



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



16576/09 (Presse 347)

PRESS RELEASE

2978th Council meeting

Education, Youth and Culture

Brussels, 26 and 27 November 2009

President

Mr Jan BJÖRKLUND

Swedish Minister for Education

Mr Tobias KRANTZ

Swedish Minister for Higher Education and Research

Ms Lena ADELSON LILJEROTH

Swedish Minister for Culture

Mr Christer HALLERBY

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Main results of the Council

*The Council adopted conclusions on the **education of children with a migrant background**, underlining the important contribution of education to the successful integration of migrants into European societies as well as the key role of language proficiency in this endeavour.*

*The Council decided to make **2011 the European Year of Voluntary Activities** promoting active citizenship.*

*The Council adopted a **renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field** that is to cover the period from 2010 until 2018.*

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS.....	5
ITEMS DEBATED	
EDUCATION	7
Professional development of teachers and school leaders - <i>Council conclusions</i>	7
Education of children with a migrant background - <i>Council conclusions</i>	7
Contribution to the discussion on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy	7
The role of education in a fully-functioning knowledge triangle - <i>Council conclusions</i>	8
Drivers for excellence in higher education.....	9
CULTURE.....	10
Promoting a creative generation - <i>Council conclusions</i>	10
European Year of Voluntary Activities 2011	10
AUDIOVISUAL	11
Media literacy in the digital environment - <i>Council conclusions</i>	11
Digitisation of cultural content in Europe.....	11
YOUTH.....	13
Framework for European cooperation in the youth field	13

¹

- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

OTHER BUSINESS	14
Education and Training 2010 work programme.....	14
Google Books settlement.....	14
Digitisation of cinema in Europe.....	14
Publishing in certain languages	14
International agreements concerning audiovisual policy.....	14
Work programme of the incoming presidency	14

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

– EU - Canada agreement on customs cooperation.....	15
---	----

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

– Rules for granting EU financial aid.....	15
– Renegotiation of the monetary agreement with San Marino and the Vatican	15

CUSTOMS UNION

– Euro-Mediterranean rules of origin	15
--	----

SOCIAL POLICY

– Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.....	16
– Protection of workers from asbestos.....	16

AGRICULTURE

– Delegation of laboratory testing of plants*.....	17
– Tractors.....	17

INTERNAL MARKET

– Safety of appliances burning gaseous fuels.....	17
---	----

ENVIRONMENT

– Protection of wild birds	17
----------------------------------	----

PARTICIPANTS

The governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Joke SCHAUVLIEGE
Ms Evelyne HUYTEBROECK

Flemish Minister for the Environment, Nature and Culture
Minister of the Brussels Capital Regional Government,
with responsibility for the Environment, Energy and Water
Policy

Bulgaria:

Mr Vezhdi RASHIDOV
Ms Svetlana LOMEVA

Minister for Culture
Deputy Minister for Education, Youth and Science

Czech Republic:

Ms Miroslava KOPICOVÁ
Mr Václav RIEDLBAUCH

Minister for Education, Youth and Sport
Minister for Culture

Denmark:

Mr Bertel HAARDER

Minister for Education and Minister for Nordic
Cooperation

Ms Carina CHRISTENSEN

Minister for Culture

Germany:

Ms Ursula VON DER LEYEN

Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth
Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for
Education and Research

Mr Helge BRAUN

Estonia:

Mr Tõnis LUKAS
Ms Laine JÄNES

Minister for Education and Science
Minister for Culture

Ireland:

Mr Batt O'KEEFFE

Minister for Education and Science

Greece:

Ms Anna DIAMANTOPOULOU

Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious
Affairs

Mr Pavlos YEROULANOS

Minister for Culture and Tourism

Spain:

Ms Ángel GABILONDO PUJOL
Ms Ángeles GONZÁLEZ-SINDE REIG
Mr Constantino SOTOCA

Minister for Education
Minister for Culture
Minister for Education of the Autonomous Community of
Murcia

Ms Dolores GOROSTIAGA

Vice-President of the Autonomous Community of
Cantabria

Mr Pedro Alberto CRUZ

Minister for Culture and Tourism of the Autonomous
Community of Murcia

France:

Mr Frédéric MITTERAND

Minister for Culture and Communication

Italy:

Mr Giuseppe PIZZA
Mr Francesco Maria GIRO

State Secretary for Education, Universities and Research
State Secretary for Cultural Assets and Activities

Cyprus:

Mr Andreas DEMETRIOU

Minister for Education and Culture

Latvia:

Ms Tatjana KOŅE
Mr Ints DÄLDERIS

Minister for Education and Science
Minister for Culture

Lithuania:

