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THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

Brussels, 26 and 27 November 2012

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Minister of Education and Culture of Cyprus

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Main results of the Council

Education

*The Council took note of the state of play concerning the proposal for a **regulation establishing the "ERASMUS FOR ALL" programme (2014-2020).***

*The Council reached political agreement on a proposal for a **recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.***

*The Council also adopted **conclusions on literacy and on the contribution of education and training to economic recovery and growth.***

Culture and Audiovisual

*The Council reached a partial general approach on the proposal for a **regulation establishing the "Creative Europe" programme.***

*The Council adopted **conclusions on cultural governance and on a European strategy for a better Internet for children.***

*The Council took note of a progress report from the Presidency on the proposal for a decision establishing a Union action for the **European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033.***

Youth

The Council adopted a resolution on the overview of the structured dialogue with young people on youth participation in democratic life in Europe.

The Council also adopted the 2012 joint report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018).

Furthermore, the Council adopted conclusions on the participation and social inclusion of young people with the emphasis on those with a migrant background.

Sport

The Council adopted conclusions on:

- strengthening the evidence base for sport policy-making;*
- promoting health-enhancing physical activities.*

The Council also designated the three EU representatives on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Foundation Board (2013-2015).

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Ms Neelie KROES
Ms Androulla VASSILIOU

Vice President
Vice President
Member

The government of the acceding state was represented as follows:

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Ms Andrea ZLATAR VIOLIĆ
Ms Irena ANDRASSY

Minister for Science, Education and Sport
Minister for Culture
Deputy Permanent Representative

ITEMS DEBATED

EDUCATION

"ERASMUS FOR ALL"

In public deliberation, the Council took note of an oral report by the Presidency on the state of play concerning the new "**ERASMUS FOR ALL**" programme for the period 2014-2020 ([17188/11](#)).

At their previous meeting in May, EU education ministers had adopted a partial general approach on the proposal, i.e. a preliminary agreement on the whole text, with the exception of any provisions with budgetary implications ([9873/12](#)). The outstanding provisions concern the total budget for the Programme, the breakdown between the various sectors and the proposed new Master's student loan guarantee facility aimed at promoting mobility for students taking their Master's degree in another member state.

On this last issue, the Presidency reported that, in addition to following the developments in the European Parliament, it had conducted a detailed technical examination of the proposal for a Master's student loan facility and its implications, partly in preparation for the future negotiations with the Parliament, and partly in readiness for an overall agreement on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

Further work on the proposal would be carried out after the EYCS Council, in the light of the amendments adopted by the Parliament's CULT Committee, following its vote today . The Presidency indicated that despite some divergences, the respective positions of the Parliament and the Council appeared relatively close in many areas, and that it hoped to ensure that the future Irish Presidency had a good basis on which to finalise an agreement with the European Parliament in the first half of next year.

Commissioner Vassiliou recalled that the main features of the new "Erasmus for All" were EU added value, flexibility and streamlined procedures. She also underlined the importance of keeping the widely known ERASMUS brand name, and disagreed with the Parliament's suggestion for a new name.

Regarding the Master's student loan guarantee scheme in particular, Commissioner Vassiliou indicated that she would soon be sending an explanatory letter to ministers on this issue. Lastly, she called on member states to ensure that the new programme received the level of financing it needed, given what it represented for young Europeans and its potential to boost growth and jobs.

Literacy

The Council adopted conclusions on literacy ([15888/12](#)), one of the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency in the field of education and training. Low literacy levels hold back economic growth and reduce its sustainability. Alarming, the latest results of the OECD's worldwide PISA survey¹ on the performance of 15-year-olds in reading, maths and science show that one in five pupils has low reading skills. The need for action is equally urgent for adults: it is estimated that almost 80 million adults in Europe – a third of the workforce - have only low or basic skills, including poor reading and writing skills.

The conclusions call on member states and the Commission to use all the relevant actions of the current Lifelong Learning Programme and the future EU programme on education and training, as well as the resources of the European Social Fund, to support and disseminate innovative approaches to improving literacy attainment across the EU², in order to achieve the target they set themselves³, namely fewer than 15% of low performers in reading, maths and science by 2020.

The Commission announced that it is planning to establish a literacy network to exchange best practices in member states, and that it will also launch a “Europe loves reading” week. Commissioner Vassiliou emphasised that literacy also included improving basic skills and said the Commission would report on this initiative next year.

