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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3428th Council meeting

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

Brussels, 23 and 24 November 2015

Presidents

- Claude Meisch**
Minister for Education and Youth of Luxembourg
- Maggy Nagel**
Minister for Culture of Luxembourg
- Roman Schneider**
Minister for Sports of Luxembourg

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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

Before starting with the formal items on the agenda, the Presidency briefly outlined the main outcome of the informal meeting with representatives from youth organizations which took place before the Council meeting in the morning. The subject under discussion was youth work in the digital age. The main concerns expressed by the youth representatives were the following:

- The need to find the right balance between on-line and off-line activities
- The importance of maintaining personal contacts:”
- Inclusion of this topic in the next Work Plan for Youth
- Increase the exchange of information and best practices, in particular with the education sector
- Implementation of on-line training schemes for youth workers and also through social media

EU Youth Report

The Council adopted the 2015 joint report on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field ([14437/2/15 REV 2](#))

The report evaluates progress towards the goals and priorities of the cooperation framework in the period 2013-2015, based on an assessment of young people’s situation and policy measures taken at EU and member state level. It also assesses the implementation of the "structured dialogue" with young people and puts forward new policy recommendations and priorities for the next three year period (2016-2018),

The report underlines that youth employment and employability remained top priorities for the EU and its member states throughout 2013-2015, with the support of the Youth Guarantee scheme¹ - the European Social Fund, the Youth Employment initiative and the Erasmus+ programme.

¹ OJ C 120, 26.4.2013.

It recommends the following priorities for the future work cycle of the cooperation:

- increased social inclusion of all young people,
- stronger participation of all young people in democratic and civic life in Europe;
- easier transition of young people from youth to adulthood, in particular integration into the labour market.

It also calls on member states and the Commission to give particular attention to young people at risk of marginalisation, NEETs and young people with a migrant background, including newly arrived immigrants and young refugees.

COM reported that although the situation remained worrying, there was a decrease in youth unemployment during the last year. It encouraged therefore member states to continue to make the best use of all the EU programmes and funds available in this field

Work Plan for Youth

The Council and the representatives of the governments of the member states adopted a resolution on a new EU Work Plan for Youth (2016-2018). ([14434/15](#))

This is a flexible, operational plan with a precise timetable to enable the EU and its member states to continue to tackle more promptly and efficiently the continuing high youth unemployment rates and the consequences of the economic crisis for young people. It sets out six priorities:

- Social inclusion of all young people;
- Participation of all young people in democratic and civic life;
- Transition of young people from youth to adulthood;
- Support for young people's health and well-being ;
- Addressing challenges and opportunities of the digital era for youth policy; and
- Responses to the opportunities and challenges presented by the increasing numbers of young migrants and refugees in the EU.

These priorities are closely linked to those set out in the Joint EU Youth Report to ensure coherence and efficiency. The Work Plan is intended as a practical tool to implement these objectives, which require reinforced cross-sectoral cooperation in the youth field. It also calls for the active involvement of youth ministries in national policy-making in the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Semester.

The Work Plan may be reviewed by the Council in light of results achieved and policy developments at EU level.

Political participation of young people

The Council adopted a resolution on improving young people political participation in the democratic life of Europe ([14435/1/15 REV 1](#)), inviting member states to develop national, regional and/or local strategies and programmes for enhancing the political participation of all young people, especially young people with fewer opportunities.

Those strategies could include, in particular, developing cross-sectoral cooperation between formal education and non-formal learning, promoting alternative forms of political participation, increasing local and regional participation opportunities, supporting youth work and youth organisations.

Ministers underlined that this has now become a vital issue for our democracies. Participation and active citizenship can prevent marginalisation, intolerance and radicalisation.

The Presidency recalled that a key issue for the structured dialogue during the 18 months of the trio Presidency (IT, LV and LU) has been how to encourage young people to participate in democratic life in Europe.