Mr Remigijus VILKAITIS
Ms Audra MIKALAUSKAITĖ

Minister for Culture
Deputy-Minister for Social Security and Labour

Luxembourg:

Ms Marie-Josée JACOBS

Mr François BILTGEN

Ms Octavie MODERT

Minister for the Family and Integration, Minister for Equal Opportunities

Minister for Labour and Employment, Minister for Culture, Higher Education and Research, Minister for Religious Affairs

State Secretary for Relations with Parliament, State Secretary for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, State Secretary for Culture, Higher Education and Research

Hungary:

Ms Edit RAUH

Mr Gyula BALOGH

State Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture

Malta:

Mr Clyde PULI

Parliamentary Secretary for Youth and Sport in the Ministry of Education and Culture

Netherlands:

Mr André ROUVOET

Minister for Youth and the Family, Deputy Prime Minister

Austria:

Ms Claudia SCHMIED

Mr Johannes HAHN

Federal Minister for Education, the Arts and Culture

Federal Minister for Science and Research

Poland:

Ms Monika SMOLEŃ

Mr Witold JUREK

Mr Krzysztof Piotr STANOWSKI

Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of National Education

Portugal:

Ms Isabel ALÇADA

Ms Gabriela CANAVILHAS

Minister for Education

Minister for Culture

Romania:

Mr Theodor PALEOLOGU

Ms Sorina Luminița PLĂCINTĂ

Minister for Culture, Religious Affairs and National Heritage

Minister for Youth and Sports

Slovenia:

Mr Igor LUKŠIČ

Ms Majda ŠIRCA

Minister for Education and Sport

Minister for Culture

Slovakia:

Mr Marek MAĎARIČ

Minister for Culture

Finland:

Ms Henna VIRKKUNEN

Mr Stefan WALLIN

Minister for Education

Minister for Culture and Sport

Sweden:

Mr Tobias KRANTZ

Mr Jan BJÖRKLUND

Ms Lena ADELSON LILJEROTH

Mr Christer HALLERBY

Minister for Higher Education and Research

Minister for Education

Minister for Culture

State Secretary for Integration and Gender Equality

United Kingdom:

Mr Siôn SIMON

Ms Jane HUTT

Minister for Creative Industries

Minister for Children, Education, Life-Long Learning and Skills (Welsh Assembly)

Commission:

Ms Viviane REDING

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ

Member

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

EDUCATION

Professional development of teachers and school leaders - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted conclusions on the professional development of teachers and school leaders, as set out in [15098/09](#).

Education of children with a migrant background - *Council conclusions*

The Council held a policy debate and adopted conclusions on the education of children with a migrant background. The conclusions can be found in [14353/09](#).

Contribution to the discussion on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy

The Council adopted the following message to the European Council as a contribution from the field of education to the reflection on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy:

"Promoting investment in education and training

- **In a time of global economic downturn it is essential that Europe makes full use of each individual's potential and continues to promote higher, more efficient and targeted investment in quality education and training.** Upgrading and adapting the knowledge and skills of all citizens is crucial to paving the way out of the crisis, as well as to meeting the long-term challenges of global economic competitiveness, employment, active citizenship and social inclusion.

- **Meeting the objectives laid down under the new 'Education and Training 2020' strategic framework and ensuring a strong role for education and training in the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy will be essential.** Education and training at all levels need to be open and relevant to the requirements of a low-carbon, knowledge-based economy and to prepare citizens for social and economic change. A solid foundation of key competences for both young people and adults, together with comprehensive lifelong learning opportunities – including enhanced possibilities for learning mobility – are crucial to promoting adaptability and innovation. Partnerships between education and training providers at all levels and the wider world, in particular the world of work, need to be developed further.

- **Strengthening Europe's innovative capacity calls for much closer interaction between the three sides of the knowledge triangle (education, research and innovation).** A Europe of knowledge, creativity and innovation needs education and training systems which promote creative, innovative and entrepreneurial mindsets among pupils, trainees, students, teachers and researchers; the highest possible quality of initial and continuing professional development for teaching staff at all levels; and reinforced commitment to the development of, as well as complementarity between, a European Higher Education Area and a European Research Area."

The role of education in a fully-functioning knowledge triangle - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted conclusions on developing the role of education in a fully-functioning knowledge triangle, see [14344/09](#).

