



Brussels, 10 November 2004

DRAFT

BACKGROUND ¹

EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE COUNCIL

Brussels, 15 and 16 November 2004

*The Council's meeting, will start on 15 November at 9:30, with the **Education** items, under the chair of Ms Maria VAN DER HOEVEN and will continue the afternoon, with the **Youth** items, under the chair of Ms Clémence ROSS. On the 16 November, the meeting will start at 10h00, chaired by Ms Medy VAN DER LAAN, to deal with the **Culture** and **Audiovisual** items.*

*Main debates will focus on the four action **programmes**: **lifelong learning**, **youth in action**, **culture 2007** and **media 2007**. The Council will further hold a **public debate** on the report from the high level group advising the Commission on the **mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy (Kok report)**.*

*In the field of Education, it will also adopt a report on the **broader role of education and its cultural aspects** and conclusions on the future priorities of **European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training**.*

*In the field of Youth, the Council will adopt conclusions on the **evaluation of the youth programme 2000-2006** and two resolutions on common objectives for **voluntary activities of young people** and for a **greater understanding and knowledge of youth**.*

*In the field of Culture, the Council will authorise the Commission to participate in the negotiations within UNESCO on a **convention on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions**. It will further appoint two **members of the jury of the "European Capital of Culture"** event and adopt conclusions on the **work plan for culture 2005-2006**.*

*In the field of Audiovisual, the Council will endorse a general approach on two recommendations on **film heritage** and on **protection of minors and human dignity and right of reply** in relation to European audiovisual and online information services industry. It will further hold an exchange of views on the definition of the **public service broadcasting**.*

A Press Conference will be held by the Presidency and the Commission at the end of each day session.

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

EDUCATION

Lifelong learning programme

Pending the opinion of the European Parliament, the Council will hold a policy debate on the lifelong learning programme proposed by the Commission, focusing on the following questions (*see 13453/04*):

Transversal programme:

- What is the Minister's opinion on the proposed content of the transversal programme?
- To what extent should the objective of learning a second foreign language be reflected in the objectives of the programme?

Quality of mobility:

- Do Ministers think that the quality of mobility should be enhanced in the context of the programme?
- Do Ministers agree that the Commission should be invited to prepare a proposal for a European charter for mobility in education and training?

Discussions on the budgetary provisions will be postponed until after a decision on the Financial Perspectives has been taken.

As proposed by the Commission (*11587/04*) the integrated programme will comprise four existing programmes: Comenius (general education); Erasmus (higher education level); Leonardo da Vinci, (vocational education and training); Grundtvig (adult education). It will also include a “transversal” programme incorporating four key activities (policy development, language learning, innovative approaches and dissemination of project results), plus a Jean Monnet programme to support action related to European integration and European institutions and associations.

Role of education and its cultural aspects – report

The Council will adopt a report on *Education and citizenship: the broader role of education and its cultural aspects (13452/04)*.

The report answers to a Spring 2003 European Council request. It underlines the Education Council commitment to strengthening citizenship and social integration through education as an extra effort in reaching the Lisbon goals.

European cooperation in vocational education and training – conclusions

The Council will adopt conclusions on the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (*13832/04*), in the perspective of the 2005 mid-term review.

The conclusions follow up the Council's resolution adopted on 19 December 2002 on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training². They underline the EU stance on continuing cooperation in the field of vocational and educational training.

They will be adopted in view of the ministerial conference to be held in Maastricht on 14-15 December (also involving EFTA/EEA and candidate countries as well as the social partners).

² OJ C 13, 18.1.2003, p. 2.

Mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy – public debate

Mr Will Hutton, rapporteur of the High Level Group advising the European Commission on its preparations for the mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy in March 2005 and Chief Executive of the Work Foundation in London, is invited by the Council to present the Report of the High Level Group (Kok Report), especially the aspects pertaining to education and training.

The presentation will be followed by a Council debate specially focusing on the following issues (13831/04):

- Lifelong learning strategy;
- "Excellence" as an objective for all levels of education;
- Contribution of education and training for the Lisbon goals.

YOUTH

Youth programme

Pending the opinion of the European Parliament, the Council will hold a policy debate on the "Youth in action" programme proposed by the Commission, focusing on the following questions (see 13834/04):

Success of the programme

How do Ministers judge the new proposed Youth programme and, in particular:

- which element / aspect of the programme do you consider innovative?
- what is your assessment of the specific actions of the programme?
- what is the added value of the programme?

