



Brussels, 12 November 2007

INFORMATION NOTE¹
FOR THE EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE COUNCIL
Brussels, 15 and 16 November 2007

*The Council will meet at 10.00 on 15 November 2007 to consider the education items on the agenda, with Ms **Maria de Lurdes RODRIGUES**, Minister for Education, in the chair. It will resume its proceedings in the afternoon, chaired by Mr **José MARIANO GAGO**, Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education, to discuss the subjects more specifically linked to higher education. On 16 November the Council will commence at 10.00 with the items relating to culture, with Ms **Isabel PIRES DE LIMA**, Minister for Culture, in the chair. The items concerning youth will be addressed in the afternoon, under the chairmanship of Mr **Pedro SILVA PEREIRA**, Minister for the Prime Minister's Office.*

Education

*The Council will reach a political agreement on a draft Recommendation on the establishment of the European **Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning**. It should also establish a general approach concerning a draft Decision establishing an action programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries (**Erasmus Mundus**).*

The following should also be adopted:

- *a Resolution on **Education and Training** as a key driver in the Lisbon Strategy;*
- *a Resolution entitled "**New skills for new jobs**";*
- *conclusions on **improving the quality of teacher education**.*

The Council will also debate:

- *a draft Resolution on **modernising universities** in order to promote European competitiveness;*
- *a **more multilingual Europe**;*
- ***the social dimension of Erasmus** in order to promote the mobility of students, in particular those from less favourable socio-economic backgrounds.*

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

Culture

*On the basis of the outcome of the Permanent Partnership Council, the Council will hold an exchange of views on the future of **cooperation between the EU and Russia** in the field of culture. Following an exchange of views, the Council will adopt a Resolution on a **European agenda for culture**. The Council will also adopt a Decision designating the **European Capitals of Culture for 2011**.*

Youth

*The Council and the Representatives of the Member States will adopt a Resolution on implementing the common objectives for **voluntary activities of young people** and conclusions on a **transversal approach to youth policy**. The Council will also hold an exchange of views on the implementation of the **European Youth Pact**.*

It is planned that during lunch on 15 November, the Ministers for Education will discuss the place of education in the new round of the Lisbon process.

On 16 November, the Presidency and the Ministers for Youth of the extended troika (DE, PT, SI, FR), together with Commissioner Figel and the representative of the European Parliament, will have lunch with representatives of the "Youth Forum".

The Presidency will hold a press conference at the end of each session of the Council.

EDUCATION

Qualifications for lifelong learning

The Council will reach political agreement on a draft Recommendation on the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (14115/07).

The aim of the proposal is to provide a common language to describe qualifications, thereby increasing transparency, improving comparability and facilitating the recognition of different qualifications acquired under the various EU education and training systems.

On 13 and 14 November 2006, the Council agreed a general approach² on the Commission proposal, pending the European Parliament's opinion.

In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty and the joint declaration on practical arrangements for the codecision procedure³, a series of informal meetings were subsequently held between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, with a view to reaching an agreement on this dossier at first reading.

A set of compromise amendments was agreed between the three institutions and was duly approved by the European Parliament at its plenary part-session from 22 to 25 October 2007⁴.

The Council is now being asked to confirm its agreement on the amendments adopted by Parliament at first reading, with formal adoption of the act taking place once the text has been finalised in all the official languages.

Proposed legal basis: Articles 149(4) and 150(4) of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a decision by the Council and codecision procedure with the European Parliament applies.

Improving the quality of teacher education

The Council and the Representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council will adopt conclusions on improving the quality of teacher education (14413/07).

In the context of the Lisbon process, one of the main objectives of the "Education & Training 2010" work programme is to improve the quality of education and training for teachers.

² 14478/06 + 14965/07.

³ OJ C 148, 28.5.1999, p. 1.

⁴ 14200/07.

In order to help prepare their pupils for tomorrow's knowledge society and equip them to face a growing number of technological, economic and social changes, teachers are required to teach new skills and competences using up-to-date techniques and tools. At the same time, they are teaching increasingly heterogeneous classes of pupils from a variety of social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, who will vary in their ability to adapt to the requirements of their education. These changes mean that teachers have to use new teaching methods, and reinforce the need they have always themselves felt to pursue continuous training throughout their lives.

At the end of August 2007 the Commission published a communication (12414/07) inviting the Member States to devote more effort to improving their teacher education systems, drawing extensively on the set of Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications drawn up in 2004.

These conclusions are intended as a response to that communication.

Education and training as a key driver of the Lisbon Strategy

The Council will adopt a Resolution on education and training as a key driver of the Lisbon Strategy (13933/07).

