



Brussels, 11 February 2008

BACKGROUND ¹

EDUCATION, YOUTH and CULTURE COUNCIL

(Education and Youth issues only)

Thursday 14 February, Brussels

*The meeting will start with a session on **youth** issues at 10.00 under the presidency of Mr Milan Zver, Slovenian Minister of Education and Sport. The session on **education** issues will start at 15.00.*

Youth

*The Council will adopt **key messages** on further implementation of the European Pact for Youth as a contribution of the youth policy field to the Spring **European Council**. The Council will hold an exchange of views on **intercultural dialogue and young people**.*

Education

*The Council will adopt the 2008 joint progress report on the "**Education and training 2010** work programme". It will also hold an exchange of views concerning **key messages** as a contribution of the education and training field to the Spring **European Council** and will further adopt them.*

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At lunch, Ministers will discuss the future of the cooperation among member states in the field of education and training after 2010.

The Presidency will hold a press conference at +/- 17.30.

Press conferences and public events can be followed by video streaming:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/videostreaming>

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Other events in the margins of the Council:

Friday 15 February, 9.30: Ministerial conference: Promoting multilingualism: a shared commitment, co-chaired by Commissioner Leonard Orban and Milan Zver, Slovenian Minister of Education and Sport, European Commission, Berlaymont building

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

YOUTH

Implementation of the European Pact for Youth - contribution to the European Council

The Council will adopt key messages addressed to the spring meeting of the European Council (13 and 14 March) on further implementation of the European Pact for Youth ([5582/08](#)).

The document is divided in two parts: progress made in implementing the European Pact for Youth in 2007 and priority steps for its further implementation.

The key messages focus on the importance of the member states' employment and social strategies to include a special emphasis on the specific problems faced by young people, on the need for tailored measures to support young people with fewer opportunities and on the importance of a cross-sectoral approach and youth empowerment in the implementation and evaluation of the European Youth Pact.

The adoption of the European Pact for Youth in March 2005, as a part of a revised Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, was a recognition of the importance of integrating young people into society and working life and of making better use of the potential they represent.

Intercultural dialogue and young people

The Council will hold an exchange of views on the basis of a Presidency background note on intercultural dialogue and young people in the context of the initiative European year of intercultural dialogue 2008 ([5584/08](#)).

The Ministers will be invited to reflect on how measures taken in the framework of youth policy and young people themselves can contribute to intercultural respect and solidarity and how to ensure that intercultural dialogue as a topic forms part of the European cooperation in the youth field also beyond the Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

The debate will focus on the following questions suggested by the Presidency:

1. *Considering the growing diversity of cultural backgrounds of the people living in EU Member States, youth policy strategies and measures can play a crucial role at both national and local levels as an early investment in the ability of societies to promote the cultural heritage of certain groups, namely through the promotion of individual skills, knowledge and cultural autonomy, while fostering intercultural respect and solidarity.*

Is there a specific project in your Member State that addresses these questions and that could contribute to peer-learning activities among Member States?

2. *How do you regard the issue of intercultural dialogue relevant in the context of future perspectives of the European cooperation in the field of youth policy, namely bearing in mind the aim of achieving sustainability of the strategies developed during and after the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue?*
3. *How could the issue of intercultural dialogue be better included in the structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations? Which tools and mechanisms would you recommend at*
 - a) national and

b) European level?

What could be the role of young people and youth organisations in deepening intercultural dialogue?

The views expressed in the debate could also provide the contribution of the youth field to the Council conclusions on "Intercultural competences" which are planned to be adopted in the field of culture at the Education, Youth and Culture Council session in May.

European year of Intercultural dialogue 2008 is expected to:

- promote intercultural dialogue as an instrument to assist European citizens, and all living in the EU, in acquiring the knowledge and aptitudes to enable them to deal with a more open and more complex environment;
- and raise awareness of European citizens, and those living in the EU, of the importance of developing active European citizenship which is open to the world, respectful of cultural diversity and based on common values.

Young people will be the main target group of the activities organised in its framework.

EDUCATION

Education and training 2010 work programme

The Council will adopt a 2008 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the "*Education and Training 2010 work programme*", a programme established to follow up the objectives set by the Lisbon agenda as regards education and training systems in Europe.

The joint progress report, entitled "*Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation*" ([5723/08](#)), gives a picture of progress made, identifies areas where progress remains insufficient and proposes measures to be taken for further improvements.

Joint progress reports are adopted on a biennial basis by the Commission and the Council. It is a key document in the measuring of education's contribution to the Lisbon process, and it is the background against which the key messages to the European Council have been formulated (see below).

Key messages to the Spring European Council

The Council will adopt, after an exchange of views, key messages addressed to the spring meeting of the European Council (13 and 14 March) in the field of education and training ([5586/08](#)).

The key messages emphasise the following themes: implementation of lifelong learning strategies; knowledge triangle (education, research, innovation), in particular the crucial role of education and training for promoting creativity and innovation; intercultural dialogue; and transnational mobility.

In addition, the Council invites the Commission to submit by the end of 2008 a proposal for an updated strategic framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training.

Ministers will hold an exchange of views in connection with the adoption of the text. An education expert working for the Commission will present an example of outcomes of a peer learning activity carried out in the framework of the open method of coordination, specifically on early school leaving.

Other business

The Council will be briefed on the following items:

- a) **European University** - Business Forum (Brussels, 28-29 February 2008)
Information from the Commission ([5789/08](#))
 - b) Designation of the **2009 European year of creativity and innovation**
Information from the Commission ([5790/08](#))
 - c) **EuroSkills** 2008 (Rotterdam, 18-20 September 2008)
Information from the Commission ([6142/08](#))
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