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THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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2729th Council Meeting

Education, Youth and Culture

Brussels, 18-19 May 2006

President

Mr Franz Morak,
State Secretary, Federal Chancellery and
Ms Elisabeth Gehrler,
Federal Minister for Education, Science and Culture
of Austria

P R E S S

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Main Results of the Council

*The Council adopted a common position imposing restrictive measures against certain officials of **Belarus**.*

*The Council reached political agreement on the **Media 2007**, **Culture 2007** and "**Citizens for Europe**" programmes and on a recommendation on the protection of minors in relation to audiovisual and online services.*

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- The documents whose references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site <http://www.consilium.europa.eu>.
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PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Ms Fadila LAANAN

Minister for Culture, the Audiovisual Sector and Youth,
French Community

Mr Frank VANDENBROUCKE

Vice-Minister-President of the Flemish Government and
Flemish Minister for Work, Education and Training

Czech Republic:

Ms Petra SMOLÍKOVÁ

Deputy Minister for Culture

Ms Petra BUZKOVÁ

Minister for Education, Youth and Sport

Denmark:

Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN

Deputy Permanent Representative

Mr Bertel HAARDER

Minister for Education and Church Affairs

Germany:

Mr Eberhard SINNER

Minister of State for Media Affairs

Mr Peter WITT

Deputy Permanent Representative

Mr Frieder MEYER-KRAHMER

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education and
Research

Estonia:

Mr Raivo PALMARU

Minister for Culture

Mr Tiit NABER

Deputy Permanent Representative

Greece:

Mr Giorgos VOULGARAKIS

Minister for Culture

Mr Theodoros ROUSOPOULOS

Minister of State and Government Spokesman

Ms Marietta GIANNAKOU

Minister for Education and Religious Affairs

Spain:

Mr Francisco ROS PERÁN

State Secretary for Telecommunications and the
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Ms Mercedes CABRERA CALVO-SOTELO

Minister for Education and Science

France:

Mr Renard DONNEDIEU DE VABRES

Minister for Culture and Communication

Mr Gilles de ROBIEN

Minister for National Education, Higher Education and
Research

Ireland:

Mr John BROWNE

Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and
Food (with special responsibility for Forestry)

Ms Mary HANAFIN

Minister for Education and Science

Italy:

Mr Alessandro PIGNATTI

Deputy Permanent Representative

Cyprus:

Mr Pefkios GEORGIADES

Minister for Education and Culture

Latvia:

Ms Helēna DEMAKOVA

Minister for Culture

Ms Tatjana KOKE

Parliamentary Secretary of State of Education and Science

Lithuania:

Mr Vladimiras PRUDNIKOVAS

Minister for Culture

Mr Remigijus MOTUZAS

Minister for Education and Science

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean-Louis SCHILTZ

Ms Octavie MODERT

Mr Georges FRIDEN

Minister for Communications, Minister for Cooperation and Humanitarian Action, Minister for Defence
State Secretary for Relations with Parliament, State Secretary for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, State Secretary for Culture, Higher Education and Research
Deputy Permanent Representative

Hungary:

Mr András BOZÓKI

Mr Bálint MAGYAR

Minister for Cultural Heritage
Minister for Education

Malta:

Mr Francis ZAMMIT DIMECH

Ms Theresa CUTAJAR

Minister for Tourism and Culture
Deputy Permanent Representative

Netherlands:

Ms Medy van der LAAN

Ms Maria van der HOEVEN

State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science
Minister for Education, Cultural Affairs and Science

Austria:

Mr Franz MORAK

Mr Georg LIENBACHER

Ms Elisabeth GEHRER

Mr Anton DOBART

State Secretary, Federal Chancellery
Director General, Federal Chancellery
Federal Minister for Education, Science and Culture
General Director

Poland:

Mr Krzysztof OLENDZKI

Mr Stanisław ŚLAWIŃSKI

Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Culture
Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Science

Portugal:

Ms Isabel PIRES DE LIMA

Mr Augusto SANTOS SILVA

Mr Jorge PEDREIRA

Minister for Culture
Minister for Parliamentary Affairs
State Secretary for Education, attached to the Minister for Education

Slovenia:

Ms Jelka PIRKOVIČ

Mr Milan ZVER

State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture
Minister for Education and Sport

Slovakia:

Mr Juraj NOCIAR

Ms Dorotea MIKULOVÁ

Deputy Permanent Representative
State Secretary at the Ministry of Education

Finland:

Ms Tanja KARPELA

Ms Susanna HUOVINEN

Mr Antti KALLIOMÄKI

Minister for Culture
Minister for Transport and Communications
Minister for Education

Sweden:

Mr Leif PAGROTSKY

Minister for Education and Culture

United Kingdom:

Mr Shaun WOODWARD

Mr Peter PEACOCK

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Creative Industries and Tourism
Minister for Education and Young People (Scottish Executive)

