*

The Council took note of the Estonian Presidency's main priorities in the field of sports the coming six months, in particular:

- Structured dialogue on sport
- Role of coaches
- Preparation of the EU's position for the next WADA meeting

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

EU trade mark - codified version

The Council adopted a codified version of the regulation on the EU trade mark ([PE-CONS 12/17](#)).

The new regulation replaces the various acts incorporated into regulation 207/2009. The new codified regulation will supersede the various acts incorporated over time while fully preserving its content.

GENERAL AFFAIRS

2016 report on access to Council documents

The Council approved the 2016 report on the access to Council documents ([7903/17](#) + [7903/17 COR 1](#)).

Currently, over 350 000 documents are listed in the Council's register, and over 70% of these are public and can be downloaded for free.

During 2016, 22 671 documents were added to the register, of which 71%, or 16 181 documents, are public. The Council's public register was consulted around 380 000 times and attracted 9% of the Council's website traffic.

More details, see [press release](#)

AGRICULTURE

International Organisation for Vine and Wine - EU position

The Council adopted a decision establishing the position that the EU will take with regard to certain resolutions to be voted on in the framework of the International Organisation for Vine and Wine's general assembly (OIV). The next OIV general assembly will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 2 June 2017.

As a result of this decision, the coordination of the EU's position on OIV will be formalised for the draft resolutions falling within the EU's field of competence. This proposal is based on Article 218(9) of the Lisbon Treaty concerning international agreements.

The OIV is an intergovernmental scientific and technical organisation made up of members, observers and international organisations with a particular status active in the vines, wine, wine-based drinks, table grapes, raisins and other vine products sectors. The OIV has 45 members among which 20 are member states of the EU. However, the EU is currently not a member of the OIV.

ENVIRONMENT

Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to propose, on behalf of the Union, an amendment to Appendix II to the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS) with a view to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 12) ([8856/17](#)). The amendment proposes to include the species *Lanius excubitor excubitor* and *Lanius minor* in Appendix II to the Convention.

The CoP 12 will take place in Manila (Philippines) from 22 to 28 October 2017. The CMS aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. The EU has been a Party to the Convention since 1 November 1983.

For more details see [website](#).