The Cyprus delegation made a declaration to the Council minutes concerning the Turkish veto to its participation in OECD activities. Cyprus believes that it is time to reiterate the need to ensure the equal treatment of all member states in the OECD activities in the field of education, carried out in cooperation with the European Commission, with EU funds.

Contribution of education and training to economic recovery

The Council adopted conclusions on the contribution of education and training to economic recovery, growth and jobs ([16137/12](#)), which seek not simply to underline but also to strengthen the key role of education and training in Europe 2020 Strategy. The European Council has consistently emphasised the need for member states, while pursuing the consolidation of public finances, to ensure efficient investment in education and training as a "growth-friendly area".

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa2009keyfindings.htm>

² See also the report of the EU High Level Group on Literacy: http://ec.europa.eu/education/literacy/what-eu/high-level-group/documents/literacy-final-report_en.pdf

³ *Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020")*, [OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, pp. 2-10](#).

At national level, the conclusions emphasise the need to ensure targeted and efficient investment, to improve the quality and status of teachers, and to develop skills in line with labour market requirements. At European level, they encourage the education and training sector to play a more prominent role in implementing the education and training aspects of Europe 2020, by ensuring that education ministers regularly debate European Semester-related issues and by promoting cooperation between the Education Committee and the Employment Committee and other relevant committees.

The Europe 2020 country-specific recommendations, adopted by the Council in July 2012, highlighted a number of areas in which educational performance could be improved across the Union, such as reducing the number of early school-leavers, facilitating the transition of young people from education and training to the labour market, reinforcing vocational education and training, modernising higher education, and improving access to education for disadvantaged groups.

The Commission urged member states to implement the country-specific recommendations and said they would be an important basis for the messages that the Education Council would send to the Spring European Council.

The Commission also drew attention to a recently published analytical report on monitoring education and training and underlined the importance of the EURYDICE network, which is an extremely valuable source of information.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning

The Council reached political agreement regarding a recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning¹, also one of the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency. It invites member states to put in place arrangements for validating these types of learning no later than 2018 - in accordance with national circumstances and specificities - and seeks to define which principles and components should be taken into account for a validation process to be effective.

Whilst acknowledging that the primary focus of the education system should remain on formal education and on endeavouring to ensure high quality learning outcomes for all pupils and students, the Presidency underlined that in today's situation of rising unemployment and lack of economic growth, making use of new learning opportunities and making the most of knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education could play an important role in enhancing employability and mobility, as well as providing more motivation for lifelong learning, particularly in the case of the socio-economically disadvantaged or low-qualified groups.

Some member states indicated that they already had arrangements in place for validating learning outcomes, while others were preparing such arrangements.

The Commission underlined the importance of the validation of formal and non/informal learning, especially in the current difficult unemployment situation facing many young people.

Whilst considering that the deadline for implementation of the recommendation was not sufficiently ambitious - and indicating that it would attach a statement to this effect to the Council minutes - , the Commission nevertheless regarded the agreement reached as a solid achievement.

¹ Non-formal learning concerns learning that takes place through planned activities where some form of learning support is present (e.g. student-teacher relationships). Very common cases of non-formal learning include in-company training, structured on-line learning (e.g. by making use of open educational resources), and courses organised by civil society organisations.

Informal learning is learning or skills resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. Examples are project management skills or ICT skills acquired at work; languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country; ICT skills acquired outside work, skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports, youth work and through activities at home (e.g. taking care of a child).

Improving teacher quality and status

Ministers held a public debate on how to enhance the quality, competence and status of teachers at a time of scarce financial resources.

The Commission underlined that high-performing European education systems required high quality teachers. In particular, this implied improving teachers' initial training, making available individual support for young teachers to avoid "drop out" during their first few years, reinforcing in-service training, and making the teaching professions more attractive financially but also in terms of personal development.

The debate was launched by three pre-selected 'lead speakers' from Ireland, Sweden and Spain, who had particularly relevant initiatives to describe.

The Irish minister informed that the Irish education system was undertaking major reforms in respect of teachers, with the aim of restoring respect for teachers, improving the initial training of primary teachers and making teachers more personally responsible for their own continuous professional development. He also considered that European education was falling behind in comparison with many international competitors, and that 20% of the current functionally illiterate risk being permanently unemployed: urgent reforms were therefore required .

