



Brussels, 15 May 2008

**BACKGROUND NOTE<sup>1</sup>**  
**FOR THE EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE COUNCIL**  
**Brussels, 21 and 22 May 2008**

*The meeting will start with a session on **audiovisual** policy and **culture** at 14.30 on Wednesday 21 May under the presidency of Mr **Vasko Simoniti**, Slovenian Minister for Culture.*

*The session on **education** will start on Thursday 22 May at 10.00 under the presidency of Mr **Milan Zver**, Slovenian Minister for Education and Sport. The items concerning **youth** will be addressed in the afternoon.*

**Audiovisual**

*The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on a **European approach to media literacy** in the digital environment. The Council is due to reach a general approach on a decision establishing a multi-annual Community programme on **protecting children using the internet**. In addition, it will hold exchange of views on the on **creative content online** to give an input into this fast-moving policy area.*

**Culture**

*The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on **intercultural competences** in the context of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and conclusions on the **work plan for culture 2008 - 2010**.*

**Education**

*The Council is due to adopt conclusions on **multilingualism** and on **adult learning**. The Council is expected to reach a general approach on a draft decision designating **2009** as the **European year of creativity and innovation**. Furthermore, the Council will hold an exchange of views on **promoting creativity and innovation through education and training** and will adopt conclusions on this issue.*

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

## **Youth**

*The Council will hold exchange of views on the **participation of young people with fewer opportunities** and adopt a resolution on this issue.*

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**All items on the agenda are public (except other business items).**

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**Press conferences:** 21 May at +18.00  
22 May at +15.00

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

## AUDIOVISUAL

Wednesday, 21 May 2008 at 14:30

### Media literacy in the digital environment

The Council is expected to **adopt in a public debate conclusions** on a European approach to media literacy in the digital environment.

The conclusions are a policy response of the Council to the Commission's communication "A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment" ([5086/08](#)), adopted in December 2007. The communication promotes the exchange of good practices and explains the Commission's intention, as a response to its obligation under the new audiovisual media services directive to monitor progress, to launch a study to develop criteria and indicators for assessing media literacy levels.

The Council is expected to welcome the Commission's communication and to invite the member states and the Commission to continue to promote and encourage media literacy development. In addition, the contact committee, established by the audiovisual media services directive is to be used as a forum for the exchange of information and good practices at the EU level.

### Protecting children using the internet

The Council is expected to **reach in a public deliberation a general approach** on a decision establishing a multi-annual Community programme on protecting children using the internet and other communication technologies. The first reading opinion of the European Parliament is still pending.

The proposed programme is a successor to the Safer Internet Plus programme that expires at the end of this year. The Commission submitted its proposal in February 2008 ([7241/08](#)). The new programme will build on and continue the work of the existing programme with small adjustments and updates to the various action lines. The Commission proposal to remove comitology for the assessment of projects above 500 000 euros was not acceptable to delegations.

The draft programme is aimed at promoting safer use of the internet and other communication technologies, particularly for children, and fighting against illegal content and harmful conduct online. It will be implemented through four general action lines:

- ensuring public awareness;
- fighting against illegal content and tackling harmful conduct online;
- promoting a safer online environment;
- establishing a knowledge base.

The programme will cover a period of five years from 1 January 2009. Its budget is set at EUR 55 million.

*Legal basis: Article 153 of the Treaty, vote by qualified majority under the Parliament/Council codecision procedure.*

## **Creative content online**

The Council **will hold a public exchange of views** on the on creative content online to give an input into this fast-moving policy area.

Ministers will be invited to focus on the following set of questions prepared by the presidency (8793/08):

- *What are the main challenges to be addressed in order to promote the development of creative content online? Do member states have relevant experience to report from their own efforts to meet these challenges?*
- *Are there particular areas for which an EU level initiative would have added-value?*

As a follow-up to the public consultation launched by the Commission in July 2006, the Commission adopted in January 2008 a communication on creative content online in the single market, which addresses a first set of challenges central to the uptake of online content services in Europe ([5279/08](#)). The communication announces in particular:

- the setting-up of the "Content Online Platform", a framework for discussion, at European level;
- the Commission's intention to prepare a proposal for a European Parliament and Council recommendation covering the transparency (labeling) and interoperability of digital rights management systems, the encouragement of innovative licensing regimes in the area of audiovisual works and legal offers and piracy;
- a focused consultation of stakeholders on the issues to be covered by the planned recommendation.