This Resolution is being adopted with a view to the forthcoming revision of the Lisbon Strategy, and in particular the Integrated Guidelines. It ensures that, in the context of that revision, education and training receive as much attention as the other two sides of the knowledge triangle, namely research and innovation.

New skills for new jobs

The Council will adopt a Resolution entitled "New skills for new jobs" (14415/07).

This Resolution should be seen in the context of the Lisbon Strategy. Working on the principle that Europe is building a "new" economy, it focuses on the need to equip citizens with the skills they need in order to be able to contribute. It also recognises the need to identify skills needs and skills gaps in the emerging economy, to provide opportunities for citizens to develop such skills, and to improve the matching of those skills with the needs of society and the economy.

The Resolution seeks to rationalise, coordinate and stimulate instruments that already exist (e.g. Cedefop's Skillsnet, Europass, the European Qualifications Framework) and also invites the Commission to analyse the need for additional mechanisms at European level.

Towards a more multilingual Europe (*public debate*)

Following presentation by the Commission of its report on the implementation of the Action Plan "Promoting language learning and linguistic diversity"⁵, the Council will have the opportunity for an exchange of views on the concept of a more multilingual Europe; the Presidency has suggested the following questions to guide the debate (13935/07):

1. *In your view, what are the challenges and objectives in this area which require the greatest attention over the medium term (i.e. in the course of the next 3 to 5 years)?*
2. *Which specific actions (e.g. education reforms, teacher training provisions, state funding, information campaigns, cooperation with enterprises, etc.) would you envisage in order to reach the objective(s) referred to in question 1?*
3. *How best can the European Union support the efforts of Member States to achieve those objectives?*

Erasmus Mundus (*public deliberation*)

Pending the European Parliament's first-reading opinion, the Council will have to establish a general approach on a draft Decision establishing an action programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus) (2009-2013)⁶.

The text that will be submitted to the Ministers has already, to a large extent, been approved by the delegations. However, the Council will still have to resolve issues relating to the details of the procedure for selecting candidates and in particular the possible use of a consultation committee.

The Commission proposal seeks to extend the scope of the current Erasmus Mundus programme so as to cover the years that remain until the end of the current financial framework (2013).

The main changes to the existing programme are as follows:

- the inclusion of doctorate-level studies;
- the inclusion of partnerships with third-country institutions financed from the budget of other Community programmes on development;
- the simplification of administrative procedures.

The general approach to be established by the Council will be the basis which the Slovenian Presidency can use for exploring the scope for a possible first-reading agreement with the European Parliament.

Proposed legal basis: Article 149(4) of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a decision by the Council; codecision procedure with the European Parliament applies.

⁵ 13346/07 + ADD 1.

⁶ Commission proposal: 11708/07.

Modernisation of universities *(public debate)*

The Council will hold a wide-ranging debate on the need to modernise universities in order to promote European competitiveness in a knowledge-based world economy.

The aim is that the results of this debate should be reflected in the draft Resolution on the same subject, submitted to the Council in the two configurations involved (Education and Research), which will be adopted by the meeting that takes place last (Research).

The Resolution will be one of the Council's contributions to the preparation of the December European Council.

Student mobility: social dimension of Erasmus *(public debate)*

The Council will discuss the possibility of providing social support for students from less favourable socio-economic backgrounds, with the aim of continuing to promote student mobility (13939/07).

The Ministers will be specifically asked to reply to the question suggested by the Presidency:

What measures are Member States taking or considering taking to promote the mobility of students, in particular regarding social support for students from less favourable socio-economic backgrounds?

CULTURE

First meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council (PPC)

The Council will be informed by the Presidency and the Commission of the results of the first EU-Russia PPC meeting on culture, which was held in Lisbon on 25 October 2007.

The main aim of that meeting was to emphasise the EU's commitment to applying the road map in the common space of research and education, including the cultural aspects. It also enabled a joint declaration to be adopted on the future direction of EU-Russia cultural cooperation.

The Council meeting will also be an opportunity to discuss the future of EU-Russia cooperation in the field of culture.

European agenda for culture *(public debate)*

The Council will adopt a Resolution on a European agenda for culture (14485/07) and hold a discussion on this subject.

The Resolution is a response to the Commission communication on a "European agenda for culture in a globalising world"⁷. It adopts the three main aims of the communication, namely: the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; the promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy; and the promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations. Furthermore, it adopts the working methods proposed by the Commission, including the "open method of coordination" already used for structuring the cooperation between the Member States and the EU in the fields of education, youth, employment and social protection. The Resolution proposes to apply this method of cooperation to the field of culture in a manner appropriately adjusted to the particularities of the sector.