The Swedish minister reported that Sweden had high recruitment requirements and paid good salaries, and that teachers were relieved of many administrative chores so that they could concentrate on teaching duties. However, pay was conditional on performance.

The Spanish minister took the view that a teacher must also be an advisor and that teaching should be a collective experience. The minister said that the profession had to remain attractive throughout the whole of a teacher's career, which meant that continuous professional training was therefore essential.

Most member states acknowledged that teachers were at the core of all education and training systems and were a determining factor in educational success: teachers should continue to be a role-model for students. Improving the quality and the status of teachers is therefore a major consideration for all member states, even under the current financial constraints.

Several member states emphasized that nowadays, and in the years ahead, teachers faced important socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges and that in order to respond to them adequately it was necessary to continually upgrade teachers' skills and competences.

Several Member States stressed that it was important to attract high quality candidates to teaching and to provide them with genuine opportunities for career development. Some had introduced aptitude tests before admitting graduates to teaching training, while others said it was important, particularly at secondary level, to ensure that teachers had an excellent level of knowledge of their subjects as well as excellent pedagogical skills.

Lastly, a number of member states suggested using the European Social Fund for financing teachers' quality training and underlined the importance of teacher mobility under the various European programmes in this field, such as COMENIUS.

Any other business

- **Erasmus funding in 2012-2013**

The Council took note of information from the Presidency on Erasmus funding in 2012-2013.

Owing to a difference between the expenditure budgeted for 2012 and member states' actual commitments, there is apparently a shortfall of around EUR 180 million affecting the Lifelong Learning Programme, half of which is needed for the Erasmus exchange programme.

However, since the Parliament and the Council were recently unable to reach agreement either on the proposal to amend this year's budget or on the Commission's proposal for the 2013 budget, the whole budget process has now had to start afresh. Accordingly, the Commission has prepared a new draft budget for 2013 and negotiations with the European Parliament have resumed on a draft amending budget for 2012 and on the draft budget 2013.

The Commission deplored the current situation and warned that without rapid agreement on both the draft amending budget 2012 and the draft budget 2013 there would already be serious difficulties in financing students' grants during the first quarter of 2013.

- **Commission communication on "Rethinking Education"**

The Council took note of a Commission presentation of its communication "Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes" ([14871/12](#)), which focuses on skills development, covering a wide range of sectors including basic skills, languages and ICT. The communication also examines which reforms are required in education and training in order to facilitate such development.

The Commission emphasised that its communication was a comprehensive package, strengthening the role of education in the Europe 2020 strategy, although, in times of austerity, funding had to be very carefully planned and also cost-effective.

- **Work programme of the incoming Presidency**

The Council took note of information from the Irish delegation on the incoming Presidency's priorities for the next half-year in the field of education, namely the pursuit of negotiations on ERASMUS FOR ALL, initiatives on skills development and teacher training as well as the social dimension of higher education.

CULTURE AND AUDIOVISUAL

"Creative Europe" Programme

In public deliberation, the Council reached a partial general approach on the proposal for a regulation establishing the "Creative Europe" Programme for the period 2014-2020 ([17186/11](#)) and bringing together the three current independent programmes Culture, MEDIA and MEDIA MUNDUS. The "Creative Europe" programme has a two-fold objective: promoting cultural diversity and enhancing the competitiveness of the cultural, audiovisual and creative sectors. The Commission proposes a budget of EUR 1.8 billion, of which 15 % would be allocated to the cross-sectoral strand, 30 % to the culture strand and 55 % to the MEDIA strand.

In particular, the aim of this second partial approach¹ is to reach agreement on the provisions relating to the Guarantee Facility, aimed at improving access to financing for small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the cultural and creative sectors. The main outstanding issues concern the funding of commercial cultural projects, indicators, and implementing provisions. The budget proposed by the Commission for the Facility is EUR 200 million.

The Presidency has concentrated its work on the provisions regarding the Guarantee Facility, introducing a number of changes to the proposal in order to ensure geographical balance among member states and a balanced sectoral representation, which is of great importance especially for smaller member states and member states with restricted linguistic areas. The structure and the tasks of the Guarantee Facility have also been specified, as well as the roles of all the players involved.