Against this background, the exchange of views will be an opportune moment for the Commission to hear the opinions of member states.

## **CULTURE**

### **Intercultural competences**

The Council is expected **to adopt in a public debate conclusions** on intercultural competences in the context of the initiative to designate 2008 as the European year of intercultural dialogue.

The issue of the intercultural dialogue is one of the main political priorities of the Slovenian presidency.

The conclusions are intended to serve as a platform for the development of intercultural competences as a key factor for strengthening intercultural dialogue.

The Council recognizes in its draft conclusions the need for developing a sustainable and cross-sectoral approach towards intercultural dialogue. The draft conclusions include concrete references to initiatives in all fields that are relevant for the development of intercultural competences and call for greater synergies between those fields. The cross-sectoral approach will seek to integrate and support initiatives in the following fields.

- **culture**, in particular as foreseen in the work plan of the Council for the period for the period 2008-2010: initiatives such as the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; promotion of everyone's active participation in cultural life and access heritage in all their diversity, improvement of the conditions for mobility of artists and works of art;
- **education** - initiatives such as the development of a lifelong learning perspective and of policies based on equity principles aimed at integrating children from a different social and cultural backgrounds into mainstream forms of education and training; active promotion of language learning and encouragement of mobility schemes among learners, teachers and other teaching staff;
- **youth** - the engagement of young people; promotion and development of intercultural competences of young people through non-formal and informal learning; the promotion of access to and the role of culture, arts, music and sport;
- **audiovisual policy** - the encouragement of media literacy; the promotion of media and audiovisual content that is culturally rich, diverse and informative for all by encouraging co-productions at European, national and regional levels and encouraging non-profit civil society-based media; fostering the process of digitalisation of cultural materials and content to enable new media to contribute to enhanced accessibility of cultural diversity.

The European year of intercultural dialogue 2008 aims to promote intercultural dialogue as an instrument to assist European citizens, and all those living in the EU, in acquiring the knowledge and aptitudes to enable them to deal with a more open and more complex environment as well as to raise their awareness of the importance of developing active European citizenship which is open to the world, respectful of cultural diversity and based on common values.

### **Work plan for culture 2008 - 2010**

The Council and the representatives of the governments of the member states, meeting within the Council, are due to **adopt in a public debate conclusions** on the work plan for culture 2008 - 2010.

Work plans for culture provide structured procedures for cooperation in this field at the European level. The first work plan covered the period 2002-2004, the second one the period 2005-2007. The work plan for culture 2008-2010, prepared by the Slovenian presidency, implements a new form of cooperation in the field of culture - the open method of coordination. It builds on the November 2007 Council resolution on an European agenda for culture ([14485/07](#)), which is the Council's response to the Commission's communication on "an European agenda for culture in a globalising world", adopted in May 2007 ([9496/07](#)).

Work plan for the period 2008-2010 will focus on the following priority actions:

- improving the conditions for the mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural field;
- promoting access to culture, in particular through the promotion of cultural heritage, multilingualism, digitisation, cultural tourism, synergies with education, especially art education and greater mobility of collections;
- developing data, statistics and methodologies in the cultural sector and improve their comparability;
- maximising the potential of cultural and creative industries, in particular that of small and medium enterprises;
- promoting and implementing the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Work plan 2008-2010 puts forward concrete ways of implementing the above priority actions. One of them is a setting up of working groups of expert from the member states and the establishment of principles for their functioning. The working groups will submit a mid-term report by July 2009.

## **EDUCATION**

Thursday, 22 May 2008 at 10:00

### **Multilingualism**

The Council is due to **adopt in a public debate conclusions** on multilingualism.