Commission:

Ms Viviane REDING

Mr Ján FIGEL

Member

Member

The Governments of the Acceding States were represented as follows:

Bulgaria:

Ms Ina KILEVA
Mr Daniel VALTCHEV

Deputy Minister for Culture
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education and
Science

Romania:

Mr Virgil NITULESCU
Mr Dumitru MIRON

State secretary, Ministry for Culture and Religious Affairs
State Secretary of Education and Research

ITEMS DEBATED**CULTURE AND AUDIOVISUAL**– *Culture 2007 programme*

Following the agreement on the financial framework for 2007-2013, the Council has now reached a political agreement on the entire¹ draft decision establishing the *Culture 2007* programme, aimed at providing financial support for the European cultural sector for the 2007-2013 period (8950/06).

It is recalled that the new programme, which succeeds the Culture 2000 programme, will give priority support to three objectives:

- promoting transnational mobility of people working in the cultural sector in the EU;
- encouraging transnational circulation of works of art and cultural products;
- encouraging intercultural dialogue.

The draft programme provides for three strands of intervention:

- direct financial support for cultural actions;
- support for bodies active at European level in the field of culture;
- support for analyses, for the collection and dissemination of information and for other activities improving the impact of projects in the field of European cultural cooperation.

It is to be noted that both the Commission and the Council agreed, as proposed by the European Parliament, that strand 2.2 of the Commission's proposal, relating to actions for the preservation of memorials, be transferred to the proposed "*citizens for Europe*" programme.

Legal basis proposed: Article 151(5) of the Treaty – unanimity required for a decision by the Council and co-decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

¹ At the (EYC) Council of 14-15 November 2005, the Council reached a partial political agreement on the proposal.

The European Parliament delivered its first reading opinion on 25 October 2005 (13677/05). A large number of the amendments proposed have been incorporated into the text, either in whole, in part or in essence. The text agreed will be adopted as a common position by a subsequent Council and sent to the European Parliament for a second reading.

– *European capitals of culture*

The Council took note of the names of the leading figures proposed by Austria and Finland to be nominated as members of the selection panel responsible for the designation of the 2011 "European capitals of culture". The two members will officially be appointed by the Council in the second half of this year.

The two nominees proposed are Mr Thomas ANGYAN (Austria) and Mr Seppo KIMANEN (Finland).

It is recalled that under Decision 1479/1999/EC¹ establishing a Community action for the European capital of culture event for the years 2005 to 2019, the Commission each year forms a selection panel which issues a report on the designation of cities as European capitals of culture. The selection panel is composed of seven leading independent figures who are experts on the cultural sector, of whom two are appointed by the European Parliament, two by the Council, two by the Commission and one by the Committee of the Regions. In accordance with Decision 2000/CE/01² on the appointment by the Council of two members of the selection panel, the two States holding the Council Presidency during the ongoing year each nominate a leading figure for appointment by a simple majority by the Council for the following year.

The "*European capital of culture*" event was instigated by the Council in 1985, on the initiative of Ms Mélina Mercouri, Greek Minister for culture, in order to help bring the peoples of Europe closer together. The support this event receives from the Community is laid down in Decision 1419/1999/EC.

¹ Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 (OJ L 166, 1.7.1999, p. 1).

² Council Decision of 17 December 1999 (OJ C 9, 13.1.2000, p. 1).

– ***European year of intercultural dialogue 2008***

Pending the first reading opinion of the European Parliament, the Council reached a general approach on a draft decision designating 2008 as the *European year of intercultural dialogue* (8951/06).

Intercultural dialogue contributes towards achieving a number of the Union's priorities, in particular:

- by respecting and promoting cultural diversity in Europe and promoting active European citizenship open to the world and based on the common values in the European Union;
- by including the renewed Lisbon strategy, for which the knowledge-based economy requires people capable of adapting to changes and benefiting from all possible sources of innovation in order to increase prosperity;
- by supporting the Union's commitment to solidarity, social justice and greater cohesion in the respect of common values in the European Union;
- by enabling Europe to make its voice better heard in the world and to forge effective partnerships with neighbouring countries, thus extending the zone of stability and democracy beyond the Union and thereby influencing the wellbeing and security of European citizens and all those living in the European Union.

The designation of 2008 as European year for intercultural dialogue will allow the Community to support information and promotion campaigns, events and initiatives, surveys and studies aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue.

The European year initiative will assist European citizens as well as those living in the Union temporarily or permanently.

Legal basis proposed: Article 151 of the Treaty – unanimity required for a Council's decision; co-decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

– *"Citizens for Europe" programme*

The Council reached political agreement on a draft decision establishing for the period 2007-2013 the programme "*citizens for Europe*" to promote active European citizenship.