The reporting obligations of the Commission are reinforced by introducing mid-term and final reports that the Commission will have to establish and submit to both the EP and the Council. The Commission considers that the reinforced reporting obligation will increase the administrative burden and the cost of implementing the Programme.

A new provision was also introduced specifying that the annual work programme for the Facility should include three sets of criteria and the annual allocation to the European Investment Fund. The Commission opposes this change, arguing that the level of detail requested is excessive and will unnecessarily complicate implementation.

¹ The first one was reached at the May EYCS Council ([9097/12](#)) and did not include the provisions with budgetary implications, pending the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020).

The rapporteur of the European Parliament's Culture and Education Committee, which is the leading committee for this file, presented her draft report on 8 October. The vote in the committee is scheduled to take place on 18 December 2012.

European Capitals of Culture

In public deliberation, ministers were briefed by the Presidency on progress regarding the proposal for a decision establishing a European Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 ([15848/12](#)).

The current decision establishing a Community action for the European Capitals of Culture establishes the order of entitlement for member states to designate a European Capital of Culture until 2019. Since the application, evaluation and selection process takes about six years, it is necessary to launch negotiations now on the continuation of this action beyond 2019 in order to have a framework ready by 2013.

The Commission proposal, submitted in July 2012, retains the general structure of the current action as well as a number of existing elements, such as the chronological order of the member states entitled to host a European Capital of Culture, a selection based on year-long cultural programmes created specifically for the event, eligibility of cities which may involve the surrounding region, if they so wish, and a two-stage selection process.

The main changes proposed to the current system are the following:

- strengthening selection criteria by increasing the number of categories from two to six and by making their description more detailed;
- establishing a single European panel responsible for both selection and monitoring procedures which would no longer be composed of national experts but exclusively of experts appointed by EU institutions;
- designating the cities to hold the title by the Commission, and not by the Council as it is currently the case.
- opening participation in the event to cities from candidate and potential candidate countries. An open competition would be organised every three years for cities from those countries. The vote in the competent Parliament committee is scheduled to take place on 23 April 2013 and the plenary vote is expected on 11 June 2013.

Cultural governance

The Council adopted conclusions on cultural governance ([15849/12](#)+ [COR 1](#)), which is a tool that can help governments both to deliver cultural policies and to implement integrated policies in order to put culture at the heart of the public policy agenda.

To this end, the conclusions recommend that new methodologies in cultural research should be adopted so that not only quantitative but also qualitative data are included. This approach would ensure that cultural policy does not lose sight of the intrinsic value of arts to individuals and society. Member states are also invited to promote synergies and develop integrated strategies at local, regional, national and European level.

Together with the Commission, member states approved the creation of an “information-sharing system” which would allow early and regular information on EU activities and policies having an impact on cultural matters. Member states also agreed to take stock of the implementation of the conclusions by 2015.

Commissioner Vassiliou stressed that in times of crisis it would be necessary to ensure that cultural policies were implemented in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Better Internet for Children

The Council adopted conclusions on a European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children ([15850/12](#)), responding to the Commission communication ([9486/12](#)) adopted in May 2012, which will replace the Safer Internet Programme as from 2013. The Strategy proposes a series of actions to be undertaken by the Commission, the member states and the ICT industry, particularly in the following four areas:

- I. stimulating quality content online for children and young people;
- II. stepping up awareness and empowerment of children and their parents and teachers;
- III. creating a safe online environment for children, notably by encouraging age-appropriate privacy settings and wider use of parental tools;
- IV. fighting child sexual abuse images, in particular through cooperation between industry, law enforcement authorities and hotlines.

These conclusions supplement the conclusions on the protection of children in the digital world adopted at the end of 2011 ([16155/11](#)), which dealt mostly with the third and fourth areas of the strategy. The present conclusions focus on promoting quality content online and on awareness-raising.

In this context, ministers held a public debate ([15846/12](#)) on a better and **safer Internet for Children**. While in some areas it is relatively easy to identify who has a major role to play (governments/public authorities in education, industry in creating quality online content), other areas are less well-defined, such as privacy-by-default settings and parental control tools.

Many member states stressed the importance of digital education: children, parents and teachers should be equipped with the necessary digital competences and skills that would allow them to enjoy the Internet in a safe and responsible way.