Drivers for excellence in higher education

The Council held a policy debate on the role of diversity and transparency as drivers for excellence in European higher education. Ministers were asked to reflect on the following questions:

- *If the mobility of students and scholars within the European higher education area with its rich diversity of higher education institutions is to develop further, what more should be done to reinforce the European dimension of quality assurance, in particular with a view to developing recognition of qualifications?*
- *Would a sophisticated and respected transparency instrument at European level help us to draw on the strengths of our diversified higher education institutions landscape by enabling comparison and providing reliable information to students, scholars, employers and policy-makers? Would you agree that the development of such instruments is even more urgent in the light of the growing number of less sophisticated international university rankings which are gaining more and more attention?*

Delegations underlined the crucial role of quality assurance in the future development of the European higher education sector and its importance for increased mobility among students, researchers and teachers. The importance of developing and improving mutual recognition of national systems was stressed, and delegations highlighted the need to make full use of the instruments established in the context of the Bologna process.

Ministers recognised the need to assess the feasibility of a European transparency instrument and looked forward to the results of the Commission's study on this. It was emphasized that any such European mechanism must respect and foster the rich diversity of European higher education institutions and be based on multiple criteria reflecting the differing missions of institutions.

CULTURE

Promoting a creative generation - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted conclusions on promoting a creative generation by developing the creativity and innovative capacity of children and young people through cultural expression and access to culture; see [14453/09](#).

European Year of Voluntary Activities 2011

The Council adopted a decision establishing 2011 as the European Year of Voluntary activities promoting active citizenship. Its aim is to improve the environment for volunteering in the EU, to raise the quality of voluntary activities and to recognise the value and importance of volunteering.

Exchange of experience and good practices, research, conferences and information campaigns are among the measures that can be supported in the framework of the European Year. To this end, a budget of EUR 8 million is allocated, of which at least EUR 2 million is directed to concrete activities in member states.

The European Parliament gave its opinion on the draft decision on 26 November. The full text of the decision can be found in [15658/09](#).

AUDIOVISUAL

Media literacy in the digital environment - Council conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions on media literacy in the digital environment, which are set out in [15441/09](#).

Digitisation of cultural content in Europe

The Council held a policy debate on the digitisation of cultural content in Europe.

To begin with, the Commission informed ministers about its analysis of the impacts from a European perspective of *Google Books*, in the wake of the revised settlement between Google and US publishers ([15109/09](#)). The Commissioner emphasised that this issue only served to highlight the need for urgent EU action on digitisation.

Ministers were asked to consider the following questions:

What are the main issues that need to be addressed in a European initiative to open up a level playing field for the digitisation of cultural works, and in particular books?

Ministers highlighted the licensing of orphan works as well as the issue of standards for digitisation as being among the questions that needed to be resolved if the volume of digitised books and other cultural content in Europe was to grow. Delegations stressed that a balanced approach to questions of copyright was critical, taking into account the interests of right holders and users alike. In addition, a number of member states were in favour of a coordinated European strategy to address these questions.

How can governments and the EU facilitate private initiatives and public-private partnerships for making cultural works, particularly books, digitally available to all European citizens, regardless of borders?

Ministers and the Commission generally considered that the involvement of the private sector in the digitisation process should be possible, albeit subject to certain conditions. Some delegations cautioned that such cooperation must not lead to private monopolies whilst others emphasised that the market should be left to develop. Legal certainty and enforcement of competition rules were also referred to as pre-conditions for the involvement of private companies. A suggestion by the French minister to create a "small committee of wise men" to look into the issue of private sector participation was supported by a number of delegations keen to contribute to such a process.

What can be done by member states and national institutions to make important digitised material – in particular public domain material – freely available through Europeana?

Member states agreed with the Commission on the importance of concerted action to ensure that much more digitised material is made available through Europeana and on the need for the prototype to become fully operational in 2010.

YOUTH

Framework for European cooperation in the youth field

The Council held an exchange of views and adopted a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field that is to cover the period from 2010 to 2018; see [15131/09](#).

The two new overall objectives for EU cooperation are creating equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market as well as promoting active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity. Initiatives should accordingly be taken in eight main fields of action: education and training; employment and entrepreneurship; health and well-being; participation; voluntary activities; social inclusion; youth and the world; creativity and culture.

The new framework is divided into three three-year work cycles, for each of which a number of priorities for European cooperation will be established. The resolution also sets the targets for the period from January 2010 until June 2011: during this time, the overall theme will be youth employment. In the first semester of 2010, work will focus on social inclusion while the main priority in the second half of 2010 is to be youth work. During the first six months of 2011, activities will aim to foster citizenship and participation.