Regarding the outstanding issue to be resolved by the Council (the designated bodies and the phasing-out period) it was agreed to add the *Institute für Europäische Politik*, the *European Council on Refugees and Exiles* and the *Maisons de l'Europe* to the list and to establish a funding phasing-out period of 3 years.

Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom announced their intention to abstain when the act is adopted.

The Commission made a statement to the minutes of the Council indicating its regret regarding the scope of the comitology procedures.

The aim of the programme is to safeguard the continuity of the ongoing programme on civic participation¹. As proposed, the programme aims specifically to:

- promote the mobility of citizens across Europe by bringing them together, in particular at local community level, to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future;
- foster action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship through cooperation between civil society organisations at European level;
- make the idea of Europe more tangible for its citizens by promoting and celebrating Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past;
- encourage the balanced integration of citizens and civil society organisations from all Member States, contributing towards intercultural dialogue and bringing to the fore both Europe's diversity and unity, with particular attention for activities with Member States that have recently joined the European Union.

The proposed programme comprises, *inter alia*, actions such as town-twinning, support for research into and consideration of European policies, support for commemorations or for Europe-wide awards.

¹ OJ L 30, 2.2.2004, p. 6

Legal basis proposed: Articles 151 and 308 of the Treaty – unanimity required for a Council decision and co-decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

The European Parliament adopted its first reading opinion on 5 April 2006 (8028/06). The text agreed will be adopted as a common position by a forthcoming Council and sent to the European Parliament with a view to its second reading.

For further details, see the Commission proposal 8154/05.

– *UNESCO convention on cultural diversity*

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion by the European Community of the UNESCO convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions (8953/06 + 8661/1/06).

The convention on cultural diversity was adopted at the general conference of UNESCO in Paris on 20 October 2005. It establishes a series of rights and obligations to protect and promote cultural diversity.

The purpose of the proposal is to authorise the European Community to approve and, consequently, become a party to the UNESCO convention, together with the Member States..

The full participation of the European Community and of its Member States in implementing the convention will contribute, in particular, towards:

- establishing a new pillar of world governance with the aim of ensuring the protection and promotion of cultural diversity;
- emphasising the specific and dual (cultural and economic) nature of cultural goods and services;
- recognising the role and legitimacy of public policies in the protection and promotion of cultural diversity;
- recognising the importance of, and promoting, international cooperation to respond to cultural vulnerabilities, in particular with regard to developing countries;
- defining appropriate links with other international instruments that enable the convention to be implemented effectively.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 133, 151, 181, 181a, 300 (2) and (3) of the Treaty – unanimity required for a Council decision.

– *Strengthening European creative industries*

The Council held an exchange of views on the topic *strengthening the European creative industries: a contribution to growth and employment*.

On 2/3 March 2006 an EU expert seminar on "*content for competitiveness*", organised by the Austrian Presidency, was held in Vienna. The conclusions of the seminar were approved as *Presidency conclusions (see annex of 8954/06)*.

The Presidency reported to the Council that the seminar had shown that content and creative industries possess a large potential for creating growth and employment thus contributing to the goal set out for Europe in the Lisbon agenda. It also underlined the need for a coherent policy with regard to content and creative industries, in particular exploiting the full potential of information and communication technologies (ICT).

On the basis of the results of the seminar and of other initiatives, the Presidency organised today's debate covering the following issues (8954/06):

- *Priorities for content and creative industries that are relevant for the updating of the Work Plan for Culture and implementation of the i2010 initiative.*
- *Improvement of the dialogue between all stakeholders of the cultural, audiovisual and ICT sectors at European level.*

– ***Protection of minors and human dignity***

The Council reached political agreement on a draft recommendation on the *protection of minors and human dignity and on the right of reply* in the European audiovisual and online information services industry (8956/06).

The Slovakia and the United Kingdom announced their intention to abstain when the act is adopted. The Netherlands delegation, in a spirit of compromise, will agree to the recommendation, being understood that it will make a statement to the minutes.

The draft recommendation calls on the Member States, the industry and interested parties (viewers' associations), 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 Council Recommendation 98/560/EC of 24 September 1998¹, which remains valid. It responds to the new challenges both in quantitative (more “illegal” content) and qualitative terms (new platforms, new products) that technological developments bring in this field.

The draft recommendation addresses the following questions:

- media literacy;
- rating or classification of audiovisual content;
- portrayal of the sexes in the media and advertising;
- right of reply.

Legal basis proposed: Article 157 of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a Council decision; co-decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

The European Parliament delivered its first reading opinion on 7 September 2005 (11955/05). The text agreed will be adopted as a common position by a subsequent Council and sent to the European Parliament with a view to its second reading.

¹ OJ L 270, 7.10.1998, p. 48.

– *Television without frontiers*

Pending the European Parliament's first reading opinion, the Council took note of a progress report and held a debate on the proposal for a directive amending the Directive on the pursuit of *television broadcasting activities*¹.