The Presidency stressed that the "structured dialogue" constitutes an important tool to promote the participation of young people in the decision-making process in the EU since it allows for a continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation involving a diverse range of young people and youth organisations in the consultations at all levels in the member states, at the EU Youth Conferences and during the European Youth Week.

The Presidency also recalled that overall thematic priority of the structured dialogue for the period 1 January 2016 -30 June 2017 will be "Enabling all young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe – Ready for Life, Ready for Society". This theme reflects the EU Youth Report and takes into account the feedback from the pre-consultation phase, which the upcoming trio Presidencies have conducted.

In this context, the Luxembourg Presidency briefly presented to the Council the final recommendations on political participation of young people resulting from the EU Youth Conference that took place in Luxembourg from 21 to 24 September ([12651/15](#))

The role of youth policy and youth work with regard to migration

Ministers were invited to reflect on how youth policy and youth work can best address the challenges raised by increasing migration flows, on the basis of a Presidency background document ([13640/15](#)).

According to Eurostat¹, 81% of the 689 000 people who applied for asylum in EU countries this year (through August) were younger than 35; more than half (55%) were aged 18 to 34.

Ministers welcomed the compendium of best practices prepared by the Presidency ([13640/15 ADD 1](#)), which shows that most member states have already put in place a large number of initiatives and measures to tackle this problem.

The main outcome of the ministerial debate was the following:

- An integrated approach was needed in this field, involving education, employment, cultural, and sport sectors, as well as parent support, in particular at local and regional level
- Youth work can be an instrument of inclusion by fostering intercultural understanding between the local and immigrant populations (involving also volunteers and young migrants in the process)
- European values must be systematically promoted as early as possible, for instance through education for citizenship in order to avoid intolerance, xenophobia and radicalisation
- Importance of fostering language learning either through formal education or non-formal learning methodologies
- The EU Youth Work Plan has a strategic role to play in coordinating member states' actions and in increasing synergies
- Use of the Erasmus + programme should be optimised.

¹ ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database

Following a minute's silence in tribute to the Paris victims, the French minister made a short declaration on the events in Paris, underlining France's determination to preserve its way of life and its freedoms, and thanked all its colleagues for the solidarity shown following the terrorist attacks of November 13th.

The Commission supported France's declaration and stressed that the time for rhetoric was over and we must now act together. He underlined the need to mobilise all possible European instruments and financial tools in order to combat radicalisation and extremism. The Commission stands ready to help member states in their efforts.

Other business

– *Work programme of the incoming Presidency*

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

- preventing radicalism through youth work
- encouraging the participation and integration of young people with mental health problems
- developing the new cycle of the structured dialogue " Enabling all young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe – **Ready for Life, Ready for Society**"

EDUCATION

Paris declaration

Following a minute's silence in tribute to the victims of Paris attacks, the French minister for Education made a short statement sharing her deep emotion and shock in the aftermath of the Paris tragedy but wished to underline as well that terrorists did not and could not destroy the core values of the French Republic – “Liberty, equality and fraternity”- which are also those of Europe. She expressed her sincere gratitude to all colleagues for their solidarity.

All ministers expressed their deepest sympathy for and solidarity with France at this painful moment. They agreed that the Paris attacks were targeted not only at France but at the whole Europe, which was why a European response must be given, involving not only words but also deeds .

Although most ministers acknowledged the importance of education in preventing exclusion and radicalisation, several ministers pointed out that it cannot be the only answer. Employment, health and cultural aspects must also be addressed.

Ministers underlined the relevance of the Paris declaration of 17 March 2015 – in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks - on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education.

The declaration was adopted at an informal meeting of EU education ministers which was attended by all the member states - 26 at ministerial level - and French President François Hollande also made an appearance.

Following a first assessment of initiatives and measures already taken at EU level, the French delegation underlined the need to maintain the political momentum by making it a long- term commitment under Erasmus+ and in the framework of European cooperation in education and training (ET2020).