The Slovenian presidency drafted these draft conclusions following an informal ministerial meeting on multilingualism jointly organised and chaired by the presidency and the Commission in February 2008. The conclusions are aimed at providing further useful input to the forthcoming Commission proposal for a comprehensive policy framework on languages in the form of a communication, expected to be presented in the autumn 2008.

In the draft conclusions the Council affirms in particular that multilingualism policy includes the economic, social and cultural aspects of languages in a lifelong learning perspective and that the linguistic diversity of Europe should be preserved and parity between languages at the EU level respected. It invites the member states, with the support of the Commission, to pursue in particular the following policy orientations: availability to learners of the broadest possible range of languages; maintaining of a sufficient knowledge base in non-European languages to promote economic growth and competitiveness and uphold the position of European languages on the international stage; quality teaching; supporting migrants to enable them to learn language of the host country, etc.

For more details on informal meeting on multilingualism see also the presidency website:

[http://www.eu2008.si/en/News\\_and\\_Documents/Press\\_Releases/February/0215CONFMSS.html](http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Press_Releases/February/0215CONFMSS.html)

## **Adult learning**

The Council is expected to **adopt in a public debate conclusions** on adult learning.

The draft conclusions emphasise the need to provide continued skills development and further education for adults as part of the overall drive to establish lifelong learning.

The draft conclusions are a response to the Commission communication "*It is never too late to learn*" ([14600/06](#)) submitted in October 2006 and to the Community-wide action plan on adult learning ([13426/07](#)), submitted in September 2007. Both texts highlight the importance of adult learning as a key component of lifelong learning. They are aimed at removing the barriers that prevent adults from engaging in learning activities and improving the quality and efficiency of the adult learning sector. They also urge member states to ensure sufficient investment in and better monitoring of the adult learning sector and to speed up the process of validation and recognition.

In the draft conclusions the Council welcomes the abovementioned Commission texts. The conclusions lay down specific measures to be addressed by the Commission and by the member states in the period 2008-2010. The Commission is in particular invited, with the cooperation of the member states, to analyse reforms at national level, especially the development of national qualifications systems; to support development career opportunities, conditions and resources for persons working in the field to enhance the visibility and the status of the profession and to support campaign aimed at raising awareness and motivation among potential learners.

## **European year of creativity and innovation 2009**

The Council is expected to **reach in a public deliberation a general approach** on a draft decision of the European Parliament and of the Council designating 2009 as the European year of creativity and innovation. The first reading opinion of the European Parliament is still pending.

Declaring a European year of creativity and innovation will be an effective way of helping to meet the challenges facing Europe by raising public awareness, disseminating information about good practices and promoting research and policy debate.

The objective of the European year will be to support the efforts of the member states to promote creativity through lifelong learning, as a driver for innovation and as a key factor for the development of personal, occupational, entrepreneurial and social competences and the well being of all individuals in the society.

The activities within the framework of the European year will be financed from the existing programmes in the field of education and training, in particular from the Lifelong Learning Programme. However, given the subject matter, programmes and policies in other fields such as enterprise, cohesion, research and the information society could support this initiative.

The Commission submitted its proposal in March 2008 ([7755/08](#)).

*Legal basis: Articles 149 and 150 of the Treaty, vote by qualified majority under the Parliament/Council codecision procedure.*

## **Promoting creativity and innovation through education and training**

The Council **will hold a *public* exchange of views** on promoting creativity and innovation through education and training and **will adopt conclusions** on this issue.

Promoting creativity and innovation is one of the priority areas of the Slovenian presidency, which organised a conference on 9-10 April in Brdo on the role of schools in promoting creativity and innovation and drafted the present conclusions. It also progressed with the work on the proposal to designate the European year of creativity and innovation (see above).