The debate covered, in particular, the following issues in relation with the proposed directive,:

- the appropriateness and the sustainability of the distinction between linear and non-linear services;
- the common rules² applying to both categories of services;
- the extent of the modernisation and simplification of the television advertising and teleshopping rules³.

Delegations welcomed the Commission's initiative in seeking to revise the regulations framework for audiovisual services. They mentioned a number of issues that needed to be discussed in greater depth, including the need for further legal clarity, particularly regarding definitions and scope, the need to avoid hindering the development of the audiovisual industry, the functioning of the country of origin principle, etc.

The proposed directive seeks to address the more recent and significant technological and market developments while ensuring a competitive level playing field.

It aims to introduce common minimum rules for all audiovisual media services irrespective of the transmission platform technology used to deliver those services, thus ensuring platform neutrality, and to modernise advertising rules.

¹ Council Directive 89/552/EEC (OJ L 298, 17.10.1989, p. 23) as last amended by Directive 97/36/EC (OJ L 202, 30.7.1997, p. 60).

² Identification of the media service provider, the protection of minors, the prohibition of incitement to hatred, the promotion of cultural diversity, some qualitative restrictions for as well as the identification of commercial communication.

³ Regulations about recognisability and separation as well as insertion of television advertising and teleshopping, about the time limit and about the regulations for television broadcasts exclusively devoted to advertising and teleshopping.

It introduces the notion of audiovisual media services and distinguishes between "linear" services (e.g. scheduled broadcasting via traditional TV, the internet or mobile phones, which "pushes" content to viewers) and "non-linear" services (such as video-on-demand, which the viewer "pulls" from a network). Only a basic tier of rules would apply to non-linear services.

Advertising rules, which concern principally linear services, are simplified. The daily limit on advertising is dropped while the 12-minute upper limit per hour is maintained. The 20 minutes minimum interval between advertising breaks is also abolished while cinematographic works, news and children's programmes can be interrupted only once every 35 minutes. Rules on product placement, not currently addressed by the TVWF Directive, are being introduced.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 47 and 55 of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a Council decision; co-decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

For further details, see the Commission proposal 15983/05.

EDUCATION– ***European indicator of language competence - Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL,

having regard to:

- the strategic goal set for the European Union by the Lisbon European Council of 23-24 March 2000 and reaffirmed by the Stockholm European Council of 23 and 24 March 2001 *to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion;*
- the mandate from the Lisbon European Council to the Education Council *to undertake a general reflection on the concrete future objectives of education systems, focusing on common concerns and priorities while respecting national diversity*¹;
- the Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 on the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning² which emphasised, amongst other things, that:
 - the knowledge of languages is one of the basic skills which each citizen needs to acquire in order to take part effectively in the European knowledge society and therefore facilitates both integration into society and social cohesion; and that
 - *all European languages are equal in value and dignity from the cultural point of view and form an integral part of European culture and civilisation,*

and which invited the Member States to set up systems of validation of competence in language knowledge based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages developed by the Council of Europe;

¹ SN 100/1/00 REV 1, paragraph 27.

² OJ C 50, 23.2.2002, p.1.

- the Barcelona European Council conclusions of 15-16 March 2002¹, which:
 - endorsed the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems²,
 - called for further action to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age; and
 - called for the establishment of a linguistic competence indicator in 2003;
- the Council conclusions on new indicators in the fields of education and training of May 2005³
- the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council entitled *The European Indicator of Language Competence*⁴;
- the draft recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning⁵, which defines communication in a foreign language as a key competence;
- the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled *A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism*⁶,

REAFFIRMS that

- foreign language skills, as well as helping to foster mutual understanding between peoples, are a prerequisite for a mobile workforce and contribute to the competitiveness of the European Union economy;
- periodic monitoring of performance through the use of indicators and benchmarks is an essential part of the Lisbon process, allowing good practice to be identified with a view to providing strategic guidance and steering for both short and long term measures of the "Education and Training 2010" work programme;

¹ SN 100/1/02 REV 1.

² Adopted by the Education Council on 14 February 2002 (OJ C 142, 14.6.2002, p.1).

³ OJ C 141, 10.6.2005, p.7.