The Commission recalled that it had already highlighted the key role which the education and youth sectors have to play in promoting common European values in its communication on a European Agenda for Security ([8293/15](#)) and that it will launch in November, in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme, a specific call for proposals in this field with a budget of 3 million euros.

New priorities for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020)

The Council adopted the 2015 joint report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ([14440/1/15 REV 1](#)).

ET 2020¹ is the key European-level framework that helps member states to modernise their education and training systems, thus contributing to the overall political priorities set under the Europe 2020 strategy. ET 2020 established four general long-term objectives which European cooperation in education and training should seek to achieve by the end of this decade²

The current report takes stock not only of progress during the most recent work cycle (2012-2014) in the process, it also reviews the ET 2020 framework as a whole at its half-way stage and puts forward proposals for adjustment. These are essentially aimed at providing greater focus, improved governance and better dissemination of the results of European cooperation.

For the remaining five years up to 2020, ET 2020 will have 6 new priority areas (instead of 13), aiming to ensure that education and training systems promote employability, skills and innovation, increase social mobility and equality, help to prevent radicalisation and lay the foundations for democratic values and active citizenship.

Finally, the Commission recommended better use the Union's financial instruments , such as Erasmus +, the Structural Funds and the Investment Plan for Europe.

Reducing early school leaving

The Council adopted conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school ([14441/15](#)), which take stock of the progress made so far in this field, with a view to consolidating and improving measures aimed at tackling this problem.

The conclusions also invite member states to make the best use of the funding opportunities offered by EU instruments, such as the Erasmus+ Programme, the European Social Fund and the European Fund for Strategic Investments, to support comprehensive policy measures in this area and to promote cooperation in and around schools.

1 OJ C 119, 28.5.2009

2 Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality, improving the quality and efficiency of education and training, promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship, enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Over the last five years there has been consistent progress towards the 10% benchmark established by the Europe 2020 strategy. The EU average currently stands at 11.1% (down from 14.2% in 2009). However, significant discrepancies remain between and within member states.

Early school leaving is a serious issue throughout Europe, both for individuals and society as a whole since it often leads to marginalisation. Low levels of education not only have severe consequences for the young people concerned, they also bring high economic and social costs for society.¹

Education and migration:

Ministers discussed strategies for integrating recently arrived migrants and people with a migrant background.

The Presidency underlined that the successful integration of migrants into society remains a precondition for Europe's economic competitiveness, as well as for social cohesion.

However, a number of member states also drew attention to the practical and financial problems created by the unprecedented influx of migrants, in particular young migrants.

In general, ministers considered it necessary to focus on the following issues:

- ensuring effective learning of the language(s) of the host country
- speeding up assessment and validation of prior qualifications
- promoting common European values systematically at all levels of education
- avoiding geographical concentration of migrants
- preparing teachers and trainers - but also learners and parents - for more multicultural diversity in the learning environment
- increasing the exchange of best practices among member states

¹ According to 2014 data, 11.1% of 18 to 24 year-olds have left education and training without completing an upper secondary programme, amounting to around 4.4 million young people.

In this context, the Presidency recalled that the working lunch of ministers of education also addressed **promotion of language learning and inclusion** but with the focus on (high- quality) early childhood education and care. Against the background of increasing diversity of migrant children in member states, ministers discussed how to foster general access and simultaneously ensure high- quality early childhood education and care.

Other business

– *Work programme of the incoming presidency*

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

- Contribution of education to jobs and growth in the framework of the New Agenda for Skills
- Vocational education and training
- Countering radicalisation

CULTURE

The Council observed a minute's silence in tribute to the Paris victims. The Presidency recalled the recent [declaration of Ministers of Culture](#) following the attacks in Paris, underlining the importance of standing up to defend our culture and freedoms, particularly in the current difficult context.

The French Minister of Culture, Fleur Pellerin, thanked her colleagues for their support and sympathy and argued that security concerns should not overwhelm us: the best answer to terrorism is to continue to live a culturally rich diverse life, in accordance with our core European values and principles.