The Council also adopted the following message to the December European Council as a contribution from the youth field to the reflection on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy:

"Recalling the adoption by the March 2005 European Council of the European Youth Pact, as one of the instruments contributing to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives of growth and jobs, and in light of the adoption of a new framework for cooperation in the youth field for 2010-2018 - which inter alia highlights the urgent need to combat the high level of youth unemployment in the EU -

the Council invites the European Council:

- **to ensure a youth perspective in the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy and to support the continuation of initiatives in line with the overall objectives of the European Youth Pact, as well as to ensure implementation of the new framework for European cooperation in the youth field for 2010-2018."**

OTHER BUSINESS

Education and Training 2010 work programme

The Commission provided information on the joint 2010 progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

Google Books settlement

To start off the discussion on the digitisation of cultural content, the Commission provided an overview on the possible impacts of the newly revised settlement on European owners of copyrights, cultural diversity and competition in Europe ([15109/09](#)).

Digitisation of cinema in Europe

In their note, the French authorities welcomed the Commission's proposals for contributing to the transition to digital cinema in Europe ([15810/09](#)) and underlined the importance of fast and effective public intervention, both in terms of financial support and regulation. The main objective of the digitisation of cinemas is to give the best possible access and quality to a greater range of works.

Publishing in certain languages

The Slovenian delegation provided an information note ([15813/09](#)) on improving the position of publishers that issue books in languages with small numbers of speakers. For Slovenia a lower VAT rate would be an important instrument to deal with this issue. It suggested that member states should be allowed a degree of flexibility on how to use taxation for such policies. This intervention was welcomed by a number of countries.

International agreements concerning audiovisual policy

Austria presented a reflection on the letter from Commissioner Reding concerning the protocol amending the Council of Europe convention on transfrontier television ([15814/09](#)).

Work programme of the incoming presidency

The Spanish delegation briefed the Council on the work programme of its forthcoming presidency in the first semester of 2010.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

EU - Canada agreement on customs cooperation

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations with Canada, with a view to expanding the agreement on customs cooperation and mutual assistance in order to include cooperation on security matters.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Rules for granting EU financial aid

The Council adopted a codified version of the regulation laying down general rules for granting EU financial aid in the field of trans-European networks ([3682/09](#)).

The new regulation replaces the various acts incorporated into regulation (EC) No 2236/95, while fully preserving their content.

Renegotiation of the monetary agreement with San Marino and the Vatican

The Council adopted two decisions on the position to be taken by the EU regarding the renegotiation of the monetary agreement with San Marino and the Vatican. The aim of the renegotiation is to ensure a level playing field for the obligations of these countries, create follow-up mechanisms, introduce a common method for calculating the ceilings of euro coins issuance and allow recourse to mints other than the Italian mint for the production of coins of the Vatican and San Marino.

CUSTOMS UNION

Euro-Mediterranean rules of origin

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations with a view to a regional convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin.

The pan-Euro-Mediterranean cumulation zone includes the EU, the EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), the countries signatories of the Barcelona process (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey) and the Faroe Islands.

At the Euro-Med trade ministerial conference in Lisbon in October 2007, ministers agreed to start the drafting of a single regional convention on preferential rules of origin for the pan-Euro-Mediterranean area in order to replace the current network of protocols on rules of origin. They also decided to include countries participating in the Stabilization and Association Process (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Kosovo under UNSC resolution 1244/99).

SOCIAL POLICY

Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

The Council approved the conclusion of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The UN Convention, which has been in force since 3 May 2008, was signed on behalf of the European Community in March 2007.

Protection of workers from asbestos

The Council adopted a codified version of the directive on the protection of workers from the risks deriving from exposure to asbestos at work ([3680/09](#)).

The new directive replaces the various acts incorporated into directive 83/477, while fully preserving their content.

AGRICULTURE

Delegation of laboratory testing of plants*

The Council adopted a directive authorising member states to delegate laboratory tests on plants and plant products to legal persons such as universities, research institutes or private laboratories, provided that they satisfy certain conditions ([15705/09](#) + [16281/09](#) ADD I). They must be impartial, free of conflict of interest as well as able to ensure reliable results and protect confidential information. The new directive amends directive 2000/29 on protective measures against the introduction into the EU of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community.

Tractors

The Council adopted a codified version of a directive on certain components and characteristics of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors in order to improve its legal clarity and rationality ([3678/09](#)).

INTERNAL MARKET

Safety of appliances burning gaseous fuels

The Council adopted a codified version of a directive relating to appliances burning gaseous fuels in order to improve its legal clarity and rationality ([3679/09](#)).

ENVIRONMENT

Protection of wild birds

The Council adopted a codified version of a directive on the conservation of wild birds in order to improve its legal clarity and rationality ([3681/09](#)).
