PRESS RELEASE

3046th Council meeting

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

Brussels, 18 and 19 November 2010

Presidents

Ms Fadila Laanan
Minister of the French-speaking Community, in charge of Culture, the Audiovisual Sector, Health and Equal Opportunities

Mr Philippe Muyters
Flemish Minister for Finance, the Budget, Employment, Town and Country Planning and Sport

Mr Pascal Smet
Flemish Minister for Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels Affairs

of Belgium
Main results of the Council

The Council officially designated Mons in Belgium as European Capital of Culture 2015.

The Council also established a regular dialogue between representatives of sports movements and EU policy makers. The first such informal meeting is scheduled for early December 2010.

The Council also reiterated the need for member states and the EU to coordinate their positions in meetings of the World Anti-Doping Agency and formalised coordination arrangements.

In the context of the European Year to combat poverty and social exclusion 2010, ministers addressed the roles of education, sport, culture and youth policy as instruments for social inclusion.
CONTENTS

PARTICIPANTS

ITEMS DEBATED

CULTURE

European heritage label

European Capital of Culture for 2015

Work plan for culture for 2011-2014

Role of culture in combating poverty and social exclusion

AUDIOVISUAL

European film heritage, including the challenges of the digital era

Opportunities and challenges for European cinema in the digital era

CULTURE/AUDIOVISUAL

Cultural and audiovisual dimensions of the digital agenda

SPORT

EU structured dialogue on sport

Role of the EU in the international fight against doping

Sport as a source of and a driver for active social inclusion

Social inclusion in and through sport

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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.
EDUCATION

European cooperation in vocational education and training in the period 2011-2020
Youth on the move initiative
Basic skills in schools
Education for sustainable development
The role of education in combating poverty and social exclusion

YOUTH

Youth work
Access of young people to culture
International policies on children, youth and children's rights
Social inclusion of inner-city youth

OTHER BUSINESS

Council of Europe cultural routes
Reconstruction of "Triumph Theatre" in Haiti
Conference on young people and youth employment
Work programme for the next presidency

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

ENERGY

– Labelling of household appliances

FISHERIES

– EU mandate for ICCAT meeting on bluefin tuna

DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEMBER STATES

– Appointment of a judge to the General Court of the European Union
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Ms Octavie MODERT  
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State Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Sport  
State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture  
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Ms Amelie VON ZWEIGBERGK  
Minister for Culture and Sports  
State Secretary, Prime Minister's Office  

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Mr Nick GIBB  
Mr Andy LEBRECHT  
Minister for Sport  
Minister for Education  
Deputy Permanent Representative  

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Commission:
Ms Neelie KROES  Vice President
Ms Androulla VASSILIOU  Member
ITEMS DEBATED

CULTURE

European heritage label

The presidency reported to the Council on progress with the establishment of a European heritage label, see 14817/10.

The European heritage label has existed as a voluntary inter-governmental initiative, in which 17 EU member states and Switzerland participate. The designation has been awarded to 64 sites since 2006. In November 2008, the Council requested that this initiative be transformed into an EU action so as to improve its functioning. The Commission proposed a draft decision in March (7094/10), which is currently being examined in both the European Parliament and the Council. The culture and education committee of the European Parliament adopted its opinion on 27 October.

European Capital of Culture for 2015

The Council designated Mons in Belgium as one of the two European Capitals of Culture 2015 (15168/10). The second capital of culture for 2015, Pilsen in the Czech Republic, will be designated at the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council in May 2011.
Work plan for culture for 2011-2014

The Council adopted conclusions setting out the EU work plan for culture for the years 2011 to 2014, see 15472/10.

The plan addresses the following priorities:

- cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture;
- cultural and creative industries;
- skills and mobility;
- cultural heritage, including mobility of collections;
- culture in external relations;
- culture statistics.

These priorities will be implemented through the open method of coordination (working groups with member states' experts) and a reinforced dialogue with civil society.

Role of culture in combating poverty and social exclusion

The Council adopted conclusions on the role of culture in combating poverty and social exclusion, see 15448/10. The conclusions argue that it is important for a cultural dimension to be incorporated into policies against poverty and social exclusion. Participation in cultural life and arts education can play a significant role in the fight against poverty by encouraging social inclusion of vulnerable social groups and promoting cultural diversity and inter-cultural dialogue. The conclusions highlight in particular the role of public libraries in this respect.
AUDIOVISUAL

European film heritage, including the challenges of the digital era

The Council adopted conclusions on European film heritage, including on the challenges of the digital era, set out in 14711/10. The text addresses two issues: the transition from the analogue to the digital era and the link between film funding policies and film heritage. The conclusions invite member states to ensure that films supported by public funds should be deposited with a film heritage institution, which should have rights to show it for educational and cultural purposes.

