

EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT COUNCIL

Brussels, 29-30 November 2021

The Council will take place on Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 November. The education, youth and sport sessions will be chaired by **Simona Kustec** (Minister of Education, Science and Sport) and the culture/audiovisual session by **Vasko Simoniti** (Minister of Culture).

The formal meeting on Monday 29 November will be preceded by a breakfast meeting in the framework of the EU Youth Dialogue, involving four Presidencies (Portugal, Slovenia, France and the Czech Republic), the European Commission, the European Parliament and representatives from European youth organisations.

On the first day, ministers will discuss education issues in the morning (starting at 10.00) and youth issues in the afternoon (from 15.00 onwards). A working lunch will be organised for the education ministers on the subject of "Investments in education and training during and after the COVID-19 pandemic".

On day two of the Council, ministers will first turn to culture and audiovisual issues (starting at 10.00) followed by an afternoon session on sport (from 15.00 onwards). The sport ministers, during their working lunch, will discuss "Future challenges of sport and the role of the EU".

Press conferences:

On Monday 29 November, there will be a press conference with minister **Simona Kustec** at 18.00 (timing to be confirmed) on education and youth topics. On Tuesday 30 November, minister **Vasko Simoniti** will hold a press conference at +/- 13.30 on culture/audiovisual topics and minister **Simona Kustec** will hold a press conference at 18.00 (timing to be confirmed) on sport topics. Commissioner **Mariya Gabriel** will participate in all press conferences.

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[Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council - meeting page](#)

[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the Press Office.

EDUCATION

Blended learning approaches for high quality and inclusive primary and secondary education

The Council is due to adopt a recommendation on blended learning approaches. Blended learning can be defined as taking more than one approach to the learning process, blending (i.e. combining) school site and other physical environments away from the school site as well as blending different learning tools that can be digital (including online learning) and non-digital.

The recommendation invites member states to develop longer-term strategic approaches to blended learning and to build on successful innovations introduced or tested during the pandemic. However, blended learning does not replace but complements school-site and face-to-face learning.

In terms of supporting learners, member states are, for instance, recommended to consider boosting the development of digital skills and competences and to support learning that combines different environments to enrich the learning experience. When it comes to supporting teachers and trainers, the recommendation asks member states to consider (among other things) embedding blended learning approaches in initial teacher education and continued professional development programmes. Finally, as regards schools, the recommendation suggests to invest in high-speed internet connectivity of school-sites and distance learning environments, accompanied by plans for maintenance and modernisation of the technical infrastructure.

The Commission will be invited to support the implementation of the recommendation by facilitating mutual learning and exchanges among member states and all relevant stakeholders and to support the development of resources and professional development and learning opportunities for teachers, trainers and other educational staff.

A new European agenda for adult learning

Ministers are planning to approve a resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030. Its objective focuses on formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities for all, specifically how to increase and improve the provision, promotion and take-up of adult learning. The resolution recognises that adult learning can contribute to making economies and societies stronger and more resilient and that individuals with a developed lifelong learning mindset are better equipped to adapt to new circumstances.

The resolution comes against the backdrop of new Eurostat data showing that in 2020 participation in adult learning was lower than before the COVID-19 pandemic, with an EU average of only 9.2 % of adults (women: 10.0 %, men: 8.3 %) aged 25-64 participating in adult learning (in the last four weeks preceding the survey date).

To reach the objective of the European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030, member states will resort to a number of instruments such as the [open method of coordination](#), mutual learning, knowledge building and evidence-based adult learning policies. The Commission is invited to support the adult learning national coordinators by funding their work to facilitate cooperation among member states.

Governance structure of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training

In February 2021, the Council approved a resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030). It is the main tool at EU level for the cooperation between member states, the Commission and, where appropriate, third countries and stakeholders to support the further development of education and training systems in EU countries. At the upcoming Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council, member states are expected to approve a complementary resolution on the governance structure of this strategic framework. In practice it is about how to coordinate the work and steer the development of the strategic framework with an aim to achieve a European Education Area.

The resolution sets the orientation and guiding principles of the governance structure - for instance ownership, responsibility and collaboration and cooperation - and establishes a coordination and support body under the High Level Group on Education and Training (HLG). Under this new body, the HLG Coordination Board, regular exchanges will be organised between the two preceding presidencies, the current presidency, the two incoming presidencies and the Commission in order to strengthen cooperation at the EU level in education and training, ensure consistency of the work as well as enable achieving a European Education Area.