⁴ 11704/05 - COM (2005) 356 final

⁵ 13425/05 - COM (2005) 548 final

⁶ 14908/05 - COM (2005) 596 final

RECOGNISES that

- measures are needed to remedy the current absence of reliable comparative data on the outcomes of foreign language teaching and learning;
- such measures must be based upon the gathering of data through objective tests of language skills, developed and administered in such a way as to ensure the reliability, accuracy and validity of those data;
- such data have the potential to help identify and share good practice in language education policies and language teaching methods through an enhanced exchange of information and experience;
- Member States need a clearer picture of the practical and financial arrangements they will each need to make in order to implement the European Indicator of Language Competence;

STRESSES that

- the development of the Indicator should fully respect the responsibility of Member States for the organisation of their education systems and should not impose undue administrative or financial burdens on the organisation and institutions concerned;
- the method for data-gathering should take account of previous work in the field at international, Union and Member State level, and be devised and implemented in a cost-effective manner;
- the European Indicator of Language Competence shall be put in place as soon as possible, in accordance with the following terms of reference:
 - data should be gathered on competences in first and second foreign languages:
 - via a common suite of tests administered to a representative sample of the target population in each Member State;
 - from a representative sample of pupils in education and training at the end of ISCED level 2;
 - ¹³ where a second foreign language is not taught before the end of ISCED 2, Member States may, in the first round of data-gathering, choose to gather data for the second foreign language from pupils at the level of ISCED 3;

- for those languages for which there exists a suitable representative sample of learners in a given Member State;
- test scores should be based on the scales of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages¹;
- because respect for linguistic diversity is a core value of the European Union, the Indicator should be based upon data concerning the knowledge of all the official languages of the European Union taught as foreign languages in the Union; but for practical reasons it would be advisable, in the first round of data-gathering, for tests to be made available in those official languages of the European Union that are most widely taught in the Member States, to the extent that they provide a sufficiently large sample of testees ;
- Member States shall themselves determine which of those official languages are to be tested;
- the Indicator should assess competence in the four productive and receptive skills; but for practical reasons it would be advisable, in the first round of data-gathering, for tests to be made available in the three language skills which may be assessed most readily (i.e. listening comprehension, reading comprehension and writing);
- the testing methodology should be made available to those Member States who wish to use it for their own development of tests in other languages;
- appropriate contextual information to help assess underlying factors should also be gathered;

INVITES the Commission to:

- set up, at the earliest opportunity, an Advisory Board (the “EILC Advisory Board”) composed of a representative of each Member State and one representative of the Council of Europe, whose mandate shall be to advise the Commission on technical matters, such as:
 - the specification of the tender for the creation of the testing instruments;

¹ *"Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment"*, as developed by the Council of Europe.

- the assessment of the work of the contractor;
- the appropriate arrangements, standards and technical protocols for data-gathering activities in the Member States, taking into consideration the need to prevent undue administrative and financial burdens for the Member States;
- in order to assist Member States to define the organisational and resource implications for them, give this Board the initial task of bringing forward a timetable for the work and a more detailed description of the construction and administration of the tests, including:
 - sample size;
 - preferred testing method, and
 - preferred arrangements for administering the tests, taking the possibilities of e-testing into account;
 - the minimum sample size that should determine whether a test for a particular language shall be made available to Member States;
- report back in writing to the Council by the end of 2006 on the progress of work and, if appropriate, on any issues outstanding;

INVITES Member States to:

- take all necessary steps to carry forward the process of establishing the EILC."

– ***Key competences for lifelong learning***

Pending the European Parliament first reading opinion, the Council agreed a general approach¹ on a draft recommendation on *key competences for lifelong learning* (8641/06).

The proposal responds to a mandate given by the 2000 Lisbon European Council ("*Every citizen must be equipped with the skills needed to live and work in this new information society*") and reiterated and developed in the "*Education and Training 2010*" work programme adopted by the Barcelona Council in March 2002, which also called for further action to "*improve the mastery of basic skills*" and to strengthen the European dimension in education. This work was to focus on identifying the basic skills and how, together with traditional skills, they could be better integrated into the curricula, learnt, and maintained throughout life. Basic skills should be genuinely available for everyone, including for those with special needs, school drop-outs and adult learners. Validation of basic skills should be promoted to support further learning and employability.

The draft recommendation is aimed at establishing a European reference framework defining the basic skills (*key competences*) which all citizens need to acquire, through lifelong learning, in order to achieve personal fulfilment, increase active participation and improve employability in modern knowledge-based economies and societies.

The key competences are:

- communication in the mother tongue
- communication in foreign languages
- mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
- digital competence;
- learning to learn;

¹ United Kingdom could not yet lift its parliamentary scrutiny reservation.

- social and civic competences;
- sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and
- cultural awareness and expression.

The proposal further establishes how key competences can be accessed through lifelong learning.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 149 and 150 of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a Council decision; co-decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

An agreement with the European Parliament might be reached at first reading.

– *European Quality Charter for Mobility*

Pending the European Parliament first reading opinion, the Council agreed a general approach on a draft recommendation on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: the *European Quality Charter for Mobility (8958/06)*.

This proposal builds on the "Education and training 2010" EU work programme, establishing a common set of principles aimed at increasing efficiency in all organised mobility for learning purposes.