Opportunities and challenges for European cinema in the digital era

The Council adopted conclusions on the opportunities and challenges for European cinema in the digital era, see 15449/10. The conclusions underline that the transition to digital cinema is urgent and that it should be supported by public policies. A particular issue is the need for financial support to help smaller and independent cinemas, which often show European and more culturally diverse films, equip themselves with digital projection equipment.
CULTURE/AUDIOVISUAL

Cultural and audiovisual dimensions of the digital agenda

The Council discussed the cultural and audiovisual aspects of the digital agenda, the first so-called flagship initiative under the "Europe 2020" strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The digital agenda, endorsed by the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council of 31 May, aims to deliver sustainable economic and social benefits from a digital single market based on fast and ultra fast internet and interoperable applications.

Delegations underscored that the cultural and audiovisual dimensions of the digital agenda are crucial if it is to achieve its objectives. As priority actions, ministers singled out the digitisation of cultural heritage and of cinema as well as the development and sustainable financing of Europeana, the European digital library. In addition, delegations stressed the importance of increasing legal access to cultural and creative content online and of intellectual property rights in this respect. Finally, many highlighted that media literacy levels need to be improved so as to enable citizens to fully benefit from a digital single market.

All ministers underlined that the cross-cutting nature of the digital agenda requires an integrated rather than a compartmentalised approach and horizontal coordination between institutions concerned at EU and at national level.
**SPORT**

**EU structured dialogue on sport**

The Council adopted a resolution establishing a high-level structured dialogue with sport stakeholders, set out in 15214/10 + COR 1. Such a dialogue will allow an ongoing exchange of views on priorities, implementation and follow-up to EU cooperation in the field of sport. It will take the form of a regular informal meeting of leading representatives of the EU public authorities and the sports movement to discuss sporting issues in the EU. The first such meeting is scheduled for 6 December.

**Role of the EU in the international fight against doping**

The Council adopted conclusions on the role of the EU in the international fight against doping, set out in 16009/10.

The conclusions reiterate the need to coordinate EU and member state positions ahead of meetings of the World Anti-Doping Agency, in particular in relation to the EU acquis, for example on the free movement of athletes and the protection of privacy and personal data. Such EU coordination should take place in close cooperation with the Council of Europe.

**Sport as a source of and a driver for active social inclusion**

The Council adopted conclusions on the role of sport as a source of and a driver for active social inclusion, see 15213/10. The conclusions identify three common priorities for promoting social inclusion through sport: the accessibility of sport activity for all citizens ("sport for all" principle), better use of the potential of sport as a contribution to community building, social cohesion and growth, and transnational exchanges of strategies and methodologies.
Social inclusion in and through sport

The Council held a policy debate on social inclusion in and through sport.

All ministers underlined that sport is an activity that can bring people together and be a powerful tool to strengthen cohesion in European societies, with professional athletes being role models for society. They mentioned that relevant activities in their countries were targeted at youth, disabled sportsmen, the elderly and those from disadvantaged and migrant communities.

Delegations specifically requested that exchanges of experience and of best practices be among the priorities of EU action in the field of sport. Several delegations advocated that a future EU programme in the area of sports should support volunteering, especially involving those with a migrant background, as well as improvements in sports infrastructures.
EDUCATION

European cooperation in vocational education and training in the period 2011-2020

The Council adopted conclusions on the priorities for European cooperation in vocational education and training for the period 2011-2020, see 15010/10.

The conclusions set out a global vision for vocational education and training (VET) in 2020, aiming at a more attractive, relevant, career-oriented, innovative, accessible and flexible European VET system than in 2010. They also establish four long-term strategic objectives for the period from 2011 to 2020, which reflect those adopted under the overarching "ET 2020" strategic framework, namely:

– improving the quality and efficiency of VET - enhancing its attractiveness and relevance;
– making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
– enhancing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship;
– promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship.

The text also sets out a programme of short-term deliverables related to these priorities, for the years 2011 to 2014. The conclusions will feed into the discussions at the informal ministerial meeting specially devoted to VET on 7 December in Bruges and serve as a basis for a special communiqué to be adopted by that meeting.

Youth on the move initiative

The Council adopted conclusions on the Youth on the move initiative, one of the seven flagship initiatives proposed in the framework of the "Europe 2020" strategy, set out in 15276/10.

The conclusions establish underlying principles for implementing the initiative, such as close collaboration between the relevant policy areas and Council formations and full use of EU programmes and budgets. The text, therefore, includes contributions from both the youth and the employment sectors. In addition, the conclusions already broadly welcome the Youth on the move initiative, while recognising that the specific measures proposed within it will have to be discussed using the relevant legislative procedures.
Basic skills in schools

The Council adopted conclusions on increasing the level of basic skills in the context of European cooperation on schools for the 21st century, see 14948/10.

The conclusions recognise that more effective action needs to be taken to achieve agreed benchmarks on reading and numeracy skills set for 2020. They also highlight several areas where attention should be paid, including curriculum design, motivation for reading literacy, the impact of new technologies and the gender dimension. The Commission is invited to set up a high-level expert group to examine the most effective ways of supporting reading literacy, with a view to proposing policy action in the first half of 2012.