The focus of this Council session was on how culture could best reinforce EU action on the international scene. Ministers addressed in particular development cooperation, the integration of migrants and refugees, the fight against the destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural heritage, as well as the digitisation of cultural heritage.

Culture in external relations

The Council adopted conclusions on culture in the EU's external relations, in particular regarding development cooperation ([14443/15](#)), which examine how culture can reinforce development cooperation policies by building deeper partnerships with partner countries based on trust, mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue

They also underline that cultural and creative sectors can contribute to the main goal of development cooperation, i.e. reduction of poverty. Furthermore, respect for cultural diversity is an important element in conflict prevention, as well as in post-conflict situations.

The conclusions reflect a shift towards a more comprehensive approach to culture in foreign policies, aiming to develop joint capacity building and global solidarity.

The Council calls on the Commission and on the High Representative to submit to it a strategic approach to culture in the EU's external relations, outlining for this purpose a set of guiding principles.

The Council also stresses that such an approach should also address the challenges that the EU is currently facing, such as the migratory crisis, radicalisation, the rise of xenophobia, as well as the destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural heritage in conflict zones such as Iraq and Syria.

Integrating migrants and refugees through intercultural dialogue

The Council adopted conclusions reinforcing the priority on intercultural dialogue in the framework of the Work Plan for Culture (2015-2018) ¹ ([14444/15](#)). The conclusions are part of a broader strategy that the European Council called for in October 2015 ([26/15](#)) in order to tackle the migratory and refugee crisis.

The Work Plan sets the priorities for cultural cooperation among member states. It has a priority area dedicated to the promotion of cultural diversity, culture in the EU's external relations and mobility, which includes intercultural dialogue

The conclusions propose to set up a series of meetings of experts from member states that will examine how culture and the arts can contribute to the successful integration of migrants and refugees coming to Europe, and will gather best practices from member states.

Several ministers underlined the need for integration and intercultural dialogue to be based on European values, while some of them wished to draw attention to the practical and financial problems arising from the arrival in Europe of an unprecedented number of migrants.

Cultural heritage in conflict areas

Ministers were invited to express their views on the role the EU can play in the fight against illicit trafficking and the destruction of cultural heritage in conflict areas, on the basis of a Presidency background paper ([13647/2/15 REV 2](#)).

Between 300 and 900 monuments or archaeological sites are reported to have been destroyed, damaged or looted since the beginning of the conflict in Syria in 2011².

The international community has firmly and unanimously condemned the senseless acts that lead to barbaric murders and to the disappearance of invaluable and irreplaceable parts of world heritage.

This has also major security implications since illicit trafficking of cultural property is the second most important financing source for Daesh.

1 OJ C 463, 23.12.2014.

2 Source: UN and the Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology).

Ministers acknowledged that UNESCO has a leading coordinating role, guided by its overall mandate and with the support of the European Union and its member states, which have been very active in this field for quite some time already: some of the measures and initiatives taken are described in the Annex to the Presidency's document.

Ministers agreed that that the focus should be put on the following actions to be developed simultaneously:

- Promoting awareness of the value of cultural heritage and cultural diversity
- Increased information exchange between member states on looted and trafficked cultural property
- Strengthening cooperation among member states at all levels, involving customs, police, museums, cultural institutions
- Review of some of the EU legislation in this field, in order to reinforce the legislative framework on controls and sanctions;
- Training customs officers to increase their expertise in identifying illicitly trafficked cultural objects,
- Restoration of destroyed or seriously damaged cultural objects through new technologies, as well as digitisation

Some ministers also emphasised that the multiple actors and the fragmentation of competences could undermine the effectiveness of EU action.

The Commission highlighted three areas in which it sees scope for its action: harmonised import rules, cooperation among law enforcement agencies, and international cooperation , in particular through support to UNESCO.

The Presidency, supported by many delegations, suggested to the Commission to set-out a European Year of Cultural Heritage , which would contribute to raising awareness about cultural heritage, its intrinsic value and the need to protect it.