Some member states mentioned the need to coordinate the implementation of activities launched under the European Strategy at both national and European level, while promoting partnerships involving, in particular, children, government departments, competent institutions NGOs, and industry.

A number of member states stressed the importance of industry self-regulation, although it would need to be independently monitored and evaluated, as well as closely combined with awareness and empowerment initiatives. In this context, the Commission referred to the establishment in December 2011 of the CEO Coalition – a self-regulatory initiative bringing together chief executives from the ICT industry –which aims to take action in a number of areas to make the Internet a safer place for children. The Coalition will publish its final report in January of next year .

Several ministers recalled the need for the continued and more intensive coordination of the work done within the EU-funded network of Safer Internet Centres, and stressed the importance of ensuring its future financing through the Connecting Europe Facility.

The Commission emphasised that the European Strategy was both about protection and inclusion: all children must be equally protected. Implementation would be national, but the Internet was a cross-border phenomenon, and therefore a European approach was needed, and children and young people should be involved in the process.

Any other business

- **European Capitals of Culture 2013**

The Council took note of information from the French and Slovak delegations on the main events of the programme for the future European Capitals of Culture 2013, Marseille and Košice.

- **State aid for films and other audiovisual works**

The Council took note of information from the French delegation on its concerns relating to the impact of the Commission's draft of the new "Cinema Communication" - published in March this year and expected to be adopted by the Commission in December - on state aid for European films and its implications on the competitiveness of European film industry.

Several member states shared France's concerns, stressing that the European film industry was important both for Europe's economy and its cultural identity.

Commissioner Almunia spoke of the need to update the cinema communication (dating from 2001) owing to the important changes in the film industry that had occurred since then. He considered that the new draft Communication already took into account many of the concerns expressed by member states but he was willing to resume consultations in January, and stressed the need for rapid progress.

Furthermore, he was generally in favour of the principle of territoriality, but it must be compatible with the internal market rules.

Work programme of the incoming Presidency

The Council took note of information from the Irish delegation on the incoming Presidency's priorities in this field for the next half-year, in particular: securing agreement on the Creative Europe, Europe for Citizens and European Capitals of Culture legislative files.

The incoming Presidency will also aim to address culture in external relations.

YOUTH

Youth participation in democratic life in Europe

The Council adopted a resolution on the overview of the structured dialogue with young people on youth participation in democratic life in Europe ([15647/12](#)), which was the overall thematic priority for European cooperation in the youth field for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2012. The present resolution evaluates the achievements of the current work cycle, incorporates key messages from the joint recommendations, and sets priorities for the next 18-month work cycle.

The aim of the structured dialogue is to serve as a forum for continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field, involving a diverse range of young people and youth organisations in the consultations at all levels in the member states, at the EU Youth Conferences and during European Youth Week.

The Commission expressed its continuous support for the structured dialogue and has already increased the funds for projects in the framework of “Youth on the move”.

In this context, ministers were also briefed by the Cyprus Presidency on the outcome of the **EU Youth Conference**, which took place in Cyprus last September.

The specific priority for the Cyprus Presidency in this field was to promote youth participation and social inclusion of all young people, focusing on young people with a migrant background. It highlighted the importance of the participation of young people and youth organizations in decision making, since it is an important factor for the creation of inclusive, democratic and prosperous societies.

More than 150 persons participated in the Youth Conference, which is the final stage of the dialogue at European level. It involved not only young people but also representatives of public administrations, various experts in this area and European institutions. Recommendations were developed jointly by all participants during thematic workshops¹.

¹ See also Cyprus presidency website: <http://www.cy2012.eu>

EU youth report 2012

The Council adopted the 2012 joint report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed **framework for European cooperation in the youth field** (2010-2018) ([15660/2/12](#)), the EU Youth Report, which covers the entirety of EU cooperation in the youth field and evaluates the implementation of the structured dialogue with young people, on the basis of reports from member states.

As well as reviewing the last three-year cycle, also known as EU Youth Strategy (2010-2012), the report proposes new policy recommendations and priorities for the next three years. It advocates a cross-sectoral approach at all levels in implementing the youth policy framework and recommends addressing in particular the medium- and long-term consequences of increasing youth unemployment. This means more emphasis on promoting social inclusion, as well as on health and well-being, thus providing young people with more opportunities to take an active part in society.