The aim of the discussion of ministers will be to give creativity and innovation more prominence in the EU education policies. During the debate, ministers will be invited to discuss on any aspect of the draft Council conclusions, express their views on the draft decision concerning the European year of creativity and innovation or focus on any of the ideas in the following set of questions suggested by the presidency:

- To what extent do ministers share the view expressed in the conference in Slovenia (see above) that schools have not changed their structure essentially since mass instruction was introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to respond to the needs of the industrial society, and that now they need to change radically to be able to promote innovation and creativity of the young as one of their main tasks in post-industrial knowledge societies and economies?
- In what way is it possible to overcome the problem that the necessary change of mindset for key players is a very slow process, while the perceived need for change is urgent?
- To what extent do you share the belief that children are born creative and eager to learn and that the rigid school environment all too often suffocates natural curiosity, the desire to experiment and the use of imagination?
- What kind of measures or action could be taken on the EU level to support the development of the new approaches to change needed for schools in the member states to become better promoters of creativity and innovativeness?
- Opening up towards the outside world and cooperating in various sorts of networks is one of the conditions that have to be fulfilled if schools are to be able to develop the creative and innovative potential of learners. How can schools best establish such networks?
- What approaches could be taken to bring the quality of teaching to a higher level and to ensure that teaching is considered a highly respected profession by society as a whole?

The complete wording of these questions and draft Council conclusions could be found in the document [9207/08](#).

For more information on the conference that took place in Slovenia see presidency website: [http://www.eu2008.si/en/Meetings\\_Calendar/Dates/April/0408\\_EYC\\_2\\_inovativnost.html?tkSuche=ajax&globalDatum=01.01.&multiDatum=30.06.&veranstaltungsart=&globalPolitikbereich=Educa tion,%20Youth%20and%20Culture&visiblePath=/htdocs/en&](http://www.eu2008.si/en/Meetings_Calendar/Dates/April/0408_EYC_2_inovativnost.html?tkSuche=ajax&globalDatum=01.01.&multiDatum=30.06.&veranstaltungsart=&globalPolitikbereich=Educa tion,%20Youth%20and%20Culture&visiblePath=/htdocs/en&).



## YOUTH

Thursday, 22 May 2008 at 15:00

### Participation of young people with fewer opportunities

The Council will **hold a public exchange of views** on the participation of young people with fewer opportunities and will **adopt a resolution** on this issue.

Ministers will be invited to focus their intervention on the following questions suggested by the presidency:

- *What is the experience in your respective member state in encouraging the participation in society of young people with fewer opportunities?*
- *Which possible future policies and measures could be developed to increase the participation in society of young people with fewer opportunities and their social inclusion at European and national level?*

The ambition of the resolution is to suggest the topic of participation of young people with fewer opportunities as one of the central themes for the cooperation framework in the youth field beyond 2009.

The draft resolution emphasises that the situation of young people such as young women and men from less-privileged educational, socio-economic or geographical background, or with disabilities is an issue of concern in many European countries. It also points out that their active participation in employment, education and social life is crucial for the overall cohesion of societies. Member states are in particular invited to regard this issue as a high priority when implementing the objectives of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs and the European Youth Pact and to develop sustainable strategies and programmes for the creation of conditions for the involvement and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in society.

The questions suggested by the presidency and the draft resolution could be found in a document [9133/08](#).

## Other business

- (a) Satellite Broadcasting of **anti-Semitic programmes**
    - Information from the Belgian delegation
  - (b) Commission Proposals on the review of the **EU regulatory framework for electronic communications** networks and services
    - Information from the Presidency on the state of play
  - (c) Communication from the Commission on the **protection of consumers**, in particular minors, **in respect of the use of video games**
    - Presentation by the Commission
  - (d) Definition of the concept of **books with regard to reduced VAT**
    - Information from the Swedish delegation
  - (e) Proposal for a decision establishing an action programme for the enhancement of **quality in higher education** and the promotion of intercultural understanding through co-operation with third countries (**Erasmus Mundus**) (2009–2013)
    - Information from the Presidency on the state of play
  - (f) Proposal for a regulation establishing a **European Training Foundation**
    - Information from the Presidency on the state of play
  - (g) Proposal for a recommendation on the establishment of the **European credit system for vocational education and training**
    - Presentation by the Commission
  - (h) Proposal for a recommendation on **quality assurance in vocational education and training**
    - Presentation by the Commission
  - (i) International seminar "**State as the regulator of education services**", Brussels May 23, 2008
    - Presentation from the Belgian delegation
  - (j) Presentation of the "**Mosquito Issue**"
    - Information from the Belgian delegation
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