It is worth recalling that under the Erasmus programme over 1 000 000 young people have studied in another Member State as part of their studies, thereby helping to increase understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity as well as create an European area of education and training in accordance with the objective of the Lisbon strategy. Thanks to mobility of this kind, Erasmus is undoubtedly one of the EU actions most widely recognised by a large number of EU citizens.

The proposed charter consists of ten practical and easily accessible guidelines covering the period prior to departure, during the stay and after the person's return:

- information and guidance;
- learning plan;
- personalisation;
- general preparation;
- linguistic aspects;
- logistical support;
- mentoring;

- recognition;
- reintegration and evaluation;
- commitments and responsibilities.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 149 and 150 of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a Council decision; co-decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

– *Lifelong Learning Programme*

In the light of the result of the negotiations on the draft financial perspective 2007-2013 and pending the presentation by the Commission of its amended proposal, the Council held an exchange of views on the financial aspects of the *Lifelong Learning Programme*.

It is recalled that the new integrated programme will comprise four sub-programmes already existing within the current *Socrates* programme: *Comenius* (school education); *Erasmus* (higher education); *Leonardo da Vinci*, (vocational education and training); *Grundtvig* (adult education).

The programme aims both to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, while ensuring good protection of the environment for future generations, and to foster interchange, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community, so that they become a world quality reference.

Following the 4 April 2006 interinstitutional dialogue on the 2007-2013 financial perspective, the budget allocation for the lifelong learning programme stands at EUR 6 970¹ million (in cash prices).

Having been invited to express their views on the use of the financial resources now available for the programme, in particular on the relative importance to be attached to each of the four sub-programmes (*Comenius*, *Erasmus*, *Leonardo da Vinci* and *Grundtvig*) (8959/06), the delegations expressed broad agreement with the proposal tabled by the Commission² while underlining the importance that should be given to adult learning (*Grundtvig*) and to mobility, notably that of teachers and researchers (*Leonardo*).

¹ The Commission had proposed € 13620 million (cash prices) (11587/04).

² Comenius: 13%, Erasmus: 40%, Leonardo: 25%, Grundtvig: 3%.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 149(4) and 150(4) of the Treaty – qualified majority for a decision by the Council and codecision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

The European Parliament delivered its first reading opinion on 25 October 2005 (13675/05). A large number of the amendments proposed have been incorporated into the text, either in whole, in part or in essence.

For further details, see the Commission proposal: 11587/04.

– *Review of the EU's sustainable development strategy*

The Council held a policy debate on the contribution of *education* to sustainable development, in the context of the review of the EU's sustainable development strategy.

The debate covered the following issues:

- Objectives, targets, key actions and the policy instruments proposed in the SDS Review package¹.
- Role of the (Education) Council in implementing the EU SDS, including the Lisbon agenda.
- Contribution of the EU SDS towards coherence between EU internal policies and its international commitments and to sustainable development both at EU and global level, in particular in the area of education.

Delegations stressed the essential role of education in the SDS as it raised awareness of the need to preserve the environment, whilst acting as an instrument to combat social exclusion.

It is recalled that in December 2005, the European Council took note of the presentation by the Commission of its communication on a renewed sustainable development strategy for the next 5 years² and looked forward "to adopting in June 2006 an ambitious and comprehensive strategy, comprising targets, indicators and an effective monitoring procedure, which should integrate the internal and external dimensions and be based on a positive long-term vision, bringing together the Community's sustainable development priorities and objectives in a clear, coherent strategy that can be communicated simply and effectively to citizens."³

¹ 15796/05.

² 15796/05.

³ Paragraph 13 of the December 2005 European Council conclusions (15914/1/05).

The Commission's "SDS review package" consists of:

- the communication itself proposing six priority issues, the integration of the external dimension into internal policy making as well as an effective monitoring procedure and follow-up process
- guiding principles for SD adopted in June 2005 by the European Council (Annex 1)
- objectives, targets, policies and actions (Annex 2)
- a Commission communication adopted in February 2005, taking stock of progress and proposing initial guidelines (Annex 3).

All the relevant Council configurations are currently being consulted with a view to the adoption of the renewed EU sustainable development strategy by the June 2006 European Council

OTHER BUSINESS

The Council was briefed on the following items:

- Inclusion in the list of "European Heritage" (9165/06)
 - Information from the French and Spanish delegations

- Changing the name of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp
 - Information from the Polish delegation

- Communication of the Commission: Carrying out the necessary reforms needed to modernise European higher education (follow-up to the Hampton Court Summit) (9166/06).
 - Information from the Commission

- Consultation on the future European credit accumulation and transfer system for vocational education and training (ECVET) (9167/06)
 - Information from the Commission

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**AUDIOVISUAL****Media 2007 programme**

Following the agreement on the financial framework for 2007-2013, the Council reached full¹ political agreement on a decision establishing a programme of support for the European audiovisual sector (*Media 2007*) (8955/06 +COR I).