Youth age range

Considering the age limits in the current programme (15-25 years), what would be an appropriate age (<15 years) to be able to start with preparatory activities for the programme and what would be an appropriate age (>25 years) to make follow-up activities to the programme possible?

Accessibility of the programme

How can young people with fewer opportunities be stimulated to participate more actively in the various actions of the new Youth Programme and how can we identify and remove obstacles that prevent them from making optimal use of the programme? What can Ministers do to make the programme more easily accessible for these young people?

Discussions on the budgetary provisions will be postponed until after a decision on the Financial Perspectives has been taken.

Youth activities will maintain their distinctive character in a new separate programme "Youth in Action", running from 2007-2013. The operational structure of the programme has been simplified and it is in general decentralised. However, continuity with the current programme has been ensured. The most significant actions (and objectives) will be:

- Youth exchanges (35,000 projects by 2013)
- "European Voluntary Service" (10,000 volunteers a year)
- "Youth for the World" aimed at developing projects with third countries.

Evaluation of the youth programme 2000-2006

The Council will adopt conclusions on the evaluation of the Youth Programme 2000-2006, covering the period 2000-2003.

These conclusions tie on the mid-term evaluation (2000-2003) of the current Youth Action Programme can also be a reference for the future programme from 2007.

Voluntary activities of young people + Greater understanding and knowledge of youth

The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the member States, meeting within the Council, will adopt resolutions on common objectives for voluntary activities of young people and on greater understanding and knowledge of youth

The resolutions address two of the four priority areas pinpointed in the Council's resolution of 27 June 2002, on a new framework for cooperation in the youth field³. They follow the Commission Communications on the thematic priorities of "voluntary activities among young people"(9182/04) and on "greater understanding and knowledge of youth"(9183/04) presented to the Council on 28 May 2004.

CULTURE

Culture 2007 programme

Pending the opinion of the European Parliament, the Council will hold a policy debate on the Culture 2007 programme proposed by the Commission, focusing on the following questions (*see 13838/04*):

Cultural sectors

- Do Ministers think that cultural sectors should be mentioned in the programme?
- If so, which sectors, and how to ensure that the programme remains open?

Participation of smaller projects and/or operators

- Should the programme be adapted?
- If so, how could this be done, whilst ensuring transeuropean cooperation and a sufficient critical mass of the projects?

Discussions on the budgetary provisions will be postponed until after a decision on the Financial Perspectives has been taken.

As proposed by the Commission (*11572/04*), the programme is aimed at giving priority support to three aspects: transnational mobility for people working in the cultural sector, transnational circulation of artistic and cultural works and products and intercultural dialogue. Projects supported by the programme will need to be on a sufficient scale and offer maximum added value at European level; each project will therefore need to pursue at least two of these objectives.

³ OJ. C 168, 13.7.02, p. 2.

The draft programme provides for three levels of intervention, with a strand corresponding to each one: direct financial support for sustainable, exploratory or “special” cooperation projects, structural intervention in favour of cooperation, going beyond the project-based approach; support for analysis and information activities, in order to create a favourable environment for cooperation.

Work plan for Culture 2005-2006

The Council will adopt conclusions on the work plan for culture 2005-2006 (13839/04).

The follow-up of current culture work plan 2002-2004 at the informal ministerial meeting held in Rotterdam last July. Five topics with specific objectives and timeframe were identified and are now reflected in the conclusions: Lisbon strategy; coordination of digitisation; cultural portal; mobility of works; mobility of persons.

The aim of the conclusions is not to be an inclusive paper but to focus on operational objectives.

European Capital of Culture – members of the selection panel

The Council will appoint Mr Charles Hennessy (Irish) and Mr Bert van Meggelen (Dutch) as members of the selection panel for the "European Capital of Culture" Community action.

The decision will be entered in the minutes of the Council's meeting and, thereafter, the Presidency will inform the Commission about the Council's designation of the members for the selection panel.

The two candidates were proposed by the Irish and Dutch delegations during the last meeting of the Council on 27 May 2004.

For further details, please see press release 9283/04

Convention on the protection of cultural and artistic diversity (UNESCO)

The Council will adopt a Decision authorising the Commission to participate, on behalf of the Community, in the negotiations within UNESCO on a convention on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions (13840/04).

The decision further establishes the negotiating directives to the negotiations.

AUDIOVISUAL

Media 2007 programme

Pending the opinion of the European Parliament, the Council will hold a policy debate on the Media 2007 programme proposed by the Commission, focusing on the following questions (*see 13841/04*):

- 1) With regards to the difference in the EU between countries with a high production capacity and countries with a low production capacity and/or a restricted language area,
 - do ministers consider the positive discrimination measures foreseen in the draft programme sufficient and effective to ensure adequate access for operators from markets with a lesser production capacity or a restricted language area?
 - If not, how could the Media 2007 programme better contribute to reducing this imbalance?