Digitisation of cultural heritage

In this context, the Presidency outlined briefly the outcome the working lunch of ministers for Culture and Audiovisual Affairs on this subject.

Digitisation of cultural heritage being a cross-cutting issue as regards all the items on the culture agenda, ministers reflected on the best way to explore the possibilities offered by digitisation.

In general, ministers agreed that:

- the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material, as well as digital preservation, are essential in order to highlight the cultural heritage, to inspire content creation and to encourage new online services to emerge.
- European (www.europeana.eu/portal should be given particular relevance to) which is an invaluable tool to increase the access and the knowledge of the cultural heritage of member states. However, ministers acknowledged the need to address a number of fundamental questions concerning its goals and objectives, governance and funding.

Other business

- *Audiovisual Media Services Directive*

The Council was updated by the Commission on the state of play regarding the REFIT evaluation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, which has been the subject of a public consultation, as well as on related issues in the framework of the Digital Single Market Strategy ([14103/15](#)), in particular:

- the modernisation of the EU copyright system: the Commission intends to present a legislative proposal in December 2015 dealing with the portability of content. A communication on a second package of measures relating to copyright is planned for 2016.
- a legislative proposal prohibiting unjustified geo-blocking in e-commerce is planned for the first half of 2016,

- public consultations on the regulation of on-line platforms as well as on the "Satellite and Cable directive" are ongoing and should be closed in December 2015.

Several member states expressed concerns regarding in particular the country of origin principle and geo-blocking.

Other members states also called for the swift implementation of the legislation on copyright in order to ensure the protection of creative sectors and legal security for investors.

- ***Work programme of the incoming Presidency***

The Council took note of information from the Netherlands delegation concerning its main priorities in the field of culture and audiovisual for the coming six months. It will focus in particular on :

- The role of European in the preservation of cultural heritage.
- Cross-border circulation of audiovisual works.
- Promotion of the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

SPORT

The Presidency expressed to the French minister the Council's deepest sympathy with and support for France at this painful moment in its history.

The minister thanked all his colleagues and underlined how touched France was by all the solidarity shown to it . He made a short and moving statement on France's and Europe's reaction to the terrorist attacks.

EU coordination for the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) meetings (www.wada-ama.org)

The Council and the representatives of the governments of the member states adopted conclusions reviewing the 2011 resolution on the representation of the EU member states on the Foundation Board of WADA and the coordination of their positions prior to WADA meetings ([14445/15](#)).

According to the current EU arrangements, the EU and its member states coordinate joint positions for the WADA meetings. These position statements are presented by three representatives of the EU member states (incumbent trio representative, future trio representative and the expert minister).

The experience gained over the past three years revealed some practical problems, and the present conclusions aim therefore at improving the current coordination arrangements so that the EU has a stronger voice and greater influence in the World Anti-Doping Agency.

The Presidency underlined the importance of an organisation such as WADA, recalling in particular the recent developments regarding the widespread doping of Russian athletes.

The Presidency also welcomed the recently elected EU representatives on the Foundation Board of WADA for the next three years:

- Mr Philippe MUYTERS, Flemish Minister for Work, Economy, Innovation and Sport (Belgium)
- Mrs Tracey CROUCH, Parliamentary Under- Secretary of State for Sport (UK).

Other business

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

In this context the Council was also briefed by the EU representatives (BE, LUX and Malta) on the outcome of the WADA meetings which took place in Colorado Springs, USA, on 17-18 November 2015. The meetings addressed mainly issues relating to the 2016 draft budget, data protection and the Code compliance.

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.

– *Physical and sport activities for young children*

The Council adopted conclusions on the promotion of motor skills, physical and sport activities for young children ([14447/15](#)), inviting member states to raise awareness of the benefits of having a regular physical activity from early childhood and to implement cross-sectoral policies, with the education, youth and health sectors among others, to encourage active lifestyles among children.

The levels of physical activity among children and adolescents in the EU are alarmingly low and have become a matter of great concern for policymakers. Early childhood is a crucial period for acquiring and improving motor skills and this should be encouraged by all persons and institutions dealing with very young children before compulsory school age.