It is recalled that the programme, which combines the current Media Plus and Media Training programmes, is intended to support the European audiovisual sector with the following objectives:

- preserving and enhancing European cultural diversity and its cinematographic and audiovisual heritage;
- guaranteeing its accessibility to European citizens;
- promoting intercultural dialogue;
- increasing the circulation and viewership of European audiovisual works inside and outside the European Union;
- strengthening the competitiveness of the European audiovisual sector in an open and competitive European market.

The text agreed will be adopted as a common position by a forthcoming Council and sent to the European Parliament with a view to the second reading.

¹ At the (EYC) Council of 14-15 November 2005, the Council reached a partial political agreement on the proposal.

YOUTH**Values of non-formal and informal learning - Council resolution**

The Council adopted the following resolution:

"the Council of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council,

Whereas:

- (1) The Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council on 23 and 24 March 2000 define new strategic objectives to strengthen employment, economic reform and social cohesion as an integral part of a knowledge-based economy. Member States were invited by the European Council to adopt the necessary measures in their constitutional provisions and the Council and the Commission, each within the limits of its own competences, were invited to develop *inter alia* a common European blueprint for curricula vitae to be used on a voluntary basis, which would make it easier for educational and training institutions as well as employers to assess skills acquired and promote mobility.
- (2) The White Paper *A new impetus for European youth* of 21 November 2001¹, with regard to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, emphasises the need for a clearer definition of the concepts, of the skills acquired and of quality standards, a higher regard for those involved, greater recognition of these activities and greater complementarity with formal learning and training.
- (3) The Barcelona European Council on 15 and 16 March 2002 adopted a concrete work programme with the objective of making the education and training systems a worldwide quality reference by 2010. It agreed that the three basic principles underlying this programme should be improved quality, facilitation of universal access, and opening to the wider world.

¹ 14441/01 - COM(2001) 681 final.

- (4) The Council Resolution on lifelong learning of 27 June 2002¹ invites the Member States to encourage cooperation and effective measures to validate learning outcomes, crucial for building bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning and thus a prerequisite for the creation of a European area of lifelong learning.
- (5) On the basis of the joint Commission and Council of Europe working paper *Pathways towards Validation and Recognition of Education, Training and Learning in the Youth Field* the January 2005 "Bridges for Recognition" conference in Leuven developed approaches towards the assessment and recognition of education, training and learning in the field of youth and underlined the need for a better validation of non-formal learning.
- (6) The comprehensive work of the Council of Europe in the field of non-formal and informal learning, for instance by means of a European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers, underlines the value of this type of educational experience and emphasises the need to recognise it, particularly given the significance of life-long learning.
- (7) The Conclusions of 28 May 2004 of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, advocated, in accordance with the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002² :
 - the adoption of a set of common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning;
 - the development and dissemination of European instruments to recognise non-formal and informal learning.
- (8) The Council Conclusions of 21 February 2005³ called on the European Council to integrate the European Pact for Youth initiative into the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy and to adopt guidelines on concrete measures.
- (9) The Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 23 March 2005, which agreed on the European Pact for Youth, state that a package of strategies and measures dedicated to youth should form a fully integrated part of the Lisbon Strategy. One objective is to develop closer cooperation between the Member States on transparency and comparability of occupational qualifications as well as to recognise non-formal and informal learning.

¹ OJ C 163 of 9.7.2002, p. 1.

² 9600/04.

³ OJ C 85 of 7.4.2005, p. 5.

- (10) The Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 15 November 2005¹, addresses the implementation of the European Pact for Youth and the promotion of active citizenship and defines action lines.
- (11) The Presidency Conclusions of the European Council on 16 and 17 June 2005 propose Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005 –2008) which include the implementation of the European Pact for Youth.
- (12) The Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council creating the "YOUTH IN ACTION" programme² gives European cooperation a key role in promoting non-formal and informal learning.
- (13) The Joint Report of the Council and the Commission *Modernising Education and Training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe* on progress in implementing the Education and Training 2010 work programme³ emphasises the importance of achieving a balance between the social and economic objectives of education and training policies and of developing diverse learning partnerships which include those engaged in both formal and non-formal sectors;

AWARE that

- (1) the work and achievements of young people and those active in youth work and youth organisations deserve greater recognition in order to enhance their value and visibility, and should be given due consideration by employers, formal education and civil society in general;
- (2) non-formal and informal learning activities within the youth field are complementary to the formal education and training system, have a participative and learner-centred approach, are carried out on a voluntary basis and are therefore closely linked to young people's needs, aspirations and interests; by providing an additional source of learning and a possible route into formal education and training, such activities are particularly relevant to young people with fewer opportunities;
- (3) non-formal and informal learning in the youth field takes place in a wide and varied range of settings and that, for the self-development of young people and their social, cultural and professional integration, specific and appropriate methods and instruments are required;

¹ OJ C 292 of 24.11.2005, p. 5.

