



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE



17.04.2009

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## *... from the Commission*

**COM (2009) 159** - REPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Final report on the implementation and impact of the second phase (2000-2006) of the Community action programmes in the field of education (Socrates) and vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci) and the multiannual programme (2004-2006) for the effective integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (eLearning)

For the period 2007-2013, the three initiatives of Socrates, Leonardo and eLearning multiannual programmes in the field of education and training were integrated under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).

The report (an evaluation of the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and eLearning programmes) shows that they have had a significant impact on education and training in the EU, both quantitative and qualitative. This can be seen at individual, institutional and policy-making levels.

At **individual level**, a positive impact was observed on both staff and learners who broadened their skills (including language proficiency), deepened their knowledge, developed a strong sense of networking across national boundaries and gained a stronger feeling of being European citizens. The mobility schemes, (learning periods abroad) seem to have been the most successful in this respect.

At the **institutional level**, Erasmus in particular, has embedded mobility in university life and led to structural changes and modernisation in higher education in Europe. As a result of various types of partnerships and projects, improvements in teaching, learning and management and structural changes in curricula or systems, were also observed, in particular in the work environment of the participants and at local level. There is less evidence of a broader impact on national education systems and the countries participating failed to make sufficient strategic use of the outcomes of the programmes to adapt their systems.



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At **policy-making level**, the impact of the Erasmus and Leonardo programmes is evident in the development of EU instruments to improve transparency and recognition of qualifications, with tools such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credits in Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

However, the impact of Comenius and Grundtvig remained more local.

Overall, the programmes clearly contributed to creating a European education area and embedded a culture of European cooperation amongst educational institutions.

***The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) adopted for 2007-13 has built on the strengths of its predecessors on the one hand and tries to remedy the weaknesses detected on the other.***

As an umbrella programme, it integrates action targeted on different groups in a coherent way, with simplified management procedures and streamlined sectoral sub-programmes, in order to harness synergies better.

The LLP is also designed to support more effectively the EU education and training policies set out in the Lisbon strategy and the Education and Training 2010 work programme. It does so not only under its sectoral strands on schools (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational training (Leonardo) and adult education (Grundtvig), but also under a new cross-cutting strand.

The Commission has the flexibility to tailor the priorities of the annual LLP calls for proposals to current policy developments, such as the New Skills for New Jobs agenda or the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, both in 2009.

Progress on the quality of outcomes, e.g. on mobility and on implementation of the LLP objectives until 2013 will be closely monitored in cooperation with the countries represented on the single Programme Committee. Attention will also focus on better application and mainstreaming of the results of the LLP in order to support modernisation of education and training systems in Europe.



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**COM (2009) 167 - Recommendation for a COUNCIL DECISION On the European Capital of Culture event for the year 2012.**

The first European capital of culture was the city of Athens in 1985. Since then, the event has been such a success each year and so the title is now highly prized. From 2011, two cities – from two different EU countries – will be European capitals of culture.

The European capital of culture is a golden opportunity to show off Europe's cultural richness and diversity, and all the ties which link us together as Europeans. The event is so attractive that Europe's cities vie with each other fiercely for the honour of bearing the title.

For a number of years, the EU's Culture programme has helped finance the event, and will continue to do so in future.

From 2012, there will be a new procedure for selecting future European capitals of culture.

**How cities are selected**

Cities wishing to become European capitals of culture must prepare a cultural programme that meets specific criteria: it must reflect the European character of the event and involve the participation of the people who live there.

The European flavour can be seen in the themes chosen and the artists and cultural organisers from different countries cooperating to put on the event. The programme must also have a lasting and sustainable impact on the city's long-term cultural, economic and social development.

The Commission forms a selection panel which issues a report on the nominations judged against the objectives and characteristics of this action. The selection panel is composed of leading independent figures who are experts on the cultural sector. The selection panel submits its report to the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council.

**The European Capitals of Culture for 2012**



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On the basis of an overall evaluation of the applications, the panel reached a consensus to recommend to the Institutions of the European Union that Guimarães<sup>1</sup> and Maribor<sup>2</sup> host the European Capital of Culture in 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> **Guimarães** is located in northwestern **Portugal**, approximately 350km north of the capital, Lisbon, and about 50km from the second largest city, Oporto.

