



Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council

Brussels, 26 and 27 November 2018

The Council meeting in the morning of 26 November 2018 will be chaired by **Juliane BOGNER-STRAUSS**, Federal Minister for Women, Families and Youth of Austria. It will be preceded by a Structured Dialogue Breakfast on the EU Youth Strategy gathering the BG, AT, RO and FI Ministers and Youth representatives.

The session begins at **10.00** with youth issues and a discussion in a public session on a proposal for a Regulation on the **European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027**. Ministers are expected to adopt Conclusions on the role of **youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters** and a Resolution on the **European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027**. They will also hold a policy debate on the EU Youth Strategy's implementation.

The afternoon session, starting at **15.00**, will be dedicated to education matters and will be chaired by **Heinz FASSMANN**, Federal Minister for Education, Science and Research of Austria. Ministers will aim at reaching a partial general approach on a proposal for a Regulation on the **Erasmus+ programme**. They are also expected to adopt a Recommendation on promoting **automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications** and to hold a policy debate on the establishment by 2025 of an **European Education Area**.

A joint press conference by ministers **Bogner-Strauss** and **Fassmann** and Commissioner **Navracsics** will be held approximately at **14.45** in the Justus Lipsius building press room.

The Council meeting in the morning of 27 November 2018, starting at **10.00**, will be chaired by **Gernot BLÜMEL**, Federal Minister for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media of Austria. Ministers will discuss culture and audio-visual matters. They will take note of a progress report on a proposal for a new **Creative Europe programme (2021-2027)** and will hold a debate on **tackling the spread of disinformation**, focusing on "fake news". The Council is also expected to adopt conclusions on the **Work plan for Culture 2019-2022** and on the **strengthening of the European content in digital economy**.

A press conference by minister **BLÜMEL** and Commissioner **Navracsics** will be held at **12.45** in the Europa building press room.

Sport-related issues will be dealt with during the afternoon session, starting at 15.00 and chaired by Heinz-Christian **STRACHE**, Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for the Civil Service and Sport of Austria, with the Commission again represented by Commissioner **Navracsics**. The Council will have the opportunity to discuss, in public deliberation, the issue of **major sporting events as drivers for innovation** and also adopt conclusions on the **economic dimension of sport and its socio-economic benefits**.

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

The session will be preceded by a lunch for sport ministers in the presence of Mr. Martin KALLEN, CEO of UEFA Events SA. The topic will be "Challenges and opportunities in the context of major sporting events".

A press conference by Vice-Chancellor **Strache**, Commissioner **Navracsics** and **CEO of UEFA events SA Kallen** will be held at approximately **14.30** in the Europa building press room.

AOB items: Meeting of the World Anti-Doping Agency

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European Solidarity Corps

The Council will discuss a proposal for a Regulation on the European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 ([14079/18](#)). The aim is to reach a partial general approach (the Council's position). This excludes budget-related issues/figures which are currently being discussed as part of the negotiations on the next multiannual financial framework. The proposal was published by the European Commission in June 2018 ([9993/18](#)) in the run-up to the discussions on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, with a proposed financial allocation of EUR 1 260 billion at current prices. The Commission projects that the 2021-2027 programme will offer opportunities to 350 000 persons between the ages of 18 and 30 years. A new element in the proposal is the incorporation of humanitarian aid volunteering activities (previously "EU Aid Volunteers").

The European Solidarity Corps aims to foster solidarity in the European society. It offers opportunities to show solidarity, express commitment to the benefit of communities and help resolve challenging situations across Europe, by engaging young people and organisations in accessible and high-quality solidarity activities. The ESC is conceived to offer young people in Europe the chance to support a non-governmental organisation (NGO), local authority or private company active in rebuilding communities following natural disasters, addressing social challenges such as social exclusion, poverty, health and demographic challenges or working on the reception and integration of refugees.

The European Solidarity Corps was announced by President Juncker in his September 2016 State of Union speech. Phase 1 of the ESC was established without a legal proposal. For phase 2 (2018-2020) a programme was agreed by the Council and the European Parliament in June 2018, transferring most of the European Volunteering Service (EVS) from Erasmus to the new initiative. The Commission proposed a new programme for the European Solidarity Corps on 11 June 2018. This new proposal is for phase 3 of the ESC from 2021 to 2027.