The Council will also take stock of the results of the first Cultural Forum for Europe, which was held in Lisbon on 26 and 27 September. At the Forum more than 700 players from the cultural world gave their views on the Commission communication and expressed their support for the European agenda for culture which is proposed here.

European Capital of Culture – cities designated for 2011

The Council will designate Turku (Finland) and Tallinn (Estonia) "European Capitals of Culture 2011" (14116/07), in accordance with Decision 1622/2006/EC⁸.

The "European Capital of Culture" event was launched by the Council in 1985 on the initiative of Ms Melina Mercouri, the Greek Minister for Culture, to help bring the peoples of Europe closer together. The support provided by the EU is set out in Decision 1622/2006/EC, which establishes a Community action for this event for the years 2007 to 2019.

YOUTH

Voluntary activities of young people – Implementation of the common objectives

The Council will adopt a Resolution on implementing the common objectives for voluntary activities of young people (14425/07).

This Resolution adapts and reinforces the common objectives for voluntary activities of young people adopted by the Council Resolution of 15 November 2004 – namely, to develop, facilitate, promote and recognise such activities as a means of personal, social and professional development, as well as a way of involving them as active citizens – and at the same time confirms their importance and validity.

The Resolution raises volunteering to the level of an essential element of active European citizenship. Voluntary activities are recognised as the best way of increasing employment opportunities for young people and encouraging their active involvement in society.

⁷ 9496/07.

⁸ OJ L 304, 3.11.2006, p. 1.

Transversal approach to youth policy

The Council will adopt conclusions concerning the adoption of a transversal approach to youth policy that will enable young people to fulfil their potential and participate actively in society (14426/07).

Following the Commission Communication of 5 September 2007 "*Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society*"⁹, these conclusions contain a series of key messages to the European Council, calling on the European Institutions and the Member States to adopt a transversal approach to future decision-making on youth policy.

Implementing the European Youth Pact (*public debate*)

The Council will hold an exchange of views on better consideration of youth issues in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy.

The adoption of the European Pact for Youth by the European Council in March 2005 was a recognition at the highest level of the importance of integrating young people into society and working life, and of making better use of the potential they represent.

The Youth Pact consists of the following three strands:

- employment, integration and social advancement;
- education, training and mobility;
- reconciliation of family life and working life.

Since its adoption, the Pact has provided a tool for incorporating the youth dimension into national implementation of the Lisbon Strategy at all levels.

This exchange of views will also be an opportunity to pave the way towards an innovative working method to achieve the Lisbon Strategy's objectives on youth, feeding into the 2009 evaluation process.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions, suggested by the Presidency (13686/07):

1. *What kind of sustainable measures could be developed to enable a new working method to be adopted to achieve the Lisbon Strategy's objectives on youth?*
2. *Which instruments could be useful to improve the implementation and monitoring of the European Youth Pact?*

⁹ 12772/07.

Any other business

- (a) Proposal for a Regulation establishing a European Institute for Technology (EIT)
 - Information from the Presidency on the state of play
 - (b) Applications regarding the European Capital of Culture event for the year 2012
 - Information from the Portuguese and Slovenian delegations
 - (c) Events organised during the Portuguese Presidency in the field of Education
 - = Closing Conference of the 20th Anniversary of the Erasmus Programme (Lisbon, 4 and 5 October 2007)
 - = High-Level Meeting on modernising universities in Europe (Lisbon, 6 November 2007)
 - Information from the Presidency
 - (d) Compendium of good practice on modernising higher education
 - Information from the Commission on the state of play
 - (e) 2008 joint interim report of the Council and the Commission on progress under the "Education & Training 2010" work programme
 - Presentation by the Commission
 - (f) Events organised during the Portuguese Presidency in the field of Culture
 - = Expert Conference "Disclosure and Preservation: Fostering European Culture in the Digital Landscape" (Lisbon, 7 and 8 September 2007)
 - = Meeting of the Cultural Contact Points (Lisbon, 28 September 2007)
 - = Expert Conference "Audiovisual online content" (Lisbon, 7 to 9 October 2007)
 - = Expert Conference "The Culture and Creative Sector in the Lisbon Agenda" (Lisbon, 31 October and 1 November 2007)
 - = "Meeting of the National Coordinators of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue – 2008" (Lisbon, 14 November 2007)
 - Information from the Presidency
 - (g) Forthcoming events in the field of Culture
 - = "Cultural Heritage and Society" (Lisbon, 5 and 6 December 2007)
 - = Meeting of the European Board of Archives (Lisbon, 7 December 2007)
 - Information from the Presidency
 - (h) Protection of European underwater cultural heritage
 - Information from the Spanish delegation
 - (i) EU-China declaration in the fields of culture and education
 - Information from the Commission
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