In this regard, the key role to be played by the education sector and sport clubs and sport federations was also underlined and therefore cooperation models between local authorities, schools and sport clubs should be encouraged.

The promotion of physical activity is a priority of EU policymaking in the field of sport and has been regularly addressed. The first edition of the European Week of Sport was successfully launched in September ec.europa.eu/sport/week/about-week-of-sport/highlights-2015_en.htm.

The Commission indicated that it is already funding around 30 projects in the field of health-enhancing activities with a budget of almost EUR 10 million.

– *The educational potential of sports*

Ministers exchanged views on how sporting activities could help disadvantaged youth (e.g. NEETs, disabled people, people with a migrant background and newly arrived refugees) find their place in society.

The Presidency introduced the debate by outlining the main conclusions of the informal meeting with representatives of the sports movement¹ at lunchtime:

- Promote the efficient use of available resources
- Work with local structures
- Support amateur sports infrastructures
- Implementation of projects involving football personalities in order to fight intolerance and xenophobia

The Presidency recalled that SV Wandsetal's project "Integration durch Sport", which deals with migrants, was awarded the "Best grassroots project in Europe" prize during the European Week of Sport in September 2015.

In order to give a wider perspective to the ministerial debate, the Presidency invited two sports personalities: Mr Edwin Moses, former Olympic champion and currently President of the United States Anti-Doping Agency and Chair of the Education Committee of the World Anti-Doping Agency and Mathieu Moreuil of the UK Football Premier League.

1 British Council (1er League) : Mr. James Keegan and Mr. Andy Hansen
SV Wandsetal : Mr. Gerd Seraphin
Swedish Basketball Federation: Secretary- General Ms Lena Wallin-Kantzy
USADA Chairperson : Mr Edwin Moses
International Paralympic Committee : President Sir Philip Craven.

Both gave examples of many projects successfully combining education and sport, often in disadvantaged areas.

They both emphasised that

- sport is not a solution to the migrant problem, but could make a huge difference in the medium term for young disadvantaged children
- the answer is always a good education and a job, but sport can help towards this objective
- the importance of giving children role models
- sports projects alone are not enough: it is necessary to establish partnerships with public and local authorities, schools, sports federations, companies
- high-quality coaches and local involvement are also required
- regular monitoring and evaluation of projects is crucial

In general, ministers agreed that:

- sport can be a central component of social integration policies. It can create a sense of cohesion and solidarity and contribute to skills and self-development outside traditional institutions such as school, work, or family
- sports activities can help young people acquire skills that complement formal education and enhance their employability
- In the case of migrants, acceptance and recognition through sport can help to avoid marginalisation and radicalisation
- sports clubs and associations can thus play an essential role in the integration of young people with a disadvantaged background
- cross- sectoral policies involving education, employment and health sectors are crucial

The Commission recalled that there is a specific chapter in the Erasmus + programme dedicated to financing projects in the area of grassroots sport.

The Presidency informed the Council that it will send a letter to the Presidents of the EU Council, the Commission and the European Parliament presenting a summary report of the four debates which will take place during the Council meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Match-fixing

The Council took note of information from the Presidency concerning two decisions on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on the manipulation of sports competitions with regard to both matters related and not related to substantive criminal law and judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

The decisions raise substantive legal issues regarding, in particular, the legal basis and the procedural handling of mixed agreements and it was not yet possible to find a solution allowing for the signature of the decision by the EU.

The Council of Europe Convention was finalised on 18 September 2014 in Macolin, Switzerland. Nineteen countries (11 EU member states) have signed the Convention and it has been ratified by Norway and Portugal.

The Convention is set to enter into force following its ratification by five signatories, including at least three member states of the Council of Europe.

Informal meeting of ministers for sport

The Council was briefed by the Presidency on the main outcomes of the informal meeting of ministers for sport that took place in Luxembourg on 6 - 7 July 2015 on the integrity of sport.