European Union Youth Strategy

The Council will adopt a Resolution on the new EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 ([14080/18](#)). The strategy is expected to develop its cross-sectoral approach by addressing the needs of young people in other EU policy areas. The Commission Communication 'Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy' proposes to focus on fostering young people's participation in civic and democratic life, connecting young people across the European Union and beyond to foster voluntary engagement, learning mobility, solidarity and intercultural understanding and supporting youth empowerment through quality, innovation and recognition of youth work.

The Commission proposes some important novelties compared to the current policy framework:

- A new EU Youth coordinator will channel voices of young people in the Commission, thus allowing young people to contribute to shaping EU policies across areas; the coordinator will strengthen the dialogue with young people, notably via the European Youth Portal and the EU Youth Strategy Platform
- A renewed EU Youth Dialogue to take youth concerns better into account and ensure wider outreach, including through innovative formats;
- Tracking of EU spending for youth in main funding programmes;
- An agenda for youth work to further improve its quality, innovation and recognition and to allow other sectors to capitalise on the potential of non-formal learning;
- A clearer link between EU youth policy implementation and related programme activities in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.

Youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters

Ministers are expected to adopt Conclusions on youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters ([14082/18](#)). Social inclusion of all young people, including those from a migrant background, is a key aim of the current EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) ([9008/09](#)). Building on evidence from the EU Youth Report 2015 and due to political developments, national governments, in cooperation with the European Commission, are prioritising the integration of young people with a migrant background, including newly-arrived migrants and refugees.

Youth work and non-formal learning respond to the opportunities and challenges raised by the increasing numbers of young migrants and refugees in the EU by:

- Helping new arrivals learn about and make European values their own
- Encouraging intercultural dialogue and building mutual understanding between new arrivals and the receiving communities

The Erasmus+ programme in the field of youth supports these activities by promoting fairness and inclusion for participants from disadvantaged backgrounds and with fewer opportunities (such as migrants or refugees) through specific support, priority setting and targeted use of funds. Parts of Erasmus+ such as the European Voluntary Service, youth exchanges and opportunities for youth workers are concrete ways to achieve this goal. Erasmus+ opportunities for youth and youth workers can encourage intercultural dialogue and intercultural learning.

Erasmus+ programme

The Council will aim at reaching a partial general approach on a proposal for a Regulation on the Erasmus+ programme ([13943/18](#)). A partial general approach excludes budget-related issues/figures which are currently being discussed as part of the negotiations on the next multiannual financial framework.

The budget for Erasmus+, proposed by the Commission for 2021-2027, is EUR 30 billion. This would double its current budget (2014-2020) with the aim of allowing the programme to become more inclusive through increasing its accessibility, e.g. for small scale or grass root organisations or young people with fewer opportunities and through extending its scope at all levels of education and training.

The integrated nature of the current programme has been maintained for the next cycle, covering learning in all contexts - formal, non-formal and informal. To underline its inclusive approach, MS want to maintain the current name of the programme "Erasmus+".

During the European Council meeting of last December, European leaders called on member states, the Council and the Commission "to step up mobility and exchanges, including through a substantially strengthened, inclusive and extended Erasmus+ programme".

Since Erasmus was established in 1987 more than 9 million people have studied, worked or volunteered abroad under the programme, making it one of the most renowned, celebrated and successful EU programmes.

The aim of the programme is to support learning mobility opportunities - through studying, traineeships, apprenticeships, youth exchanges, teaching, training, youth work and sport activities all over Europe and beyond - that contribute to the personal, educational, civic and professional development of individuals, thereby contributing to sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion and to strengthening European identity.

The programme provides opportunities for study periods and traineeships/ apprenticeships for both higher education and vocational education and training students, youth exchanges, volunteering and staff exchanges in all fields of education, training, youth and sport.

The European Parliament and the Council adopted in December 2013 a regulation on "Erasmus +", the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport", for the period of 2014-2020.

With more than 2,000 transnational strategic partnerships per year, the Erasmus+ programme goes beyond Europe-wide learning mobility.

The programme covers 33 countries (EU member states, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). The budget of the programme for 2014-2020 is €14.7 billion.

Automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad

In December 2017 the European Council called on Member States, the Council and the Commission to take work forward on a number of key initiatives, including the mutual recognition of diplomas. The Commission submitted its proposal on 22 May 2018 ([9292/18](#)). The proposed Recommendation ([13955/18](#)) aims to ensure that any higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad that are awarded by an accredited institution within the Union should be automatically recognised for the purposes of further learning in all Member States by 2025. Several regional recognition schemes are already put in place, for example in the Nordic, Baltic and Benelux countries and could serve as a basis for EU-wide solutions.

European Education Area

Ministers will hold a policy debate on the establishment by 2025 of an European Education Area. The Commission's communication on "*Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture*" set out a vision of a European Education Area, building on the 'New Skills Agenda for Europe' and the 'Investing in Europe's youth' initiatives. In its Communication the Commission outlined a European Education Area, based on trust, mutual recognition, cooperation and exchange of best practices, mobility and growth, to be established by 2025. The European Council in its conclusions of December 2017 ([EUCO 19/17](#)) identified a number of specific areas on which work should be taken forward by the Council, the Commission and the Member States, and invited the Commission to present, where relevant, proposals for Council Recommendations.

In February 2018 the Education Ministers held a policy debate on the follow-up of the EC Conclusions. In May 2018 Ministers adopted a set of conclusions, which invite Member States to continue reflecting on a shared vision of a European Education Area, including its possible goals, objectives and scope.

For further guidance, the Presidency has proposed a policy debate at the Ministerial level based on the following questions:

1. What actions could be taken by Member States in order to enable and promote the establishment of a European Education Area by 2025?
2. What are the obstacles that should be overcome for the European Education Area to become a reality by 2025?
3. In addition to the priority work strands identified by the European Council in December 2017, which other common topics in the area of education do Member States consider essential for the successful implementation of the European Education Area by 2025?
4. How can we ensure that the ongoing cooperation within the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework, its successor framework and other Union instruments contributes to the establishment of the European Education Area?

Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027)

Ministers will take note of a progress report on a proposal for a new Creative Europe programme (2021-2027) (13925/18). The European Commission adopted its proposal on 30 May 2018 ([9170/18](#) + [ADD 1](#)). It builds on and continues the existing structure of the current Creative Europe Programme (2014-2020) with three distinct strands:

- a MEDIA strand to support the European audiovisual industry;
- a CULTURE strand to promote other European cultural and creative sectors;
- a CROSS-SECTORAL strand to support cross-cutting activities spanning the audio-visual and other cultural and creative sectors.

The general objectives of the Programme are:

- to promote European cooperation on cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage, and
- to increase the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular of the audio-visual sector.

The overall budget for 2021-2027, as proposed by the Commission, is EUR 1.85 billion (MEDIA: EUR 1.081 billion, CULTURE: EUR 609 million, Cross-sectoral: EUR 160 million) which would represent an increase of EUR 390 million (approx. 27%) compared to the current programme.

Work plan for Culture 2019-2022

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the Work plan for Culture 2019-2022 ([13948/18](#)). The aim of these conclusions is to adopt a strategic and dynamic medium-term planning instrument that will set focused priorities and define concrete actions to address current developments in cultural policy such as the digital shift, globalisation, growing societal diversity and changing working environments. Those priorities and actions will be subsequently implemented by the Commission and Member States.

The Work Plan for culture 2019-2022 takes into account the needs and expectations of Member States and of the cultural and creative sectors and civil society. It focuses on topics that add clear value to European culture and increase the awareness of the social and economic importance of European culture and heritage.

The Work Plan for culture also strives to develop synergies with the Creative Europe programme and encourage cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as joint activities with international organisations, such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

Strengthening of European content in the digital economy

The Council will adopt conclusions on the strengthening of European content in the digital economy ([13949/18](#)). The conclusions will concentrate on the following political priorities on the European Union's agenda:

- Fostering diversity, visibility and innovation
- Establishing a level playing field
- Strengthening trust in information and sources
- Improving skills and competences.

The global expansion of digital technologies has significant effects on and implications for all creative sectors, but also provides new opportunities for the European cultural and creative sectors. Under the Austrian Presidency, the debate on key challenges facing the European cultural, media and creative industries is one of the main priorities.