Digital education and skills

Ministers will hold a debate about the structured dialogue on digital education and skills launched by the Commission in October 2021. The dialogue should enable the implementation of measures to achieve member states' ambition in relation to digital education, training and skills. Minister will also discuss the role of emerging technologies, such as AI, in education and training.

YOUTH

Outcomes of the 8th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue

The EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD) serves as a forum for continuous reflection and for consultation on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of cooperation at EU level in the field of youth. It involves policy makers, young people and their representative organisations. The EUYD is organised into 18-month work cycles. The current cycle runs from the second half of 2020 to the end of 2021 over the course of the German, Portuguese and Slovenian EU Presidencies.

Member states are due to approve a resolution to ensure that the outcomes of the 8th cycle of the EUYD, which are based on the cycle's three EU Youth Conferences, on feedback from national and European qualitative consultations and on the quantitative results of the EUYD Central Survey, are recognised and followed-up by relevant stakeholders.

Implementation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2021 and EU Youth Strategy Work Plan 2022-2024

Ministers are expected to approve conclusions and a resolution related to the EU Youth Strategy. The Strategy is the framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027. It focuses on three pillars - Engage, Connect, Empower - and the implementation of eleven [European Youth Goals](#). The Commission has to report on the implementation of the Strategy every three years.

The Council conclusions welcome the report and invite member states and the Commission to ensure that the concerns of young people are better heard and respected in EU and national policy-making.

Triennial work plans are one specific instrument for member states and the Commission to implement the EU's Youth Strategy. The Work Plan 2022-2024 - on which ministers aim to approve a resolution - is based on planned activities of France, Czech Republic, Sweden, Spain, Belgium and Hungary - the countries holding the EU presidency during this period.

Civic Spaces for Young People

Civic spaces for young people are (online and offline) political, public and social environments that allow for their meaningful participation in society. But as a result of COVID-19, these spaces are under pressure, with the online equivalents often remaining as the only viable alternative. Council is expected to approve conclusions inviting member states to safeguard and expand civic spaces for young people and to put measures in place to ensure that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and with fewer opportunities, in particular those from remote and rural areas and those with disabilities, can access and participate in these spaces.

Ministers will also discuss strategies for the development and enhancement of civic spaces for young people. In its background note preparing the policy debate, the presidency notes that there is a trend of "narrowing down civic spaces" and mentions administrative processes, attacks on civil society organisations and negative narratives in the public discourse as examples. Ministers will thus discuss how youth civic spaces can be maintained and further supported and what public authorities can do to generate reflection about the impact generated by privately-owned tools on youth civic spaces.

CULTURE/AUDIOVISUAL

New European Bauhaus initiative

The Council is due to approve conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative. Ministers welcome the initiative and invite member states and the Commission - among other things - to:

- Create favourable frameworks for high-quality architecture to underpin public procurement rules, regulatory simplification and innovative procedures that foster a high-quality-based approach over a solely cost-based one
- Further promote and strengthen the awareness, knowledge and competences of decision-makers and dedicated teams at all relevant governance levels to enable them to use high-quality criteria and standards in their decisions related to architecture and the built environment

Availability and competitiveness of European audiovisual and media content

In order to support the sustainable development of the European media sector and to promote cultural and linguistic diversity as its main asset of its competitiveness, the Council is planning to approve conclusions on increasing the availability and competitiveness of European audiovisual and media content.

Ministers propose actions in the areas of cultural diversity, promotion and prominence of European content and sustainability. Actions include encouraging greater availability of original content in different language versions, promotion of efficient marketing tools and film audience strategies, improving and facilitating the discoverability of creative content online in all EU languages and encouraging to increase the volume of European audiovisual works in on demand catalogues.

Cultural heritage and heritage rights in the context of sustainable development and the future of Europe

Ministers will discuss cultural heritage and heritage rights in the context of sustainable development and the future of Europe. The presidency discussion paper states that principles and values of heritage rights play an important role for the future of Europe and that promoting and protecting heritage rights is an effective way to reshape EU societies, recovering from the COVID-19 crisis. It also highlights the synergies with human rights and sustainable development, reports on recent high-level events in this area, and proposes a specific focus on Afghanistan.

Ministers are asked to share their views on 1) the most efficient ways to protect and promote heritage rights and sustainable heritage management in Europe; 2) the role heritage rights should play in the context of the European Union action - both at domestic and external level - regarding cultural heritage and 3) ways to facilitate humanitarian admission of Afghan female artists in Europe.