European Week of Sport

The Council took note of information from the Commission regarding the European Week of Sport that ran quite successfully from 7th to 13th September 2015 and which aimed at raising public awareness at European level of the benefits of sport and physical activity. The Commission also outlined the general guidelines for the 2016 edition [14249/15](#)

Work programme of the incoming Presidency

The Council took note of information from the Netherlands minister concerning its main priorities in the field of sport for the coming six months. The overall theme of the next trio presidencies (NL, SK, MT) is **good governance and education through sport**.

The Netherlands presidency will focus on **the integrity of sport**, in particular:

- Preparation and legacy of major sports events
- Prevention of doping and match-fixing
- Prevention of violence at grassroots level in sport

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Partnership and cooperation agreement with Russia: Croatia

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of the protocol to the EU-Russia partnership and cooperation agreement to take into account the accession of Croatia to the EU. ([11878/14 COEST 249](#))

European Union Special Representative for South Caucasus, Georgia: Mandate extended

The Council extended the mandate of the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia until 28 February 2017. [See press release](#)

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Bank capital requirements

The Council decided not to object to a Commission regulation supplementing regulation 575/2013 on bank capital requirements ([14013/15](#) + [13443/15](#) + [13443/15 ADD 1](#)).

The text relates to draft technical standards for prudential valuation, submitted by the European Banking Authority in accordance with article 105 of the capital requirements regulation. It specifies the conditions under which those standards will be applied.

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. It can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects.

AGRICULTURE**Pesticides - maximum residue levels**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending annex IV to regulation 396/2005¹ as regards COS-OGA, cerevisane, calcium hydroxide, lecithins, Salix spp cortex, vinegar, fructose, Pepino mosaic virus strain CH2 isolate 1906, Verticillium albo-atrum isolate WCS850 and Bacillus amyloliquefaciens subsp. plantarum strain D747 ([13068/15](#));

Regulation 396/2005 establishes the maximum quantities of pesticide residues permitted in products of animal or vegetable origin intended for human or animal consumption. These maximum residue levels (MRLs) include, on the one hand, MRLs which are specific to particular foodstuffs intended for human or animal consumption and, on the other, a general limit which applies where no specific MRL has been set. MRL applications are communicated to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) which issues a scientific opinion on each intended new MRL. Based on EFSA's opinion, the Commission proposes a regulation such as those listed above to establish a new MRL or to amend or remove an existing MRL and modifying the annexes to regulation 396/2005 accordingly.

This Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

International Olive Council - EU position

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be adopted on behalf of the EU within the Council of members of the International Olive Council (IOC) concerning the accession of new members ([14123/15](#)).

At the next session of the Council of members of the OIC, the EU should request the postponement of votes on all requests for new accessions until a new international agreement on olive oil and table olives replacing the 2005 Agreement is in force.

¹ OJ L 070, 16.3.2005, p. 1.

The IOC is an international intergovernmental organisation in the field of olive oil and table olives. It was set up in Spain in 1959, under the auspices of the United Nations. The Council contributes to the sustainable and responsible development of olive growing and it serves as a world forum for discussing policymaking issues and tackling present and future challenges. The EU is a member of the IOC.

TRANSPORT

Inland navigation standards

The Council adopted a decision setting out the position of the EU on the adoption of a standard concerning technical requirements for inland waterway vessels. The EU position is established for the meetings of the European Committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI) on 26 November 2015 and of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) on 3 December 2015, and any relevant subsequent meetings of the CCNR.

[Council decision on the position to be adopted in relation to the adoption of a standard concerning technical requirements for inland waterway vessels](#)

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Interoperable digital services

The Council adopted a decision on a programme to promote the interoperability of digital services across Europe (ISA²). The programme aims to help member states' public administrations interact more efficiently with each other and offer more user-friendly digital services for citizens and businesses. [See press release](#). See also: [ISA² decision](#), [ISA² - Statement of the Commission](#)