<sup>2</sup> **Maribor** is the second largest city in Slovenia. The population of **Maribor** is approximately 133000.

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## Ideas move Europe on Spring Day



### European politicians will be visiting schools around Europe as part of 'spring day' 2009.

Debates and competitions with an EU focus are taking place in schools around the EU as part of spring day for Europe. Commissioners and MEPs are playing their part, visiting schools and answering questions in online chats.

One of spring day's key events sees public figures going "back to school" to discuss European themes with students. The list of potential guests includes MEPs, European commissioners, university professors and representatives from national and regional authorities. But ultimately it is the students who decide who they'd like to meet and send out the invitations themselves.

The articles in the event's online spring day magazine are a good starting point for anyone looking for a topic to debate. Recent articles, by students aged 10 to 20, cover the impact on schools of a new plan in Portugal to get everyone using more technology, and the definitions of creativity and innovation – the theme of the 2009 European year.

Spring day is an annual event open to all schools in Europe and elsewhere. Once schools have registered, they have access to the web portal's activities, competitions, resources, tools and services. They can also communicate with schools all over Europe to exchange ideas and find out more about other cultures.

A network of 31 European ministries of education, known as schoolnet, organises spring day, with funding from the EU.

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[Participate online - calendar of chats with European politicians](#)

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**... from the Presidency**



### **Prague forum stresses economic potential of culture**

Politicians, EU officials and arts experts attending the Prague Forum for Creative Europe, one of the main events of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation Arts and culture, agreed that culture can play key roles in Europe's economic recovery, agreed.

Czech Culture Minister Václav Jehlička, whose country currently holds the EU presidency, described culture as "something that is related to art (and) science," as well as to the economy, industry and education.

#### **Economic advantages of culture, art**

Jehlička stressed the "huge economic potential" of art and culture, which said should be exploited during the current crisis "when old mechanisms are failing". The minister explained that cultural industries stimulate marketing, communication, human resources and product development.

Stressing the importance of creativity and innovation, the European Commission's director-general for education and culture Odile Quintin noted that they present a "new model for growth in the globalised world," insisting that support for the production of "immaterial goods" would have a multiplying effect.

Regarding the influence of culture on the economy, economists agreed that creativity is the basis of artistic fields as diverse as painting, music and literature. Creative industries like film, design, television broadcasting, the music industry and advertising are derived from basic types of art, and in this sense, art and creativity influence the entire economy, they explained.

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### **Economy 'depends on creativity and innovation'**

Canadian economist Richard Florida went as far as describing creativity as "the basic characteristic of the future economic and social order," arguing that past crises reformed the foundations on which economies and societies are built.

While previous crises led to increased emphasis on industrial production, which in turn brought welfare characterised by high consumption, after the current crisis, the economy will probably depend on creative thinking and innovation, the Canadian economist believes.

Creativity will not only be the basis of economic welfare, but will also help to overcome environmental problems like climate change and air pollution, explained Florida.

Moreover, firms in the "new" economy will have to learn to capitalise on all of their employees' abilities, including their creative potential, the economist argued. Companies will become "living laboratories" that will continue to make use of the creative potential of their employees.

Indeed, Finland's approach indicates that Florida's words are more than mere fiction. Finland radically increased its research, development and innovation expenditures in the 1990s, and today the country is one of the world's most competitive economies.

### **'Support creativity in schools'**

Conference participants agreed that creativity is not solely a trait of "talented" people, but something common to all. Experts said creativity could be seen most easily in children, lamenting that educational systems and society usually transform people to the extent that they begin to suppress their creativity. Politicians should therefore focus on ways to support and develop creativity in children.

The policies of countries like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Estonia and Sweden prove that this approach is beginning to take hold across the EU. Meanwhile, the Swedish EU Presidency, which will replace the Czech Republic at the EU's helm in July, has chosen the motto 'Support for a creative generation', suggesting a focus on boosting children's creativity.



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## CONSULTATION on EU plans for a European Heritage Label

The European Heritage Label was launched as an intergovernmental initiative by several European states in 2007. It aims to strengthen the support of European citizens for a shared European identity and to foster a sense of belonging to a common cultural space.

*See EYC Update – 27.03.2009 for more details*

Have a look  
at other Sectoral Committees' UPDATES

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