In October 2018, the Austrian Presidency organised the Conference "Challenging (the) Content", involving experts and participants from different fields and inviting them to reflect on a wide range of topics, such as ensuring a "level playing field" between European and non-European actors, the need for stronger cross-border cooperation and the most pressing technological challenges to the preserving of quality and diversity of journalistic content in the light of phenomena such as disinformation and hate speech.

Tackling the spread of disinformation

Ministers will hold a debate on tackling the spread of disinformation, focusing on "fake news", media and their role in tackling disinformation. The use of discrimination has increased enormously and it is now primarily spread via social media and online platforms. By providing trustworthy information and maintaining high journalistic standards, the media play a key role in tackling the spread of disinformation online.

The European Commission has recently launched and implemented a comprehensive initiative to tackle online disinformation through a range of measures. In April 2018, it published the communication 'Tackling online disinformation: a European approach'. Based on this communication, the Commission convened a multi-stakeholder forum on disinformation, with the main task of drafting an EU-wide code of practice on disinformation which was published in September 2018. This Code of Practice was signed by the most important global online platforms, such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, Mozilla and several trade associations representing online platforms.

The issue of disinformation has been several times on the agenda of the European Union leaders. On 28 June 2018, the European Council invited the High Representative and the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States and in line with the March 2015 European Council conclusions to present an action plan by December 2018 with specific proposals for a coordinated EU response to the challenge of disinformation. In this context, discussions are ongoing at different levels of Council preparatory bodies, most recently at Coreper II on 14 November 2018. Furthermore, the European Council in its conclusions of 18 October 2018 called for measures to combat disinformation, including in the context of the upcoming European elections.

The debate will be based on a Presidency discussion paper ([13442/18](#)). The Austrian Presidency would like to provide an opportunity for ministers to discuss this issue of prime importance for the media sector. They will also be invited to react to the initiatives that have been recently launched and implemented at the EU level with a view to tackle online disinformation. Ministers will share their views in relation to the following questions:

1. Given the importance of media pluralism, quality journalism, media literacy, transparency and accountability, what measures at EU level do you consider to be the most effective in the context of disinformation?
2. Have you started or are you planning any initiatives to address this issue at national level?

Economic dimensions of sport and its socio-economic benefits

Ministers will adopt conclusions on the economic dimensions of sport and its socio-economic benefits. The aim is to recognize sport as a driver for growth and jobs, as well as a means to improve the health and social conditions of citizens.

All EU Work Plans for Sport, including the current one (2017-2020) ([9639/17](#)), acknowledge the economic dimension of sport and the positive impact it has in terms of health. According to a recent study, sport accounts for 2,12% of the EU GDP and sport-related employment accounts for 5,67 million people, ie 2,72% of total EU employment. The health benefits of sport activities for people have been consistently confirmed by evidence-based studies.

Nevertheless further work is needed on sport data and indicators, monitoring and awareness raising, promotion of sport activities, fostering international cooperation and mainstreaming sport in other policy areas in order to better measure and maximize the positive impact of sport on the economy and on citizens.

Major sporting events as drivers for innovation

Ministers will hold a public policy debate on major sporting events as drivers for innovation, joined by Mr. Martin Kallen, CEO of UEFA events SA. The debate will be based on a Presidency discussion paper, which highlights the links between major sporting events and innovation, including patent applications and new technologies applied to sport events.

Research and innovation are one of the Austrian Presidency priorities, seen as a generic policy area that has to be put to work for all sectoral policies, including Sport. The economically strong European sports industry is constantly innovating and has therefore become a leader in certain technologies. This has spill-over effects on other sectors of the economy. At EU level, the number of patent applications in the field of sport had been increasing slightly, but now fluctuates around 1 500 applications per year.

Any other business

1. On the first day of the meeting ministers will be informed on the work programme of the incoming Romanian presidency in the areas of Youth and Education, and on the second day on the work programme in the areas of Culture and Sport.
 2. On the second day of the meeting ministers will be briefed by EU Member States representatives in the Foundation Board of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on the meeting of WADA, held on 14 and 15 November 2018 in Baku, Azerbaidjan.
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