

Beat: Arts

Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council - May 30-31,2016

By The European Council

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USPA NEWS - Statement regarding the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council, lasting two days (May 30 & 31,2016). Below, the main results given in Brussels on May 30, 2016, by the Council of the European Union :

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- Culture and Audiovisual

Ministers had a first exchange of views on the recent Commission proposal for a revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS), The AVMS regulates the free circulation of audiovisual works, combining jurisdiction in the country of origin with (minimum) protection of general interests throughout the EU.

The proposal aims to modernise the current regulatory framework in order to adapt it to a rapidly evolving digital market and the new habits of consumption of audiovisual content.

Ministers agreed on the importance of updating the AVMS, as part of the Digital Single Market Strategy, and also underlined that it must respect European cultural and linguistic diversity, the freedom and pluralism of the media, the openness of the Internet and the protection of consumers and in particular minors.

Ministers also addressed one of the aspects of the AVMS directive in particular, namely how public policies can support cross-border circulation of European audiovisual content. Ministers considered several issues, such as content creation versus audience reach, co-productions, national financial incentives and quotas.

Furthermore, the Council adopted conclusions on the role of Europeana for the digital access, visibility and use of European cultural heritage. The conclusions recommend the technological improvement of the Europeana platform and they also call for a more sustainable funding model within the current Multi-annual Financial Framework.

The Netherlands minister for Education, Culture and Science, Jet Bussemaker said that 'the conclusions will give renewed political guidance to this European project, which was launched in 2008: Eight years down the line, Europeana is connecting 3.700 cultural institutions that are sharing over 50 million cultural treasures online. But there are serious challenges ahead. And to tackle them, a collective effort is again needed.'

- Sport

Ministers discussed how governments can improve governance in sports against the background of recurrent corruption, money laundering and doping scandals and the consequent negative impact on the credibility and trust of the public in the positive values of sport.

Ministers underlined that the autonomy the sports sector has been enjoying for a long time can only be maintained if high standards of good governance are applied, but the current situation has made it clear that sports organizations alone are not equipped to combat the threats to its integrity that continue to occur.

Ministers agreed that sports organizations require support and cooperation and in some cases, the intervention of national governments and recalled that the sports sector must respect the basic principles of good governance, such as skilled management, sustainable financing, accountability and transparency. Europe needs one voice to improve the integrity in sport.

The Council also adopted conclusions on enhancing integrity, transparency and good governance in major sports events. The text

proposes several measures to implement these principles at national and European level at all stages of such events (feasibility, bidding, preparation, organization, evaluation, legacy), including after their closure.

After the EU-Sport Council a structured dialogue took place between EU-sports ministers and representatives of the IOC, EOC, FIFA and UEFA. The participants discussed transparency and good governance in sport and agreed to set up a regular dialogue.

The Netherlands minister for Health, Welfare and Sport, Edith Schippers said: 'sport is great fun, but only if the game is played fairly : not only on the field but also in the boardrooms of sports organizations and authorities. That is why the Netherlands presidency has made integrity, transparency and good governance in sport one of its priorities.'

- Youth

The Council adopted conclusions on the role of the youth sector in preventing and combating the violent radicalisation of young people. The conclusions highlight the invaluable contribution that youth work, voluntary and cultural activities and sport can make in reaching out to young people who might otherwise be more vulnerable to radicalisation.

They also stress the need to undermine and challenge existing violent extremist ideologies and to counterbalance them with appealing non-violent alternatives and to support parents, siblings, peers and others in contact with young people who are at risk, providing them with information on existing support systems and counselling possibilities.

Ministers discussed how youth policy can best contribute to support youth identity development. Ministers agreed that young people need more than ever a strong and positive identity to be able to successfully participate in education, the labour market and society at large and that this could be developed through integrated educational networks. These networks will also help them to build resilience against anti-democratic influences and forces.

State secretary M. van Rijn said 'European Youth and Education ministers are joining forces today. We focused on the role of teachers, youth workers and other social professionals. Their contribution can be extremely valuable to empower young people, enabling them to recognize and reject the empty promises of violent radicals.'

-Education

The Council adopted conclusions on developing media literacy and critical thinking through education and training, acknowledging the positive aspects of the Internet and social media, but also highlighting the potential threats and dangers they can present.

The conclusions stress the fundamental role of education and training in helping young people to become media-literate and responsible citizens of the future.

The conclusions are also a follow-up to the Paris declaration of March 2015 which highlights the key role that education has to play in promoting citizenship and the Union's fundamental values. Ministers agreed that one of the areas in need of strengthening was young people's ability to think critically and to exercise judgement so that they were able to grasp realities, to distinguish fact from opinion, and to resist all forms of indoctrination and hate speech.

Ministers also discussed the future of higher education in Europe, in anticipation of a forthcoming Commission proposal.

Minister Bussemaker said 'Youth policies and education have a joint role in preventing radicalisation among young people. It is clear that any approach to this urgent problem must involve all sectors in society: parents and families, teachers and youth workers, social workers and other representatives of civil society. We discussed how they can be supported and what next steps are needed at EU-level.'

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