Education for sustainable development

The Council adopted conclusions on education for sustainable development (ESD), see 14947/1/10 REV 1. This is virtually the first time the Council has tackled the issue of ESD, integrating economic, social and environmental perspectives. The conclusions stress that sustainable development aspects should be mainstreamed into all areas of education and training. The Council invites member states to feature education for sustainable development in national lifelong learning strategies and to equip teachers and trainers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required.

The role of education in combating poverty and social exclusion

The Council debated the role of education in combating poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

All ministers agreed on the critical importance of education in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty. In fact, evidence shows that people with low educational attainment are at a four times greater risk of falling into poverty than those with high education levels and children born into low-income homes face seriously reduced educational opportunities and life chances.

Many delegations highlighted what they saw as prerequisites for successful policies in this area: early childhood education, commitment by parents to the educational success of their children, teacher training as well as increased language learning so as to integrate children with a migrant background. Many in particular emphasised the need to support Roma children.
However, all delegations also underlined that education policies alone are not enough and wider measures are needed. Therefore, cross-cutting approaches to combating social exclusion are essential. Ministers stressed the need for collaboration with areas such as health, culture and employment, as well as with town planning.

Ministers also underlined the significance of monitoring the impact of their policies so as to increase awareness of the challenges in the education sector and to allow the fine-tuning of policies to ensure their efficiency.
YOUTH

Youth work

The Council adopted a resolution on youth work, set out in 14847/10. The text recognises the crucial role of youth work as a provider of non-formal learning; it encourages member states to create better conditions and more opportunities for youth work at all levels. The resolution also invites the Commission to develop a study to map the diversity, coverage and impact of youth work in the EU. In this context, the Commissioner announced her intention to propose during 2011 a Council recommendation on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.

Access of young people to culture

The Council adopted conclusions on access of young people to culture, see 14849/1/10 REV 1. The conclusions invite member states and the Commission to facilitate access of all young people to culture and to develop long-term coordinated policies to that effect.

International policies on children, youth and children's rights

The Council took note of information from the presidency about the policy agendas of the EU, the Council of Europe and the United Nations on children, youth and children's rights.

It also adopted conclusions encouraging member states to take an active role in the ongoing intergovernmental activity in the field of children, youth and children's rights, set out in 14846/10. The text also welcomes the Commission's intention to propose an EU strategy on the rights of the child.
Social inclusion of inner-city youth

The Council debated the social inclusion of young people in deprived inner-city areas.

Ministers highlighted that urban youth was particularly hard hit by the economic crisis, with high levels of youth unemployment. To help them, measures must be taken to combat early school leaving and to facilitate the transition between education and the workplace. In addition, ministers reported positive results from projects offering leisure and sporting activities to urban youth.

In this respect, EU funding programmes such as the lifelong learning and Youth in action programmes were cited as contributing positively to national initiatives.

The presidency will hold a special conference on this issue on 27 November in Brussels so as to listen to the ideas of young people and their representatives.
OTHER BUSINESS

Council of Europe cultural routes

The Luxembourg delegation drew the attention of ministers to the draft extended partial agreement on the Council of Europe's cultural routes and invited member states to join it. The aim of the agreement is to support the cultural routes programme, which cannot be funded from the Council of Europe's ordinary budget for 2011 (15463/10).

Reconstruction of "Triumph Theatre" in Haiti

Bulgaria provided information on the reconstruction of "Triumph Theatre" in the capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince.

Conference on young people and youth employment

Representatives of the European Youth Forum and the Flemish Youth Council briefed delegations on the outcome of a conference on young people and youth employment, which the presidency organised in Leuven on 2 to 4 October.

Work programme for the next presidency

Hungary informed the Council of the work programme of its upcoming presidency in the areas of education, culture, youth and sport.
OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

ENERGY

Labelling of household appliances

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of four Commission regulations supplementing directive 2010/30/EU on the labelling of the energy consumption of the following household appliances:

– televisions (14246/10);
– household dishwashers (14251/10);
– household washing machines (14253/10);
– household refrigerating appliances (14256/10).

These Commission regulations are subject to the so-called regulatory procedure with scrutiny, which means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulations unless the European Parliament objects.

FISHERIES

EU mandate for ICCAT meeting on bluefin tuna

The Council adopted an EU negotiating mandate for the discussions on bluefin tuna management at the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), taking place in Paris from 17 to 27 November 2010.

For more information, see press release.
DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEMBER STATES

Appointment of a judge to the General Court of the European Union

On 18 November, the representatives of the governments of the member states appointed Mr Andrei POPESCU as the Romanian member of the General Court of the European Union (the former Court of First Instance) for a term of office from 26 November 2010 to 31 August 2016.

This follows three decisions of the representatives of the governments of the member states taken on 23 June, 8 July and 20 October 2010 to appoint 13 members of the General Court of the European Union for a period of six years (T2077/10 + T5172/10) and completes the partial renewal of the General Court.

The General Court is made up of at least one judge from each member state. Judges are appointed for a term of office of six years, which is renewable. They appoint their president from among their number for a period of three years.