Furthermore, the EU Youth Report also proposes that challenges facing young people should in the future be better addressed in key EU initiatives, such as the Europe 2020 strategy (including the Annual Growth Surveys, Youth on the Move and the Youth Opportunities Initiative).

Social inclusion of young people

The Council adopted conclusions on the participation and social inclusion of young people with the emphasis on those with a migrant background ([15652/12](#)), which propose several actions to address this issue. They underline that non-formal and informal learning has a key role to play as an instrument for supporting the social and economic inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and in particular those with a migrant background; in this context, the work of youth workers and youth organisations with young migrants is of particular importance.

A growing number of studies have shown that young women and men with a migrant background continue to face major disadvantages in education, on the labour market, and in transition from education to the labour market, despite the fact that a high proportion of this group of people have been socialised in or born in their country of residence.

The successful integration of migrants is a major issue in many member States. It is essential for the prosperity, mutual understanding and communication, not only of the individual migrants and local society, but also of the EU as a whole, since it contributes to both economic growth and the richness of European culture.

The Commission underlined that most of the Youth in Action priorities already address social inclusion of youth with fewer opportunities and that the new ERASMUS for ALL programme is an essential tool in this field.

France briefly described a project developed in cooperation with other member states (AT, CZ , FI, PL) which aims to build bridges between migrant associations and traditional youth associations: an on-line training platform with information which can contribute to the inclusion of migrants is now available (<http://www.iyouth-project.eu/en/training-materials/understanding-migrant-youth>) and a workshop is scheduled for Spring 2013, in Brussels.

In the follow-up of these conclusions, ministers held a public debate on the subject "**Mobility and diversity: How to ensure social inclusion?**" ([15657/12](#)).

In view of growing mobility and diversity in the EU¹, there is an urgent need to strengthen policies that enhance the social inclusion of all young people, based on mutual understanding and respect. Social inclusion is a two-way process: on the one hand it is about providing young people with the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life of their countries and on the other it requires young people to be actively engaged in the society they live in, starting from their local community.

Most member states stressed again that although mobility and migration are sensitive issues that can be a challenge, they are also an opportunity and can not only bring cultural richness but also contribute to growth.

Many member states considered that school was one of the main vectors of integration: education and training systems must be adapted and teachers should be provided with the training and competences necessary to meet the specific needs of each individual learner, including better learning support for young people with a migrant background, particularly for language learning.

¹ Over recent years mobility within the European Union has increased significantly, especially among young people. According to Eurostat, 12.8 million EU citizens are living in a Member State other than their own, representing 2.5% of the EU 27 population. In addition, there are 20,5 million third-country nationals living in the EU, amounting to some 4% of the total EU population.

Some member states were of the view that easily accessible public services should be provided – if possible in their own national languages - for young people who have experienced or are in danger of experiencing discrimination, xenophobia and racism. In this context, a number of member states also recalled the importance of increasing accessibility to cultural, sport and leisure-time activities, since they are important tools for the social inclusion both of young people with a migrant background and mobile young EU citizens; they also stressed the vital role that youth organizations and NGOs can play in this area.

Several member states also supported programmes and activities that facilitate access to employment and improve employability, through career guidance and information on employment, education and training opportunities. Most member states also acknowledged the important contribution of European programmes and actions, such as ERASMUS and Youth in Action, in this field.

Any other business

- **Work programme of the incoming Presidency**

The Council took note of information from the Irish delegation on the incoming Presidency's priorities in this field for the next half-year, in particular:

- Social inclusion, including the important contribution of informal and non-formal learning;
- The contribution of youth policy in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

SPORT

Evidence base for sport policy-making

The Council adopted conclusions on strengthening the **evidence base for sport policy-making** ([15873/12](#)), which highlights the economic importance of sport and its significant contribution to achieving the Europe 2020 strategic goals, as an important driver of growth and employment, and also to ensuring social cohesion, skills development and well-being.

The conclusions also aim at promoting the role of Sport Satellite Accounts (a statistical framework to measure the economic importance of a specific industry in the national economy) which were established in 2006 and are a valuable tool to generate data for the formulation of sport policies.

Although research on the economic impact of sport has been carried out in many member states, the results of this research have generally not been comparable. The conclusions underline that enhanced cooperation for improving the level of knowledge on sport in the EU can best be achieved through cross-sectoral cooperation between academics, the sports industry and the sports movement, as well as national and European public authorities, including the statistical offices.