SPORT

European Sport Model

Ministers will aim to approve a resolution on the key features of a European Sport Model. Common features of such a European Sport Model include: a pyramidal structure, an open system of promotion and relegation and grassroots approach and solidarity. The resolution recognises that values-based organised sport in Europe is usually structured on a national basis and in principle organised by one federation per sport, allowing for a comprehensive approach to rules, regulations, and standards as well as respecting competition calendars and qualifications for competitions. The resolution also emphasises that financial solidarity is among the key features of values-based organised sport and that the increasing commercialisation of professional sport, driven in particular by the value of broadcasting rights, can contribute to the creation of financial resources for athletes but is not without risk for the values of sport.

The Council also invites member states and the Commission to draw the attention to the consequences closed sport competitions could have on organised sport in Europe, such as fundamental change in the sport qualifying processes usually based on sporting merit. The sport movement is invited to ensure the organisation of top-level and professional sport competitions in compliance with the principle of openness in sporting competitions, giving priority to sporting merit. In addition, the sport movement is invited to respect and align the requirements of the international sporting calendar.

Lifelong physical activity

In its conclusions on lifelong physical activity - which the Council is expected to approve - ministers recall that physical inactivity is causing extensive health problems in today's lifestyle and is being ranked among the leading risk factors of mortality by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Physical activity is one of the most important and effective factors in maintaining physical and mental health throughout life. It also has a positive impact on the prevention of certain health conditions and diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, among others. Physical fitness monitoring systems can assess the scale of the physical inactivity problem and evaluate the effectiveness of any policies, action plans or adopted initiatives.

To achieve the goal of more European citizens being physically active with the aim to improve their physical and mental health, and to reduce pressure on health systems and health-related costs, the Council invites member states to:

- Continue promoting and encouraging the lifelong physical activity of the population
- Where appropriate and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation, establish and promote evidence-based national, regional and/or local physical fitness monitoring systems that motivate the population to lifelong physical activity with appropriate individual feedback reports and the tracking of fitness changes on a voluntary basis

Ministers also invite the Commission to explore the possibility of supporting the development of a harmonised system of data that enables the monitoring of physical activity at European level in order to assess more accurately the health, social and economic consequences.

Athletes' dual careers

Ministers will hold an exchange of views on athletes' dual careers. The term dual careers refers to the athletes' right to combine sport and education/work. The EU, through work plans, studies and the Erasmus+ programme has been involved in guaranteeing the athletes' rights to dual careers. In its [Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes](#) from 2012 it recommended national policy actions in support of dual careers in high-performances sport at the education, vocational training and employment levels. Ministers will discuss what has been done in their countries since the publication of the EU Guidelines, on which it adopted [conclusions](#) in 2013, what follow up action can be taken at EU level and how member states should further promote and monitor dual careers of sportspersons.

Other business

- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and training - Information from the presidency on the exchange of information among Member States
- Joint statement by the Ministers of Education on the situation of women in Afghanistan in relation to the right to education - Information from the presidency
- Belgium and Lithuania, on behalf of the Benelux countries and Baltic States, will inform ministers on the Treaty on the automatic mutual recognition of higher education qualifications
- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth - Information from the presidency
- Outcome of the discussion at the Youth Informal Forum breakfast meeting - Information from the Presidency (in the presence of an external guest from the Youth Forum)
- [Designation of Oulu as European Capital of Culture 2026](#) - Information from the Finnish delegation
- [Recovery of the culture sector after the COVID-19 pandemic](#) - Information from the Commission
- The Spanish delegation will inform ministers on the drafting of a Green book on the [sustainable management of cultural heritage](#)
- Portugal will present ideas on the way forward as regards the [status of cultural and creative professionals](#) and actions that can be taken at national level
- Italy will present the [G20 cultural ministerial meeting and the Rome declaration of G20 Ministers](#) of culture
- The Commission will inform about the [CulturEU funding guide and web tool](#): EU funding opportunities for the cultural and creative sectors 2021-2027
- The Romanian delegation will present a proposal to invite the European Commission to come forward with a legislative proposal to make 2023 the European year for resilience through culture.
- WADA meetings: Executive Committee and Foundation Board (Paris, 24-25 November 2021) - Information from the EU member states representative of the incumbent Trio Presidency in the WADA Foundation Board
- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sport - Information from the presidency
- Denmark, on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, will present a statement on "[Transparency and democracy in international sport federations](#)"
- The French delegation will also inform about the work programme on education, youth, culture, audiovisual and media and sport policies of the upcoming presidency