- 2) Given the importance that television broadcasting has as a mean to disseminate European audiovisual works, in the context of Distribution and Dissemination (Section 3 of the Annex of the Draft Decision),
- do ministers support the aim of involving broadcasters more in the Media 2007 programme so as to better disseminate and distribute European audiovisual works?
 - are the measures foreseen -in section 3.3.- which are focussed on television works produced by independent producers sufficient or should direct support for broadcasters (e.g. for co-productions) be envisaged?

Discussions on the budgetary provisions will be postponed until after a decision on the Financial Perspectives has been taken.

As proposed by the Commission (11585/04), the programme aims at supporting the European audiovisual industry, with the following global objectives:

- Preserve and enhance European cultural diversity and its cinematographic and audiovisual heritage, guarantee its accessibility for European citizens and promote intercultural dialogue;
- Increase the circulation of European audiovisual works inside and outside the European Union;
- Strengthen the competitiveness of the European audiovisual sector in the framework of an open and competitive market.

The programme should take into account four horizontal priorities:

- the importance of the creative process within the European audiovisual sector and the cultural value of Europe's cinematographic and audiovisual heritage.
- the strengthening of the production structures of the SMEs as a means of enhancing its competitiveness. This will mean contributing to the spread of a business culture for the sector and facilitating private investments in the sector.
- the reduction of imbalances between countries with a high production capacity and countries with low production capacity or a restricted linguistic area.
- market developments with regard to digitisation.

Film heritage and competitiveness of related industrial activities

Pending the opinion of the European Parliament, the Council is expected to endorse a general approach on a draft European Parliament and Council Recommendation on film heritage and the competitiveness of related industrial activities (*see Commission proposal 7583/04*). The aim of Council's debate is only to record the convergence of views of delegations.

It is recognised that cinematographic works are an essential component of Europe's cultural heritage, deserving full protection. The fragility of its support justifies appropriate measures to its preservation.

The draft Recommendation provides for the deposit of cinematographic works forming part of Member States audiovisual heritage as a way of preserving this European heritage. while ensuring the competitiveness of the Community's film industry and of the related activities of conservation, restoration and exploitation. It aims at encouraging policies of innovation, research and technological development in the field of conservation and restoration of cinematographic works. It covers, inter alia, the cataloguing of works, the creation of databases, the use of films for educational purposes and cooperation between responsible institutions in the sector.

It follows on two resolutions adopted by the Council on this matter, on 26 June 2000⁴ and on 24 November 2003⁵.

Protection of minors and human dignity and right of reply

Pending the opinion of the European Parliament, the Council will endorse a general approach on a draft European Parliament and Council Recommendation on the protection of minors and human dignity and on the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and online information services industry (*see Commission proposal 9195/04*). The aim of Council's debate is only to record a convergence of views of delegations.

The draft Recommendation calls on the Member States, the industry and interested parties, as well as the Commission, to enhance the protection of minors and human dignity in the broadcasting and internet sectors. It also recommends that the Member States consider the introduction of measures regarding the right of reply in relation to online media.

It builds upon the original Council Recommendation 98/560/EC of 24 September 1998⁶, which remains valid. It responds to the new challenges both in quantitative (more "illegal" content) and qualitative terms (new platforms, new products) which technological developments bring in this field.

Public service broadcasting

The Council will hold an exchange of views regarding the competence of the Member States to define the public service broadcasting mission in the information society. The exchange of views should continue during lunch time.

This exchange of views should be seen in the context of the Protocol annexed to the EC Treaty by the Treaty of Amsterdam on the system of public broadcasting in the Member States.

Other business

The Council will further be briefed on the following items:

- Follow-up to the White Paper "A new impetus for European youth": taking stock of activities in the framework of European cooperation on youth (*13856/04*).
- Proposal for a Recommendation of the Council and of the European Parliament on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education (*13495/04*).
- Commission report on the implementation of Council Recommendation 98/561/EC of 24 September 1998 on European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education (*13969/04*).
- Multinational forum on "Education through University Sport" – Lisbon, 21-27 July 2004 (*14485/04*).

⁴ OJ C 193, 11.7.2000, p.1.

⁵ OJ C 295, 5.12.2003, p. 5.

⁶ OJ L 270, 7.10.1998, p. 48.