Manipulation of sports results

The Council was not able to adopt the draft conclusions establishing a **strategy to combat the manipulation of sports results** today. Although 26 member states had reached agreement on the text, one member state could not accept it. The draft conclusions will therefore be adopted as Presidency conclusions ([17049/12](#)). Malta made a statement to the Council's minutes.

In recent years, as a consequence of the rapid growth of on-line betting, sport in Europe has been confronted with several scandals relating to the manipulation of sports results. Many sports have been affected and no sport is immune from this potential risk, since people will bet on the outcome of any competition. This kind of fraud generally involves serious criminal activities, such as corruption, fraud and money laundering, with the resulting profits feeding other criminal networks.

The cross-border nature of match-fixing and of the betting industry, which is closely connected to the problem, means that this is clearly an area where EU action could bring real added value. The EU Work Plan for Sport for 2011-2014¹ already highlighted the fight against match-fixing as a priority topic.²

¹ [OJ C 162, 1.6.2011, p. 1.](#)

² *See also the recent Commission communication: "Towards a comprehensive European framework for on-line gambling" ([15737/12](#)).*

The Presidency conclusions underline that good governance principles, such as sound financial management, transparency, and risk management plans and strategies at club, association and federation level are crucial to prevent fraud, notably match-fixing, and to safeguard the integrity of sport.

They also invite member states to support initiatives at national level aimed at raising awareness and educating sports participants, as well as law enforcement agencies, gambling regulators, betting operators and the general public about the risks involved in match-fixing. Close cooperation and information-sharing between the member states, the Commission and the sports world is also recommended.

Health-enhancing physical activities

The Council adopted conclusions promoting health-enhancing physical activities (HEPA) ([15871/12](#)), one of the Cyprus Presidency's priorities in the sports sector. The conclusions call on member states to support initiatives aimed at promoting physical activity within the sports sector, such as, for instance, specific guidelines to improve physical activity offers in local sports clubs, specific programmes introduced by sports organisations within a given sport .

The conclusions also invite the Commission to urgently prepare a proposal for a Council recommendation in this field which should be based on the EU Physical Activity Guidelines¹ and on the findings of the Expert Group on Sport, Health and Participation, established in the framework of the EU Work Plan for Sport (2011-2014). The Work Plan also identifies HEPA among its priority themes and calls on the member states to “explore ways to promote health-enhancing physical activities and participation in grassroots sport”.²

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently identified insufficient physical activity as the fourth leading risk factor for disease and premature mortality globally³, causing about one million deaths per year in the European region alone.

Despite increasing knowledge about the importance of health-enhancing physical activity for the individual and for the society, EU-wide surveys, including the 2010 Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity, indicate that 60 % of EU citizens seldom or never engage in physical exercise. Data available at national levels confirm the general trend and the significant differences between member states.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents/c1/eu-physical-activity-guidelines-2008_en.pdf

² See also Commission communication: "Developing the European Dimension in Sport" ([5597/11](#))

³ http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/global_health_risks/en/index.html

Annual European Week of Sport

In this context, ministers held a public debate on the subject "From virtual sports to real sports: a step from the sofa to the playing field", ([15814/12](#)), which addresses in particular the future establishment of an Annual European Week of Sport, as a means of promoting the practice of sport and physical activity especially among children, teenagers and young adults, taking into account similar national initiatives and in cooperation with the relevant sports organisations.

This issue was also discussed at the structured dialogue between EU Sports Ministers from the extended Troika, the Commission and sports movement representatives from the International Sport and Culture Association (**ISCA**), the European Health and Fitness Association (**EHFA**), **UEFA**, the **EU Sports Platform**, the European Physical Education Association (**EUPEA**), the Association For International Sport for All (**TAFISA**), the International School Sport Federation (**ISF**) and the Federation of the European Sporting goods Industry (**FESI**).

The sports associations and member states in general warmly welcomed the idea, but some member states had doubts about the real European added value of this project, since there are already a lot of similar initiatives in many member states. Effective coordination between member states, institutions and European and national sports organizations will be essential. The financing issues must also be addressed and the initiative should be as cost-effective as possible.

The Commission stressed that the initiative was meant to build on existing actions and not to replace them. It should also involve local, regional and national sports organizations, local clubs, schools, the European Parliament and the Committee of Regions and would have the full support of the Commission, which could consider making some funding available from the Erasmus programme.