² 11586/04 - COM(2004) 471 final.

³ OJ C 79, 1.4.2006, p. 1.

- (4) public and private investment in the youth field at local, regional, national and European level have an important economic and social impact;
- (5) the social and economic importance of the youth field is evident in its potential impact on the development of key competences that are of practical relevance to the labour-market, and its fostering of participation, active citizenship and social responsibility.

RECOGNISE that

- (6) non-formal and informal learning are important elements in the learning process and are effective instruments for making learning attractive, developing readiness for lifelong learning and promoting the social integration of young people;
- (7) non-formal and informal learning can enable young people to acquire additional knowledge, skills and competences and contribute to their personal development, social inclusion and active citizenship, thereby improving their employment prospects;
- (8) non-formal and informal learning activities within the youth field can provide significant added value for society, the economy and young people themselves; the contributions which such activities make should therefore be made more visible, as well as better understood, recognised and supported;
- (9) the YOUTH and future "YOUTH IN ACTION" Programmes make an important contribution to the acquisition of competences and are therefore key instruments in providing young people with opportunities for non-formal and informal learning in a European dimension.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION to

- (1) encourage, while taking into account the specific situation in each Member State, the development of a comparable and transparent youth-specific element within Europass for identifying and recognising the skills and competences acquired by young people through non-formal and informal learning, that could be attached to or form an integral part of, certificates or other recognition tools in order to make it easier for third persons – particularly in another Member State – to understand what the original certificate means in terms of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by its holder;
- (2) enable by this means the identification of those competences acquired and actually used, with a view to their recognition on the labour market;

- (3) encourage public bodies and NGOs to use and, where appropriate, adapt comparable and transparent instruments for recognising competences of those active in youth work and youth organisations, in accordance with the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers currently being developed within the Council of Europe;
- (4) recognise and support, within their respective competences, the specific contribution made by youth organisations and other non-governmental organisations in providing non-formal and informal learning;
- (5) promote application of the common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal learning to the specific needs of the youth field;
- (6) encourage further research into the impact of non-formal and informal learning provided by those working in the youth field and youth organisations, in particular their contribution to society and the economy, *inter alia* by making comprehensive use of the information provided by the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy;
- (7) encourage the social partners to acknowledge the quality and diversity of young people's non-formal and informal learning and to recognise its social and economic added value;
- (8) encourage innovative partnerships between formal and non-formal learning providers, in order to develop pedagogical approaches that could be attractive for different groups of learners;
- (9) promote access to Europass and similar instruments existing at national and European level and encourage young people to use these on a voluntary basis."

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Belarus - Council adopts financial restrictive measures

The Council adopted a common position amending common position 2006/276/CFCP imposing restrictive measures against certain officials of Belarus by freezing all funds and economic resources of persons who are responsible for the violations of international electoral standards and the crackdown on civil society and the democratic opposition in the context of the 19 March 2006 presidential elections and those natural or legal persons, entities or bodies associated with them, as listed in the annex (8818/06). The common position also specifies that no funds or economic resources shall be made available, directly or indirectly, to or for the benefit of the persons concerned.

The Common position establishes a list of 36 persons concerned, including President Lukashenko.

These measures are adopted in addition to travel restrictions against President Lukashenko, members of the leadership and certain officials of Belarus imposed by common position 2003/276/CFSP¹ adopted by the Council on 10 April. At that time, the Council had indicated that further targeted measures could be decided (*See 10 April Council conclusions on Belarus in External relations press release 7939/06*).

The Council also adopted a regulation implementing these measures at Community level (8847/06).

For further information, please see press release 9531/06.

Relations with Monaco

The Council agreed on the position to be taken by the Community in the EC-Monaco Joint Committee concerning its rules of procedure.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

ACP-EU council of ministers in Papua New Guinea, 1-2 June

The Council approved a draft provisional agenda for the 31st session of the ACP-EU council of ministers, which will take place in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, on 1 and 2 June.

The ministerial session will address issues of common interest such as economic partnership agreements, trade and development cooperation, migration and EU strategies for ACP regions.

The Council also approved a draft joint ACP-EU declaration on climate change and development, to be issued at the meeting.

¹ OJ L 101, 11.4.2006, p. 5.

DECISION TAKEN BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

European Central Bank - Appointment of a member of the Executive Board

The Heads of State or Government of the Member States with the euro as their currency adopted a Decision on 19 May, appointing Mr Jürgen Stark as a member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank for a period of eight years as from 1 June, to replace Mr Otmar Issing, whose term of office expires on 31 May.

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

The Council adopted:

- the reply to the letter sent to the Council by the European Ombudsman concerning the follow-up to complaint 2172/2005/MHZ (8773/06);
 - the reply to confirmatory application 22/c/01/06 (8729/06).
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