Many member states and the Commission stressed that the initiative should aim to be inclusive, reaching out to people of all ages and backgrounds, including disabled and disadvantaged citizens, who often do not have the possibility or the opportunity to practise sport.

Several member states also insisted that the driving factor of the European Week of Sport should be pleasure and not competition and that it should therefore ensure the participation of grassroots sports and encourage voluntary work.

Anti-doping

The Council designated the three **EU representatives on the World Anti-Doping Agency** (WADA) Foundation Board (2013-2015) ([15720/12](#)), which will operate on the "troika" principle rotating every 18 months, in line with the EU Presidency:

- Mr Leo VARADKAR, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Ireland)
- Mr Romain SCHNEIDER, Minister for Sport (Grand Duchy of Luxembourg)
- Mr Alexandre Miguel MESTRE, State Secretary for Youth and Sport (Portugal)

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)¹, set up in 1999, is a private law body whose mission is to promote, coordinate and monitor the fight against doping in sport in all its forms. Its key tasks include scientific research, education, development of anti-doping capacities and monitoring of the World Anti Doping Code..

The WADA is composed of a Foundation Board, an Executive Committee and several Committees. The 38-member Foundation Board is WADA's supreme decision-making body and it is composed of an equal proportion of representatives from the Olympic Movement and from governments. The European continent has five representatives (three of them from the EU) on the Foundation Board.

In this context, ministers will be briefed by the Presidency on the outcome of the World Anti-Doping Agency's recent meetings in Montreal concerning the ongoing **WADA code review**.

The World Anti-Doping Code is the core document that provides the framework for harmonised anti-doping policies, rules and regulations within the sports organisations and among public authorities in all sports and in all countries. The review procedure started in November 2011 and the final draft will be submitted to the WADA Foundation Board for approval at the World Conference on Doping in Sport, in Johannesburg in November 2013. The new Code will then come into force as of 1 January 2015.

¹ <http://www.wada-ama.org>

Any other business

• **Work programme of the incoming Presidency**

The Council took note of information from the Irish delegation on the incoming Presidency's priorities in this field for the next half-year, in particular:

- Progress on implementation of the EU Work Plan on Sport;
- Sustainable financing of sport;
- Integrity of sport, in particular anti-doping issues.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**CULTURE****European archives and the challenges of the digital era**

The Council took note of a Commission report on European archives and the challenges of the digital era ([14974/12](#) and [14974/12 ADD1](#)).

The report focuses on the changing role of archives, the question of online versus on-site access to digital archives, the relationship between archives, the re-use of public sector information, digitisation, costs and funding.

It is the second progress report submitted to the Council in implementation of recommendation 2005/835/EC on priority actions to increase cooperation in the field of archives in Europe¹.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**Access to books for impaired persons - World Intellectual Property Organization**

The Council authorised the Commission to start negotiations for an international agreement within the World Intellectual Property Organization on improved access to books for print-impaired persons.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS**Asset recovery - Egypt and Tunisia**

The Council took steps today to facilitate the return of misappropriated funds to the Egyptian and Tunisian authorities. For more details, see press release [16078/12](#).

¹ [OJ L 312, 29.11.2005, p.55](#)

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA**Meeting of the EEA Council (Brussels, 26 November)**

The Council took note of preparations for the 38th meeting of the EEA Council, which will take place in Brussels on 26 November.

(EEA website: <http://eeas.europa.eu/eea/>)

ENERGY**EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council**

The Council took note of the agenda for the seventh meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Energy, which will take place in Nicosia (Cyprus) on 12 December 2012.

Decision of the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community/Moldova

The Council adopted a decision establishing the EU position on a draft decision of the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community concerning the implementation of Article 9 of Directive 2009/73/EC by the Republic of Moldova.

The Treaty establishing the Energy Community came into force in 2006. The Energy Community extends the EU internal energy market to South East Europe and beyond on the basis of a legally binding framework. It provides a stable investment environment based on the rule of law, and binds the contracting parties, together with the European Union. Through its action, the Energy Community contributes to the security of supply in the wider European context.

APPOINTMENTS**Committee of the Regions**

The Council appointed Mr Alain HUTCHINSON (Belgium) as member of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2015 ([16149/12](#)).
